

# Chief Executive's preface



*The Social Report 2010* provides a picture of progress towards better social outcomes for New Zealanders. It shows how we are faring on a range of important social indicators and allows us to compare ourselves with people in other developed countries.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Social Report. This is an important milestone in the history of social reporting in New Zealand. Reliable information about how well New Zealanders are doing is critical to social progress.

The first edition of the Social Report was produced in 2001 by the Ministry of Social Policy. In 2002, the Ministry of Social Development undertook a review, inviting people around the country to give their views on the role of the Social Report and the things that were important to them. In the same year, the report was updated and translated into an online format for the first time. Counting the 2002 update, *The Social Report 2010* is the 10th edition and the third to be published online only. As in previous years, the report can be downloaded and printed by users who prefer to read a print copy.

In 2005, the coverage of the report was expanded to include regional council and territorial authority areas. We have continued to update and refine regional indicators each year since then.

An early challenge for those producing the Social Report was the limited range of data on social outcomes, both at a national and regional level. New social surveys have allowed us to fill some of these gaps. The latest of these is the New Zealand General Social Survey (NZGSS), a large, nationally-representative survey conducted by Statistics New Zealand. Data from this survey has been used for two new indicators in the 2010 report – voluntary work and overall life satisfaction – and to refresh several existing indicators.

The report now has a good balance between traditional, objective measures such as life expectancy and market income per person, and newer indicators that show how people feel about their lives. This approach is in line with international trends in monitoring social progress.

The high standard of the Social Report reflects the work of staff within the Ministry of Social Development as well as the support and expertise of analysts across the wider government sector. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of all of those who have been involved in producing this year's report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Hughes', written over a light grey background.

**Peter Hughes**  
Chief Executive  
Ministry of Social Development