

Media Release | 2024

Hundreds of social service providers to gather at Whakamanawa 2024

Next week, a record number of social service providers from across Aotearoa New Zealand will gather at Whakamanawa 2024 – The National Social Services Conference.

Hosted annually by Social Service Providers Te Pai Ora o Aotearoa (Te Pai Ora SSPA), Whakamanawa is highly anticipated as the only conference that brings together all those working to support children and whānau within Aotearoa New Zealand's community social services.

Belinda Himiona, Te Pai Ora SSPA's Chief Executive Officer, notes that gathering for Whakamanawa 2024 is particularly significant this year given the uncertainty being faced by not-for-profit providers delivering services to children and whānau across the country. "We're blown away by the tautoko the event is receiving from social services kaimahi around the motu, with a record number of registrations. The opportunities provided at Whakamanawa are important to a sector that is continuously developing, gathering knowledge, and adapting to the needs of their communities. The high number of registrations also highlights the need for connection and whanaungatanga among kaimahi across the sector."

Following the opening of the conference, attendees will have the significant opportunity to hear from The Minister for Children and Minister for Prevention of Family and Sexual Violence, Hon Karen Chhour who will address the social services community-based sector. "We appreciate the Minister coming to kōrero with providers about our common goal of nurturing children and whānau" says Belinda.

The first day will also include a panel kōrerorero on social investment, featuring Sir Bill English, Nicola Nation (CEO Tumu Whakarae, Ākina), and Dr Craig Jones (Acting Chief Executive, Social Investment Agency). They will offer valuable insights into the social investment model, its challenges, and key opportunities for the social service sector moving forward. Day one will also feature Kaye-Maree Dunn speaking on kotahitanga, insights into the future of care from Hon Willow-Jean Prime and Dr Luke Fitzmaurice Brown, slam poetry champion Daisy Lavea Timo, and Dr Chris Jansen sharing insights on adaptive leadership.

"Whakamanawa 2024 is a special moment for strengthening our collective social sector. I'm excited to see kaimahi renewing old relationships and building new collaborations. The focus of Whakamanawa 2024 is on encouraging, inspiring, and revitalising our social services kaimahi from across the country. Community-based social service workers and those working across our wider social sector are unsung heroes, doing essential work to support children and whānau," Belinda says.

"At Whakamanawa 2024, as many providers face an uncertain future regarding the services they can offer to their communities, we're focusing on nurturing a space for learning and relationship-building, enabling our social services kaimahi to be as strong as possible in supporting tamariki, rangatahi, families, and whānau. The essential mahi they do within their communities can be tiring, and Whakamanawa provides an opportunity to regroup and strengthen these providers," Belinda adds.

Whakamanawa 2024 will be held at Te Pai Christchurch Convention Centre on Monday 16 and Tuesday 17 September. To find out more about Whakamanawa 2024 and to view the full conference programme, visit <https://www.sspa.org.nz/event/whakamanawa-2024>.

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Belinda Himiona is available for interviews upon request: ceo@sspa.org.nz | 021 0230 1029

Editor's Notes:

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ABOUT SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS TE PAI ORA O AOTEAROA | www.sspa.org.nz

Te Pai Ora SSPA is a membership-based organisation, representing more than 230 non-profit, community-based social service organisations from around Aotearoa New Zealand. Te Pai Ora SSPA's vision is that Aotearoa New Zealand's community-based social services are sustainable, making a positive impact every day in our communities and hapori, supporting children, young people and whānau to thrive now and into the future. Te Pai Ora SSPA works to strengthen Aotearoa New Zealand's social sector through advocacy and engagement, learning and development, relationships and sector leadership.

Our member organisations are diverse, including small rural organisations, Iwi and kaupapa Māori service providers, Pacific providers, and large national children's organisations. Our member organisations provide life-changing and often life-saving services and support in their communities.

Te Pai Ora SSPA's full members are funded by government to deliver social services in our communities every day, with a predominant focus on children, rangatahi, families and whānau. Our affiliate members are organisations that deliver social services for these people, and organisations and individuals working in areas aligned to the interests of children, young people, whānau or communities.