

## Media Release – For immediate release | 18 May 2023

### Social Service Providers Te Pai Ora o Aotearoa reacts to no-frills Budget 2023

Social Service Providers Te Pai Ora o Aotearoa (SSPA), the national member-based organisation for community-based social service providers, is welcoming initiatives in Budget 2023 that will make a difference for families and whānau, and the community-based social services providers who support them.

However, the organisation cautions that the short-term nature of many of the initiatives means that greater long-term, sustainable investment is still needed. Especially for children, rangatahi, families and whānau in the most challenging circumstances, and in the capacity, capability and wellbeing of Aotearoa New Zealand's community-based social services.

Dr Claire Achmad, SSPA's Chief Executive Officer, says that "looking at today's Budget through the lens of the wellbeing of children, rangatahi, families and whānau, as well as our community-based social services, there are some initiatives that should add up together to make a difference. Alongside this, there are some notable gaps in investment."

"It's positive to see the Budget removing prescription co-payments, extending 20 hours free early childhood education to two-year olds, and making public transport permanently free for children under 13 and half-price for rangatahi. We know these investments will make a difference in the lives of everyday families and whānau, lifting some pressure. Other Budget initiatives we are pleased to see are in the areas of family and sexual violence prevention and response, cyclone recovery, free school lunches, and the wellbeing of hapū māmā, whānau and pēpi in their first 1000 days," Dr Achmad says.

When it comes to the gaps in the Budget, she says that "SSPA is disappointed this Budget doesn't invest more significantly in the lives of low-income families and whānau. We know this is so much needed, because of the mahi our member organisations are doing every day."

SSPA welcomes the Budget's investment recognising the cost-pressures facing Oranga Tamariki partner organisations, investment in community connector roles, cyclone recovery social services, and in relational social sector commissioning. SSPA looks forward to working with Oranga Tamariki and the Ministry of Social Development to support these initiatives. However, SSPA is disappointed Budget '23 does not invest in long-term, sustainable funding increases for community-based social services, and social services kaimahi hauora (worker wellbeing). Dr Achmad says that "The community-based social services sector has been inequitably and under-funded for decades. In line with the times we are in, where more people are having to turn to social services for help – this really needed to be the Budget that finally made a significant commitment to sustainable, long-term funding for community-based social services. This would have helped both now and intergenerationally."

She says that it is disappointing that the Budget "doesn't build on the Government's initiative to invest in social services kaimahi hauora through cyclone recovery grants, which have supported the wellbeing of whānau and the social services workforce. We would have liked to have seen continued and wider recognition through Budget 2023 of the difference that investment in social services kaimahi hauora makes. Social Service Providers Te Pai Ora o Aotearoa will be continuing to advocate for cross-party commitment to this, and to sustainable funding for our community-based social services, in the lead-up to this year's General Election."

**ENDS**

Dr Claire Achmad is available for interviews upon request: [ceo@sspa.org.nz](mailto:ceo@sspa.org.nz) | 027 562 73 68



## Editor's Notes:

### **ABOUT SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS TE PAI ORA O AOTEAROA | [www.sspa.org.nz](http://www.sspa.org.nz)**

SSPA is a membership-based organisation, representing more than 200 non-profit, community-based social service organisations from around Aotearoa New Zealand. 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 have been providing life-changing and often life-saving services and support in their communities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and in rōhe affected by the many natural disasters experienced in Aotearoa New Zealand over recent months due to the impacts of our climate crisis.

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.

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. SSPA works to strengthen Aotearoa New Zealand's social sector through advocacy and engagement, learning and development, relationships and sector leadership.