



Media Release – For immediate release

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Social Service Providers Aotearoa reacts to Budget 2022

Social Service Providers Aotearoa (SSPA), the national peak body for community-based social service providers, says that several Budget 2022 investments will help children, rangatahi and whānau, and investing in changes to how social services are commissioned will support outcomes in the long-term. However, SSPA says next year's Budget must include social sector investment on a more comprehensive basis, to sit holistically alongside this year's health sector investments.

In reacting to the Budget today, Dr Claire Achmad, SSPA's Chief Executive Officer says that looking at the investments made through the lens of Aotearoa's community-based social service providers, there is little included that will make a meaningful difference to the pressures they are under.

"Over the past two years, our community-based social services have worked tirelessly at the very front lines of the pandemic, helping families and whānau get through. Our community-based social services are facing the combined pressures of massive pay equity gaps, the need to grow the workforce, worker fatigue, and a rising demand in need from their communities. We urgently need to see more consistent fair and sustainable funding into our community-based social services. While SSPA welcomes the significant Budget investments into the health system – which should reduce disparity and improve equity – we urge the Government to make significant investments in next year's Budget focusing on social services. These are needed so that Aotearoa's children, rangatahi, families and whānau experience better holistic hauora and wellbeing outcomes," Dr Achmad says.

SSPA says that Budget 2022 includes positive signs of the direction that the Government is looking to move things in, when it comes to the wellbeing of children, rangatahi and whānau. A number of the initiatives receiving investment will ensure the provision of support to the children, rangatahi and whānau who SSPA's member organisations work alongside throughout the motu. "We very much welcome the investment in Mana Ake, Family Start and the Integrated Community-led Response to family violence and sexual violence. SSPA members are involved in delivering these initiatives every day around Aotearoa. They are initiatives that are proven in delivering outcomes such as strengthening families and whānau, responding to support children's mental wellbeing, and preventing harm. Sadly, we remain far from Aotearoa being a place where every child grows up loved, safe and thriving. At a time when it's imperative we are focusing on strengthening family and whānau outcomes and wellbeing, we do think these investments will make a difference. However, much more is needed to truly address the realities of challenges including our country's child and youth mental health crisis, and the circumstances that lead to child abuse," Dr Achmad says.

Social Service Providers Aotearoa is also welcoming Budget 2022's investment in supporting a shift in how social sector commissioning works. Dr Achmad says that "SSPA has been advocating for more equitable and fair social sector commissioning for many years. We are grateful for the commitment shown by Minister Sepuloni and the Ministry of Social Development to progressing a new approach to social sector commissioning that is grounded in whanaungatanga, lived experience and the knowledge and skills of community-based providers, to ensure better family, whānau and community outcomes. We are happy to see this mahi being supported through new Budget investments. We are looking forward to contributing to ongoing collective progress in this area. Ultimately it should make a difference for family and whānau outcomes."

Dr Achmad says that SSPA remains focused on advocating for more equitable socio-economic outcomes for children, rangatahi, families and whānau, and a sustainable community-based social sector contributing to intergenerational child and whānau wellbeing. "All children and tamariki in Aotearoa should grow up with thriving holistic health and wellbeing, in households with livable incomes, feeling a sense of belonging in their communities and hāpori, with hope for the future. Continued efforts and sustained investments are needed to ensure that the inequities and poverty that drive family and whānau stress are alleviated. Alongside this, Government funding must ensure that our community-based social services can effectively and sustainably play their part in contributing to strong socio-economic outcomes, now and into the future," Dr Achmad says.

ENDS

Dr Claire Achmad is available for interviews upon request.



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Editor's Notes:

ABOUT SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS AOTEAROA | www.sspa.org.nz

Social Service Providers Aotearoa is a membership-based organisation, representing some 200 non-profit, community-based organisations from around Aotearoa. 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.

The SSPA *Agenda for Change: Big Ideas to Tackle Big Problems* is available at: <https://sspa.org.nz/information/agenda-for-change>

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

SSPA's vision is that Aotearoa's NGO social services are sustainable, making a positive impact every day in our communities, supporting children, young people and whānau to thrive now and into the future. SSPA works to strengthen Aotearoa's social sector through advocacy and engagement, learning and development, relationships and sector leadership.