



# Communiqué

Autumn/Winter 2001

News from the office of the Hon Laila Harré

## Fresh focus on Youth Suicide Prevention

Leadership of New Zealand's Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy has been transferred to the Ministry of Youth Affairs.

Since 1998 the Ministry of Health has been responsible for coordinating the strategy's implementation across government departments.

Youth Affairs will now use its experience in leading issues across sectors to put the strategy into action.

It will receive an extra \$214,000 to fund its new role, and is in the process of appointing a full-time national coordinator to lead the work.

Youth Affairs Minister Laila Harré said this person would work closely with non-government organisations, community groups and researchers working on youth suicide prevention.

"A lot of excellent work is being done both inside and outside of government to develop programmes aimed at reducing New Zealand's unacceptably high rate of youth suicide.

"But if we want to build momentum on this issue we need to make sure these efforts are well coordinated, and that communities play an active role in the design of their local youth development initiatives.

The changeover in no way lessens the responsibility all government agencies have to support youth suicide prevention, Laila said.

"It will simply make it easier for everyone involved to take a more consistent approach."

## Taken for a ride

Few early-morning speaking engagements are as much fun as the one Hon Laila Harré attended in Pukekohe recently.



The Minister was speaking to the Franklin Small Business Enterprise Centre about the Labour-Alliance Coalition's "fresh approach" to small business development. The awards are aimed at making sure New Zealand entrepreneurs have the financial support they need to get a good idea off the ground or grow their business.

One such initiative was John Butler's Monsta Trike design, a winner in the fourth round of the Industry New Zealand Enterprise Awards. So instead of the usual ribbon-cutting ceremony, Laila wound up the breakfast with a quick spin through Pukekohe on a Monsta Trike.

## Action on child poverty

New Zealand is among the world's least successful wealthy countries when it comes to child poverty, a recent report from the Child Poverty Action group shows.

Hon Laila Harré invited the report's authors to Parliament in March to present their findings to politicians, government officials and non-government agencies focused on improving the healthy development of New Zealand children.

One of the Child Poverty Action Group's key recommendations was for more redistribution in favour of children, backed up by a more progressive tax structure.

For a copy of *Our Children* contact Alison Blaiklock, [alisonb@iconz.co.nz](mailto:alisonb@iconz.co.nz).

## editorial

### Women and Children First

Soon the Labour Alliance Government will announce the details of a scheme that aims to give New Zealand children the best start in life.



Simple in design, it will enable working parents, particularly mothers, to take a decent amount of time off work following the birth or adoption of a child.

The announcement will mark the end of five years of campaigning and months of discussion for the Alliance, and as such it will go down in history as one of the significant achievements of this government, and the Alliance within it.

The announcement will highlight the potential for further gains through strong advocacy of a progressive agenda within government.

From a platform of stability the Alliance is well positioned to make further progress on its key priorities.

With the People's Bank and Paid Parental Leave under its belt, the Alliance could rest on its laurels.

This is not an option. The Alliance is now looking beyond 2002 with a clear understanding of its potential to constructively and positively bring about change within government.

## Punishing Children

The second report on New Zealand's compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) has drawn attention to a section of the Crimes Act that allows parents to use "reasonable force" to discipline their children.

Known as section 59, this provision allows parents to use physical force against children as punishment within the family, provided the force is "reasonable in the circumstances".

The United Nations committee expressed concern that section 59 had not been reviewed since New Zealand's first report in 1995, as one of UNCROC's aims is to "effectively ban all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse against children".

In response to these concerns, the Labour-Alliance Coalition is looking at how other countries have addressed the issue of compliance with UNCROC in relation to corporal punishment. This includes looking at education campaigns that have accompanied legislative change.

Youth Affairs Minister Laila Harré agrees that section 59 should be repealed in the interests of protecting children from violence.

"This does not mean that parents or caregivers would be taken to court for the occasional smack of a child. What it does mean is that if the police believe that there are sufficient injuries to a child to warrant a charge of assault than the parent or caregiver that has inflicted those injuries will not be able to use section 59 as a defence," she said.

## Youth rates rise

Changes to the youth minimum wage and training exemptions came into force on March 5. Young workers aged 18 are now eligible for the adult minimum hourly wage of \$7.70, and the least 16 and 17 year olds can now be legally paid is \$5.40, with this increasing to 80% of the adult wage next year. This is an increase from \$4.55 for young people aged 16 to 19. Young workers under 16 still have no minimum wage protection, and achieving this protection is an Alliance priority.

## PO

A public d  
Youth Affa  
was launc

Feedback  
Ministry d  
and your i  
need of yo

The Youth  
the way th  
the positiv  
25.

Youth Affa  
strategy w  
people as  
people as

The discus  
be followe  
around the

Laila is ke  
individua  
themselve

An inform  
the discus  
of Youth A

## Rap

That's the  
education  
Independe

Speaking a  
Laila Harré  
used on th  
posters di  
still exist

"This is n  
perpetuat  
many situa  
day life."

Information  
(04) 473-5

# sitive growth

Discussion document that will help the Ministry of Social Development create a Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa launched in Auckland this month.

Issues raised in the document will help the Government decide what should be included in the strategy, and input will help ensure it accurately reflects the views of young New Zealanders.

The Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa aims to improve the lives of young people and the government and wider society actively supports the development of young people between 12 and 25.

Minister Laila Harré said she hopes the final strategy will shift thinking away from a focus on young people's problems to be solved a positive focus on young people with something to offer.

The discussion document was launched mid-April and will be followed up with a series of public consultation meetings across the country.

Minister Harré hopes to see as many submissions as possible from schools, community groups and young people.

A consultation resource for young people and a copy of the discussion document will be available on the Ministry of Social Development website, [www.youthaffairs.govt.nz](http://www.youthaffairs.govt.nz).

## Student politics

Tertiary students around the country have been getting a first hand account of the Alliance's role within government and its plans to progress free tertiary education.

Laila joined Deputy Prime Minister and Alliance leader Jim Anderton on a tour of university and polytechnic campuses over the orientation period.

The pair spoke on the Alliance's achievements in government and the differences between being a progressive left wing party inside and outside of parliament.

The tour coincided with the start of the Alliance's campaign to have the Emergency Unemployment Benefit (EUB) reinstated for students in time for summer 2001.

"Students are the only adult group in our society who are not entitled to an unemployment benefit when they are out of work. This is discrimination," Laila said.

"The Alliance wants the EUB reinstated this year. With the support of students we can achieve this goal through good old fashioned agitation and negotiation."

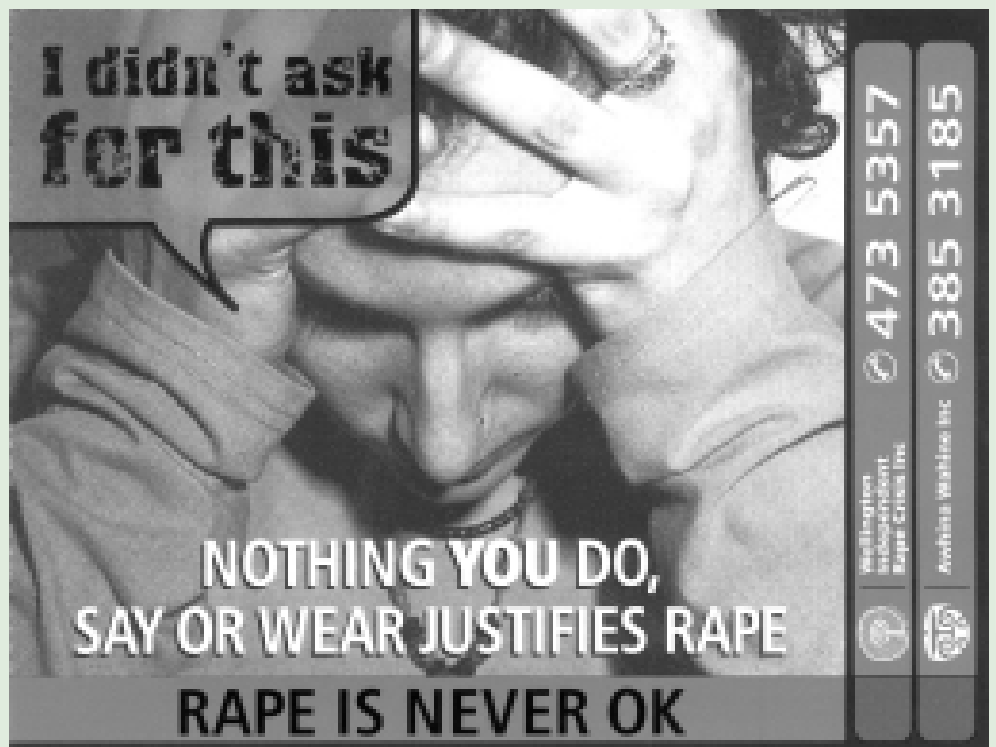
## It is never ok

A hard-hitting message of a new public awareness campaign being run by Wellington Independent Rape Crisis.

At the launch, Women's Affairs Minister Laila Harré said the simple, assertive messages of the campaign's stickers, postcards and signs directly target some of the myths that surround sexual abuse and rape.

It is not an easy task. These myths are spread by the media, in our workplaces and in the attitudes we take for granted in our day to day lives.

For more information contact Wellington Independent Rape Crisis on 473 5357.



# Work lives, Family lives

An excerpt from Hon Laila Harré's speech to the international Work/Life Summit held in the United Kingdom on International Women's Day 2001.

The language of work/life balance is relatively new. But the concept is far from novel. Most historic trade union victories and workplace interventions by the state have been about the dignity of work and the struggle for humane workplace practices.

Let's start with traditional pay setting systems.

Designed to preserve the "family wage" they were a form of work/life balance. The difference between that form of work/life integration and the sort that is the subject of this meeting is that whereas the family wage delivered to a society based on a gendered division of labour between the home and the workplace, modern work/life integration must be achieved both within the home and within the workplace.

There has always been a need to manage the relationship between production and reproduction.

The period of a gender based division of labour between production and reproduction might be ultimately viewed as an aberration separating periods characterised by the full integration of production and reproduction in earlier human development, and a future in which caregivers are facilitated in combining paid and unpaid work.

Making this transition is testing us all around the world.

I suggest we see our modern concept of work/life balance as simply another step in the humanisation of paid work. That way we can refer back to earlier humanisation efforts, such as the introduction of the most basic of health and safety measures for assistance in how we might progress.

Pulling children out of chimneys and introducing other early health and safety measures took a combination of agitation, negotiation and regulation.

Our effectiveness will depend on our ability to create the space for all three approaches. Agitation and negotiation have had and will have some impact. But as with all broad attacks on discrimination, regulatory action is also essential.

Broad-based equality measures, by their very nature, require governments to act. That is because markets are not designed to deliver non-discriminatory outcomes. Without some sort of distortion - such as a rule or a subsidy - markets will always reflect the distribution of power within a society. Thus it was necessary for equal pay legislation to be introduced to address even the most blatant pay discrimination between men and women.

For a full copy of this speech go to [www.executive.govt.nz](http://www.executive.govt.nz) or [www.alliance.org.nz](http://www.alliance.org.nz)

You can contact Laila Harré by posting a letter C/- Parliament Buildings, Wellington, or by emailing her at [info.harre@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:info.harre@parliament.govt.nz)

## supporting families

Working families can now get clear, simple advice on their entitlements to family assistance.

Inland Revenue has produced a one-page information guide in seven languages that outlines who qualifies for financial help, when you can claim it and where to get help preparing an application.

Order copies on 0800 377 774, or for information on Family Assistance phone 0800 277 773.

## solving insolvency

Public submissions have been gathered on how the Labour-Alliance Coalition can improve New Zealand's insolvency laws.

These laws deal with both personal bankruptcy and corporate liquidation, and the review aims to find a simpler regime for dealing with financial failure.

It will look at things like alternatives to bankruptcy for people in debt and the order in which creditors are paid when a company goes into liquidation.

Policy decisions are likely to be made on this issue later this year, which will involve Laila as Associate Minister of Commerce.

Check out [www.med.govt.nz](http://www.med.govt.nz)

## legal urges

The New Zealand Law Society is offering an online legal advisory service to young people through the youth website *Urge*.

Free of charge, lawyers answer questions e-mailed to the website, which are then accessible to all web site users. Questions currently posted include young people's rights at school, when dealing with the police and legal ages.

Check out [www.urge.co.nz](http://www.urge.co.nz)

**Hon Laila Harré is an Alliance MP**

**ALLIANCE**