



Workplace Wellbeing and the Law

Ruby Manukia-Schaumkel

On September 3 2019, the New Zealand Law Society celebrated its 150th Anniversary. Lawyers reflected on the past and where the legal profession is today.

The New Zealand Law Society reflected on how it wants to shape the future of the profession where lawyers work together to create a more diverse and inclusive legal community in Aotearoa, New Zealand, with a greater focus and emphasis on health and wellbeing.

This is important and every profession or organisation in

New Zealand should be focussed on providing services within the workplace for the health and wellbeing of their members and employees.

This had me thinking about the Methodist Church of New Zealand and where we are with the wellness and wellbeing of members. We have pastoral care within our churches and relational prayer, but we should also understand the expectations of mental health and wellbeing legislation.

Legislation, such as the Health and Safety at Work Act (2015), the Employment Relations Act (2000), the Privacy Act (1993), the Harassment Act (1997) and the Human Rights Act (1993) set



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out a business or organisation's responsibility to provide a healthy work environment.

Businesses or organisations may see their main legal responsibility as ensuring people's physical safety and reducing their risk of occupational illnesses. However, that responsibility also includes protecting workers' physical and mental wellbeing.

Businesses or organisations must provide a workplace free from:

- bullying
- discrimination
- sexual harassment
- all types of exploitation
- tobacco harm (including second-hand smoke)
- alcohol-related harm
- risk of sun damage.

Businesses or organisations that don't provide a safe and healthy workplace could be prosecuted, face significant fines and even imprisonment. Such costs can be severely damaging to a business or organisation's financial viability, as well as its reputation and ability to attract new employees and customers.

Protect yourself - and your people. Knowing the laws and regulations for your industry, business type or organisation (i.e. charity) is prudent practice. Businesses and organisations are ultimately responsible for

making sure the workplace is compliant.

Providing a thriving and happy environment and ensuring members are compliant and respectful of worldviews and cultural competencies will also have a huge impact on mental health and wellbeing.

We have a responsibility in our churches to provide a culture that recognises health and wellbeing. A wellness and wellbeing-focussed organisation creates healthier members and employees. Successfully implemented wellness programmes make for a more enjoyable and rewarding work environment for both employers and employees.

We can do this for ourselves, our homes, the Church, and our workplace culture to create a healthier environment that promotes health and wellbeing.

N E W S

The World of Early Childhood

Sue Clarke

Operations Leader, Methodist Mission Southern

Late in 2018, Methodist Mission Southern's second early childhood centre opened in Milton. This marks a new chapter in our involvement in early childhood education.

Little Citizens Dunedin was founded as the Dunedin Citizens Day Nursery in 1930 by the Dunedin City Council. It is the oldest early learning centre in Dunedin and one of the first early learning centres in New Zealand.

In 1954, the centre became part of the Methodist Mission Southern's work. It was extensively redeveloped in purpose-built facilities at Hillside Road in 1966 and 1988, and expanded to include neighbouring houses in Wesley Street.

Little Citizens Dunedin moved to its current site, the former Forbury School, Oxford Street in July 2012 and is currently licensed for 75 children aged from zero to five years old. It is a very busy centre with a range of ethnicities enrolled, including children of Māori, Pasifika, Asian and European descent.

The new Milton Little Citizens

evolved from a 2016 government priority to increase participation in early childhood education (ECE), particularly for Māori, Pasifika and children from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Working with the Ministry of Education over a three-year project, children and families were identified and connected to ECE providers in the Clutha area.

During 2017, there were growing pressures on existing ECE centres particularly in the Milton area. This reached a crisis point in mid-2017, when a privately-owned centre closed down. The Ministry of Education worked quickly with existing

ECE providers to increase rolls to accommodate these young children and the Methodist Mission Southern started the search for suitable premises, eventually settling on the disused Play Centre building.

The property was secured and work began to renovate and complete the Ministry of Education licensing requirements. This project was well supported by the local Milton community and businesses with several making donations towards the refurbishment. The outcome was a fresh airy modern ECE licensed for 25 children.



Children at Milton Little Citizens have fun learning through play.



Dunedin Little Citizens' tamariki participate in the Otago Polyfest 2019.

Both Little Citizens centres offer free nutritious meals, prepared and cooked on site. These meals cover the full spectrum from a tasty breakfast through to a wholesome dinner prior to the young children being picked up.

Special events are a highlight on the annual calendar with families and whānau invited to attend Matariki and Christmas celebrations where the young children sing and share their stories with carers.

Another highlight for the Dunedin Little Citizens' children is participating in the annual Otago Polyfest. The performance requires hours of

practise and takes place on a large stage at the Edgar Centre.

Both centres have a dedicated client support worker who assists families and whānau when required. These two staff members spend time with new families and work alongside the children when they join the centres to ensure they settle easily into their new environment.

The Methodist Mission Southern's Early Childhood Centres will continue to evolve and adapt as the journey continues.



METHODIST ALLIANCE
NGA PURAPURA WETERIANA

If your parish is engaged in community or social service work, you should join the Methodist Alliance.

The Alliance supports the work of its members by leveraging collective skills and experience, providing resources and information, and raising the profile of the work you do.

If you would like to join the Alliance please contact the National Coordinator Carol Barron:

03 375 0512 • 027 561 9164

Carol@MethodistAlliance.org.nz

PO Box 5416, Papanui, Christchurch 8542

methodist.org.nz/methodist_alliance