



Community Discussion Paper

**Knowledge Wave Trust
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www.knowledgewave.org.nz

Community Theme Sessions

Overarching aim: Creating Social Dynamism and Cohesion

In a culture that often accepts the status quo and declares “She’ll be right,” creating a sense of urgency for positive change is very challenging.

Exploration of the following interdependent areas may hold key solutions:

1. *Fostering higher levels of civic engagement and stronger families.*

Recommendations from Catching the Knowledge Wave conference in 2001 emphasised the importance of creating networks within society. How can we make further progress in fostering civic engagement? What might the role of civic education play in this process? What is the link between strong families and community groups, and successful societies? How realistic are social expectations that citizens should be both producers (with careers) and re-producers (with families)?

Keynote speaker Professor Robert Putnam will address the topic of civic engagement in depth.

Key Facts

- **Group membership is relatively high.** More than two thirds of the New Zealand population belong to a group, organisation or club. Sports clubs and hobby groups are the most popular with 38% of people belonging to a sports club or organisation, compared with 30% in Australia.
- **Considering its small size, New Zealand has many voluntary organisations.** There are 22,146 incorporated societies, and 13,298 charitable trusts in NZ.
- **Religious affiliation is decreasing.** According to the 2001 census 30% of people said they did not have a religious affiliation, up from 20% in 1991.
- **Crime rates are relatively steady.** Crime rates have been relatively steady since the mid-1990s, although recorded crime doubled between 1970 and 2000. New Zealand has high rates of assault, theft and burglary, and of child abuse deaths, compared with other OECD countries.
- **Education and fertility are in inverse relationship.** Increasing numbers of educated women are delaying the decision to have children, and have fewer children on average than less educated women.
- **Divorce rates have increased.** Divorce rate is currently at 12.3 divorces per 1000 existing marriages each year. This figure has been relatively unchanged over the last decade, however is up from that of the 1970s. The marriage rate has been falling steadily since 1971.
- **Almost one third of New Zealand families with dependent children have sole parents,** up from 14% in 1981.

Thought starters:

- Are public policies and workplaces in New Zealand truly supportive of families?
- Are there too many public and private agencies trying to assist individuals and families, given New Zealand's small population?
- If 'clusters,' critical mass and networks contribute to the development of successful industries, could the same principles apply in the voluntary sector? [eg. the Social Venture Accelerator, set up after the 2001 Catching the Knowledge Wave conference]
- Can the exchange of good ideas and successful strategies be fostered among community groups, and between them and business, and local and central Government?
- Might civics education in schools contribute to a greater sense of shared identity and purpose among New Zealanders?

2. Acknowledging and leveraging 'Pacific Fusion'

New Zealand is experiencing dramatic changes in its demographic composition. This presents both challenges and tremendous opportunities. How can we work through these challenges and make the most of this new mix of cultures? What balance should be struck between absorbing these various influences into a 'New Zealand' culture versus retaining and celebrating diversity? How might we foster stronger cross-cultural leadership?

Much of New Zealand's overall demographic change is being driven by changes in Auckland's population. What does the future hold for Auckland? How can Auckland and New Zealand meet the challenges posed by the continued shift of employment opportunities to urban areas and offshore?

Key Facts

- **Despite its small size, the population is ethnically very diverse.** There are over 200 separate ethnic groups represented in New Zealand, 45 of them having populations of over 1000 people, with a rapid rise in the number of Asian people.- The 2001 census found that one in three people in Auckland were born overseas (compared with one in five in the whole of New Zealand). There is extensive inter-marriage between ethnic groups in New Zealand.
- **Regional differences are increasing.** Over the last 5 years Auckland has become home to 57% of New Zealand's immigrants. Asians represent 14% of Auckland's population, compared with 8% in Wellington, and 5.7% in Christchurch.
- **Different ethnic groups have different demographic profiles.** While Maori and Pacific Island life expectancies have increased over time, they remain much lower than those of other groups. They also have higher fertility rates and younger age structures, although Māori fertility rates are dropping.
- **According the 2001 Census, 57% of all children in New Zealand will be Māori or Pacific Islanders by 2050.**

Thought starters:

- If 'Pacific Fusion' is happening in the arts, with internationally successful cross-cultural experiments in cuisine, fashion, film and painting, could this creative approach spread to other sectors of life in New Zealand? The public sector? Business? Community groups? The professions?
- Do new migrants and minority groups have adequate access to community networks and groups, and employment which fits their skills? If not, what are the barriers?
- How can we build effective networks across ethnic boundaries in New Zealand? Schools? Sport? Churches? Voluntary organisations? Tertiary institutions? What other forms of co-operation?

3. Driving significant, creative social change

The world is changing rapidly and thus increasing the need for individuals, organisations and societies to adapt to new situations more readily. How can we foster a strong desire amongst all New Zealanders to not only 'survive' these changes but also to strive for a better future? What is the role for education in equipping our citizens with the skills to meet the challenges posed by the changing environment? What innovative social institutions and policy should we implement to help create a better future for all? How can we unleash the power of the young to contribute in these turbulent times?

Keynote speaker Professor Peter Saunders will address the topic of social innovation and policy reform in depth.

Key facts

- **Over 90% of New Zealanders participate in some kind of cultural or arts activities.** The most common activities are reading and listening to music. In the year to June 2002 almost 50% of the adult population visited a museum or art gallery. The principal reasons for not participating in cultural activities are cost and time restrictions.
- **Growth in employment in the creative industries is outstripping growth in the economy as a whole.** "Employment share" of the creative sector within the economy has increased. The industries employing the most people are literature (over 15,000), design (over 12,000) and film and video (around 5,000).
- **The New Zealand population is ageing.** Population projections predict the median age will be 45 years by 2051, up from 35 years in 2001. Because of the 'baby blip' of the late 80s and early 90s, the full impact of this trend will not be felt until 2010.

Key Facts (cont'd)

- **In 2001, 35% of all 18-24 year olds were enrolled in tertiary education.** This represents a high level of participation in the sector. However, just 7.8% of people held a bachelors degree or above compared with 10.1% of Australians and 15.8% of Americans.
- **New Zealand spends more than the OECD average on welfare payments, and less on 'active' labour market policies** – training programmes, work subsidies, job matching

Thought starters:

- How can creativity be enhanced in the way we organise our communities? (Professor Richard Florida's presentation)
- How can we best balance diversity and innovation, and shared opportunities in education? Could 'magnet schools', which focus on particular areas of excellence, be encouraged to identify and foster talent in students from low socio-economic backgrounds?
- Is there a natural tension between social dynamism and cohesion, with one tending to work against the other?
- The welfare state is often seen by its critics as undermining individual initiative and independence. To what extent is this the case in New Zealand, and what initiatives might make a difference?

4. Access to opportunities

At present, the distribution of educational opportunities and outcomes is very uneven in New Zealand, by ethnicity, rural/urban location and socio-economic status. How do social conditions, education policy and institutions have to shift to achieve a more equitable pattern of access to the knowledge economy? How can success in the workplace be fostered and developed?

Keynote speaker Mr John Martin will address the topic of changing labour dynamics in depth.

Key facts

- **New Zealand has a good high school performance on average, but the proportion of low achievers is high by OECD standards.** About one in six students leave secondary school with no qualification, with Māori and Pacific people over-represented in this figure.
- **Socio-economic status plays a large part in determining educational attainment.** There is a strong relationship between under-achievement in bursary examinations and low-decile schools (deciles measure the socio-economic status of a community in which the pupils of a school live).
- **Education and employment are closely related.** There is a proven relationship between qualifications and employment. University graduates can expect to earn substantially more than people with only high-school qualifications.

Key facts (continued)

- **Different ethnic groups in New Zealand have very different educational and economic life chances.** In 1996, 22.6% of Maori held post-school qualifications compared to almost 35% of non-Maori. The median income for Maori is just 80% of non-Māori income; the comparable figure for Pacific Islanders is 78%. Asians are almost 20% less likely than the non-Asian population to receive government support, and 12% more likely than the general population to have a university education.
- **Unemployment currently stands at 5.3% for 2002.** The unemployment rate for Maori is three times and for Pacific Islanders twice that of Europeans. The employment rate for new migrants has decreased from 64% in 1986 to 50% in 2000.
- **New Zealand spends less than the OECD average on 'active' labour market policies** (for instance, training programmes, job matching and work subsidies).
- **Child poverty is high** – 29% of children in New Zealand experience low living standards. Those at high risk include children with sole parent families, Maori and Pacific children.

Thought starters:

- What are the fundamental rights that all children in New Zealand should enjoy?
- If those ethnic groups with the highest growth rates and youngest age structure fail to achieve educational and economic success, is a prosperous knowledge society possible in New Zealand?
- Why do we tolerate sharp inequalities in educational outcomes between low and high decile secondary schools? Currently more than 20% of young people leave school with no formal qualifications. Are we willing to accept this? Can we set a national goal of decreasing this figure, and what would be a realistic target?
- Can innovative educational programmes and institutions which achieve successful educational outcomes for low income young people be actively and strongly supported?
- Can 'networks of success' be extended to include disadvantaged young people? Through voluntary associations, scholarships at high decile schools, through scholarships and hostels at tertiary institutions, mentoring schemes?
- How can we successfully intervene to increase participation in the workplace?

5. Sources of Human Capital

New Zealand's growth in tertiary education is concentrated in short-term training courses, rather than those which produce skilled tradespeople, technicians, scientists and those with advanced qualifications. Declining birthrates combined with the large number of retirements due soon in knowledge/science industries would indicate that New Zealand will experience challenges in sourcing the human capital required to produce

the prosperity we desire. What solutions can we find to alleviate these factors? How can we ease the education debt burden of our graduates and make New Zealand a more attractive place to apply their skills?

Key Facts

- **Fertility levels have declined.** With more women in the labour force and smaller family sizes, fertility has reached replacement levels only 4 times in the last 20 years. The median age of mothers has also risen considerably over the last 20 years.
- **Other developed societies face ageing population problems and declining fertility rates.** This means New Zealand will have to compete with countries such as the US and Australia for skilled labour.
- **New Zealanders are emigrating, although many return home. In 2001** over 56,000 New Zealanders left New Zealand on a long-term or permanent basis. Many of those leaving are looking for higher wages and enhanced career prospects, but it does appear that increasing numbers are returning.
- **Immigration levels are high.** Although many skilled New Zealanders emigrate, the last few years have seen a net inflow of migrants. In 2001, 54,000 residency permits were granted with Chinese and Indian migrants claiming the highest proportions.
- **There is a net outflow of skills.** During the five years ending 2001 there were net outflows from all major occupation categories. At the same time there was a net inflow of 23,400 migrants who were not in the workforce or stated no occupation.
- **The tertiary education sector is highly fragmented.** There are more than 300 publicly-funded tertiary institutions for a country with a population the size of Sydney.
- **Students are heavily burdened with debt.** In 2001 the average student had a loan of \$12,000 and 10% of students had debts over \$30,000.

Thought starters:

- Can creative solutions be devised to ease the debt burden for tertiary students? Could loan write-offs be offered for service in sectors and regions where there are skill shortages, for example?
- Could post-graduate scholarships be offered to bring bright young people from other countries to New Zealand?
- Could citizenship be offered to successful international students?
- Could the KEA network offer more assistance to expatriate New Zealanders returning home? Can repatriation schemes be devised?
- Could a comprehensive undergraduate scholarship scheme be established for low and middle-income students, on the Canadian model?