Resistance and rangatiratanga in a time of political change

At the end of a very challenging year, we present our editorial—in two parts. The first section addresses the contemporary significant national and international challenges to human wellbeing, written by members of the editorial collective Eileen Joy and Liz Beddoe, and our two guest editors, Donna Baines of the University of British Columbia in Canada and Kendra Cox (Te Ure o Uenukukōpako, Te Whakatōhea, Ngāi Tūhoe, Ngāti Porou) of the University of Auckland. We consider the first year of the Aotearoa New Zealand National-led coalition government in the context of rising populism and the politics of cruelty. The second section is a reflection on rangatiratanga by Kendra Cox. The editorial finishes with introductions to the articles in the issue.

Social work, the politics of cruelty and political resistance

Kendra Cox, Donna Baines, Eileen Joy and Liz Beddoe

It is a year since the general election that resulted in an unattractive alliance between three conservative political parties: ACT, National and New Zealand First. Made possible by the mixed-member proportional electoral system, this three-party alliance brought to power two smaller, more extremist parties on the coattails of the larger, centre-right National party. Despite their combined vote share of 15%, this gave them immense power as 'kingmakers' in the process. As we noted last year, many sacrifices of progressive policy, and especially policies and services designed to address inequities borne of colonisation, were made to achieve a consensus that left many citizens deeply uneasy. Both short- and longer-term political projects reflected the concerns and bugbears of the two extremist right-wing smaller parties, desperate to maintain their small but vocal political base, with little obvious space left for the majority National party's policies at all. The result is a noxious mix of policies, poor economic direction, savage cuts to health and public services and an overarching anti-Māori, anti-Te Tiriti o Waitangi theme. ACT, in particular, relishes every opportunity for race-baiting, enabling the blatant expression of racism, driving a divisive and misleading discourse that is downright dangerous.

Deeply conservative social values and neo-libertarian ideals have prevailed in the year that is ending as we write this extended editorial. These are expressed in policies including reducing regulation across many areas of policy (particularly climate-related), damaging health and safety legislation, despite risks, threatening to remove speed-limits round schools (yes, really, in the interests of business efficiency apparently, right-wing parties have always being willing to sacrifice children to 'industry') reducing workers' rights, removing any recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi and taking more punitive approaches to crime. The list of retrogressive and dangerous policies goes on and on, seemingly without end. Bringing back bootcamps for struggling young people, cutting family support services and funding for foodbanks, requiring specific time in schools to teach reading, writing and maths and banning cell phones in school, and repealing the smokefree legislation that was enacted to reduce smoking across the population, which flies in the face of sound, evidence-based population health policy. Earlier this year, the Māori Health Authority, Te Aka Whai Ora, was disestablished. This body was set up to provide a one-stop funding agency for Māori health providers

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with the aim of reducing health disparities such as high rates of cancer, heart disease and lower life expectancy.

As we noted in an editorial earlier this year (Beddoe et al., 2024) year, many of these policy shifts signal a return to very conservative notions of equity and freedom from within a neo-libertarian paradigm, rejecting policies that are inclusive and decolonising. This latter aspect of policy includes a concerted (childishly banal and expensive) rejection of te reo Māori in public ministry and government operations as well as a rejection of Māori rights to sovereignty or governance under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The inclusion of te Tiriti o Waitangi in legislation and policy is consistently reconstructed within the ACT party's divisive and race-baiting rhetoric as a threat to equality rather than an expression of it. In line with this, a further win for ACT in the collation agreement negotiations was the introduction of the Treaty Principles Bill. Annoyed that Te Tiriti was influencing legislation and policy, ACT's bill is a scarcely concealed effort to reduce Te Tiriti to a universalist doctrine, rather than one that guarantees rangatiratanga to Māori, and redress for breaches of it. It is grounded in the politics of colonialism, white supremacy and essentially revisits the assimilationism of the 1950s. The threat to our state's founding document that sets out the rights and responsibilities of iwi Māori and the Crown would be put before the house, requiring six months of committee work (despite the prime minister saying that the National party would not support its passing) has caused intense anger and seen a upsurge of activism. Resistance and protest are also invigorated, the strongest tools for saying no.

While we are an island nation, we are not immune to the wider political dynamics of the era. We note that the recent election of Donald Trump to a second term as President of the US, and the success of right-wing politicians in many countries, including Aotearoa New Zealand, represents a disturbing political shift towards right-wing populism and an ongoing undermining of equity and social justice advances. Populism involves a deep distrust of existing political parties and institutions and can be left or right wing (Baines & Mapedzahama, 2020). Though not always successful, left-wing populism, (such as SYRIZA in Greece) captures the frustrations of workers and marginalised communities and draws them together to collectively advocate for mutual empowerment, an end to austerity and the extension of social justice and social entitlements (Muddle, 2017). However, in most of Europe, the Antipodes and North America, populism most often takes a right-wing form (Schraff & Pontusson, 2024).

Exaggerating some social problems to instil fear (e.g., crime) and demonizing struggles for equity, climate justice, human rights and social justice; right-wing populists target and blame those they construct as "foreign" and "undesirable" (Baines & Mapedzahama, 2020). In Aotearoa New Zealand, we see this construction of 'enemies' in the legislation that bans gang insignia, but which we instinctively know will not be applied to any degree equally. Who decides what constitutes a gang? A group of men in black, on motorbikes, buzzing democratic protests against the Palestine genocide, wearing what to all intents are 'gang' patches; but because they represent a dubious 'church' they are unlikely to be subject to this law.

This pandering to racism and exclusion applies particularly to people outside of the populist movement's notion of authentic citizens and those entitled to opportunities and security in life (Campani et al., 2022; Noble, 2017). Right-wing populism pivots on the idea that communities constructed as outsiders (such as immigrants and refugees, LGTBQI+ people, feminists, and Indigenous communities) are undermining economic stability, and threatening the social fabric and moral order (Taras, 2012). Fear is a major feature of right-wing populism: unfounded fear that the country and

"historic" social values are being destroyed, groundless fear of rampant violence and crime, and intentionally propagated fear that the economy is in steep and unstoppable decline (Nguyen et al., 2022). Right-wing populism also promotes a deep nostalgia for a past of greatness and widespread affluence that never existed for most people and is not going to exist within the policies and practices of right-wing governments. White supremacy and patriarchy have never brought peace and prosperity to people beyond the dominant groups.

Frighteningly, right-wing populist political groupings increasingly include ultra-right and fascist groups. Their association with right-wing populists brings these often violent, white supremacist groups out of the shadows and into the arena of power and legitimacy (Foa & Mounck, 2016). Ultra-right/fascist populists support and perpetuate violence against those speaking out against racism, sexism, coloniality, homophobia and transphobia. These ultra-right and fascist forces are deeply troubling, with faith communities, human rights groups, social justice movements, a wide spectrum of centre, left and even some right-wing politicians warning of the dangers of fascism, its doctrines of hate and violence, and the need to halt its spread (Baines & Mapedzahama, 2020; Campani et al., 2022).

Populisms generally develop in contexts where there is deep dissatisfaction with the economy, the government and those perceived to be power elites, such as corporate leaders, political parties and even social justice movements, unions and religious institutions. Thirty-five years ago, wealthy countries adopted neoliberal policies that cut and privatised government services, reduced or removed regulations, and smoothed the way for unimpeded private profit (Baines & Mapedzahama, 2020). These neoliberal policies produced economies in which the rich have significantly increased their wealth alongside an overall decline in take-home pay, the growth of poverty and precarity, and few government services left to support or defend people (Stanford, 2015). In the polarised and competitive context of late neoliberalism, discontent and cynicism are widespread. Unfortunately, this creates a fertile ground for populist leaders who promise a break with the past and propose simple solutions to complex problems.

Social workers experience these impacts as they face increasingly complex and heavy caseloads with service users who are caught in despair and destitution. Neoliberalism has meant that social workers have less autonomy and discretion to use equity-engaged practices, they also have less time and space to critically think and have fewer resources, time and capacity to respond to the specific and new needs of service users and communities. In addition, right-wing populism's threat and expansion can seem overwhelming to social workers already juggling multiple demands. However, there are ways that social workers can, and should, be involved in the struggle for equity and social justice, and against right-wing xenophobic, hateful, violence-tolerating policies.

More than thirty-five years of neoliberalism have left communities individualised and fragmented, and with fewer social services, social organisations, social skills and solidarity between people. Ottmann (2017) argued that to challenge right-wing populism, it is time to re-forge networks and deepen linkages with civil society to resist individualism and isolation (p. 34). He also recommended that social workers need to form groups of like-minded peers and community members (Ottmann, 2017, p. 34) who are willing to work to rebuild the social fabric across differences. Ally-ship with advocacy groups, social movements, and unions can provide resources and the broader analysis needed to build solidarity and mutual care strategies in the face of right-wing violence and fearmongering. Ally-ship can also provide important linkages, networking, cross-connections and opportunities to build far-reaching coalitions and caring communities.

In the face of what feels like a daily assault from populist, mostly right-wing politics and policies, how are we meant to find hope, or even resistance? Popular discourses, peddled by those on the left and right, would have us lean into resilience. We should be resilient to the challenges of life and if we currently lack it, or do not have enough of it, then we should absolutely be working on more. Parents are told to step back and instead build resilience through allowing children to experience hurts and disappointments (Robinson, 2024). In the last few decades, resilience has become a buzzword, a required set of attributes indicating grit, optimism, and self-determination in the face of setbacks (Chemaly, 2024). The successful citizen will be one who is resilient to life's shocks, and thereby does not require the state to step in and help their less-than-resilient self. Resiliency could be considered to be one of the required skills in what Nikolas Rose (1999) called governing the soul, a technology of the self, designed to ensure that citizens self-govern according to the advice of experts and in line with social norms.

We wonder how much resilience is needed for tamariki Māori to build a lifetime resistance to racism and poor health outcomes, women to withstand men's indoctrination by the likes of Andrew Tate and calls of 'your body, my choice', or transgender children and their families to persist despite a growing tide of regressive policies and politics? Or, more chillingly, just how much resilience is needed for Palestinian children to become accustomed to daily barrages of bombs, constant loss and injury, displacement and uncertain futures? When considered against these inequities (and more) it becomes clear that resiliency is a buzzword doing a lot of heavy lifting to obscure structural inequalities (Chemaly, 2024; Galpin et al., 2022). Why should anyone have to develop resilience to the machinations of colonisation, misogyny, transphobia, and even genocide?

Such exhortations to be resilient are not only used against marginalised communities—they are also used to govern the behaviour and conduct of social workers (Galpin et al., 2022). Galpin and colleagues note that, in the UK, the term has been used to blame and responsibilise practitioners for their reactions to events and working conditions rather than consider employer responsibility. They go on to note that resiliency itself has become an expression of competence and enshrined in professional standards of all four UK nations. Fortunately, such encoding has not happened here in Aotearoa with notions of resilience absent from our Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers *Code of Ethics* (2019) and our regulatory *Code of Conduct* (Social Workers Registration Board, n.d.). Galpin et al. (2022) presented this against concerns of burnout, turnover and staff shortages in social work organisations, something which we also must address here in Aotearoa New Zealand. They suggest that this focus on individual responsibility for organisational shortfalls serves to divert attention from more collective and active responses.

However, resilience is not impossible, indeed it is relatively easy to be resilient if you are privileged enough to have resources and networks to fall back on (Chemaly, 2024). In a particularly direct passage, Soraya Chemaly challenges the siloed thinking that popular notions of resiliency encourage:

> Ask yourself, if the people around you are struggling to survive and spiralling into poverty and sickness, but you are working, healthier and wealthier, are you optimistic and resilient, or are you a hardy, cheerful, entitled asshole who has the resources to justify a way of life sustained through denial, exploitation, and injustice. (pp. 91–92)

Here Chemaly hints at what a better notion of resiliency looks like, and it is not one dependent on independence, instead it relies on *inter*dependence, relationality and equitable distribution of resources. Indeed, women participants in research about mental health note that "resilience was not a 'given',

that it was often based on social resources rather than internal strengths, and that a capacity to depend on others was important" (Tseris, 2019, p. 101).

That capacity to depend on others is critical to resisting calls for individual resiliency. Indeed, as Māori scholars have noted, resilience discourses obscure what is actually happening in people's lives and in communities (Penehira et al., 2014). Instead of accepting a narrative that Māori have developed resilience in the face of colonisation, Penehira and colleagues asked "Why would we re-name and re-frame Māori acts of resistance as acts of resilience? Who benefits from this re-naming, re-framing and re-positioning?" (p. 97). Like other scholars (Chemaly, 2024), Penehira et al. suggested that notions of resilience simply codify and reify survival of the fittest, whereas resistance implies "fighting back [and] actively opposing" (p. 103).

In November of this year, tens of thousands of Māori and Tauiwi demonstrated exactly that, collective resistance to a misinterpretation of our founding document, te Tiriti o Waitangi. Beginning in the far North of the North Island on November 10th, a hīkoi (march) protesting the proposed Treaty Principles Bill wound its way down to Wellington, eventually culminating in what is likely Aotearoa's largest-ever protest with some estimates suggesting 100,000 people were present (MacManus, 2024). The hīkoi, retracing the steps of the 1975 land march protesting the loss of Māori land and breaches to Te Tiriti was a powerful reminder that collective resistance to colonisation has a history, a present, and a future (Walker, 2004). Participants of the hīkoi sang waiata, chanted, performed haka, and critically, collectively resisted the intended policies of a minor right-wing coalition government partner to redefine Te Tiriti in ways that would further systematically disadvantage Māori.

Most social workers joined the profession to make a meaningful difference in the world. The resistance practices discussed here can continue to position social work as a moral project challenging right-wing populism, global and local injustices, and the grim inequities facing humankind. The only way to re-weave the social justice-based social fabric is to start working on it and to hone our skills in the development of new initiatives, solidarities, and optimism.

On rangatiratanga

By Kendra Cox (Te Ure o Uenukukōpako, Te Whakatōhea, Ngāi Tūhoe, Ngāti Porou)

Te Kete Rokiroki a Whakaotirangi—the secure basket of Whakaotirangi. Whakaotirangi is an important ancestress for iwi that descend from both Te Arawa and Tainui waka. In the Te Arawa tradition, it was Whakaotirangi, a wife of Tamatekāpua the captain of our waka, who brought kūmara and other important plants to Aotearoa. Across the long voyage from the island of Rangiātea, and through the encounter with the monstrous whirlpool Te Korokoro o te Parata that nearly destroyed our waka, Whakaotirangi kept a small kete of kūmara safe. At Maketū, the resting place of the Te Arawa waka, Whakaotirangi nurtured the kūmara in the comparatively inhospitable soils of Aotearoa. In doing so she became our first horticulturalist, one of our first scientists on this whenua, and secured the future of Te Arawa uri in a new land. Whakaotirangi brought together the seeds of the old world, the knowledge and values of her tūpuna and the literal hua of that whenua and applied creative new methods and dedication to ensure the continuation of her people. Throughout the rohe of Te Arawa and Tainui waka, there are several lovingly carved and painted representations of Whakaotirangi in private and public places, a testament to her importance to our peoples. Whakaotirangi's actions illustrate critical aspects of rangatiratanga: leadership, perseverance, and a commitment to the protection, sustenance, and flourishing of her people.

While the Crown has attempted to extinguish rangatiratanga for nearly two hundred years, it has yet to be successful.

Like Whakaotirangi holding tight to the seed kūmara that would be critical to the future descendants of Te Arawa, the sovereignty of hapū has always been jealously protected. Mutu (2010) said that the idea of rangatira signing away their political independence and authority to the Crown in 1840 would have been seen as "thoroughly repugnant" (p. 28). Similarly, in his brief of evidence on New Zealand's Abuse in Care inquiry, the late and much-loved Moana Jackson said:

> [T]he fact that there is no word in te reo Māori for 'cede' is not a linguistic shortcoming but an indication that to even contemplate ceding or giving away mana would have been legally impossible, politically untenable, and culturally incomprehensible. (Jackson, 2019, p. 11)

That unceded rangatiratanga has been a core value and practice of hapū well before the arrival of Pākehā (Mutu, 2010) and since, and will be for as long as we have mokopuna for whom we need to prepare and protect the world.

This year has not been short of examples of rangatiratanga—nor of New Zealand's hard right "three headed taniwha" coalition government's attempts to smash it. Near the start of te tau hou Pākehā, the 10,000-person strong hui-ā-motu summoned by the late Kiingi Tuheitia Pootatau Te Wherowhero VII to discuss the government's political attacks on Māori was a vision of what was to come (E-Tangata, 2024). A few weeks later, an estimated 50,000 people attended Waitangi Day commemorations at the Waitangi Treaty Grounds (Piper, 2024). The atmosphere there was electric, taut, and sucked you in like the vortex of Te Korokoro o te Parata. Thousands of people listened to kaumātua and comparatively fresh Māori organisers talk about putting discussions of tino rangatiratanga into concrete steps in our homes, in our hapū, at Parliament and local government, and across Aotearoa. At the same time, it was joyous and loving. The nannies wiping clean mokos' sticky cheeks were talking revolutionary words—mana motuhake *in action*, tino rangatiratanga *in action*. This āhua has characterised every mass activation since—up to and including the Hīkoi mō te Tiriti this November, which gathered up to an estimated 100,000 people, both tangata whenua and tangata Tiriti, outside Parliament in Pōneke (Gunson, 2024). The message throughout the year has been clear: toitū te Tiriti. Honour te Tiriti. Te Tiriti is everlasting and untouchable.

The challenges for social workers, and the whānau who are impacted by our work and the organisations social workers practise in, have felt innumerable this year in Aotearoa. Some of the most critical to social work practice and our broadly accepted professional aspirations of social justice and equity are all tied to the retrenchment of neoliberal austerity economics in pursuit of deregulation and privatisation. In the Aotearoa context, this is built on the foundation of historic and ongoing processes of settler colonialism and racial capitalism (Comyn, 2023). While the attacks on any steps towards power sharing with Māori—for instance, the repeal of Section 7AA of the Oranga Tamariki Act, the destruction of Te Aka Whai Ora (Māori Health Authority), and the Treaty Principles Bill—are certainly an expression of racism, the underlying aim is to re-establish tighter Crown control over the political and economic governance of Aotearoa New Zealand. The whānau, tamariki, communities, disabled people, poor people, public services, and natural environment that get harmed along the way are apparently acceptable collateral damage.

The whirlpool of Te Korokoro o te Parata likely seemed insurmountable, too. Whakaotirangi held on, white-knuckled, and made it to Maketū to plant and nurture her kūmara. In a dialectical relationship, the contemporary attacks on Māori authority have been met with powerful examples of rangatiratanga. An example critically relevant to social work in Aotearoa is the response to the government's proposed repeal of Section 7AA of the Oranga

Tamariki Act—the section that binds the Chief Executive to a *practical commitment* to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. While Section 7AA is in itself not rangatiratanga (Fitzmaurice-Brown, 2024) and is indeed a concession on the part of Māori attempting to reduce the potential harm of state care on tamariki and whānau, it has represented a small step towards sharing power and resources between Māori and the Crown for better outcomes for Māori (Cox, 2024). And, as Keddell (2024) demonstrated, until this year it has been working as intended—as a high-level mechanism to ensure partnerships with hapū and iwi and reduce disparities in care.

Iwi and kaupapa Māori social services around Aotearoa have been pushing for Māori-led and Māori-controlled alternatives to the state care and protection system for decades (Hyslop, 2022), and their complete rejection of this repeal was mokopuna-focused leadership in action. More than 30 hapū, iwi, rūnanga, post-settlement entities, or marae collectives submitted on the repeal of Section 7AA, all of which rejected it (Oranga Tamariki, 2024). Ngāpuhi led their own hīkoi and rallies before their oral submission rejecting the repeal (Perese, 2024). Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services took a central role in advocating for halting the repeal of Section 7AA, coupled with renewed calls for devolution of resources and decision-making power to hapū and iwi (Perese, 2024). A total of 119 organisations submitted on the repeal including social services, community and political groups, professional associations, charities, and more—and every single one of those organisations rejected it. More than 100 individuals who submitted on the repeal identified they were doing so in a professional capacity as a social worker, lawyer, social service or community worker, or in an associated profession—and more than 90% of those individuals were in opposition (Oranga Tamariki, 2024). During oral submissions, I watched as several people who rejected the repeal openly identified themselves as care and protection or youth justice practitioners. This was certainly a demonstration of moral courage and a commitment to the holistic safety and care of mokopuna, whānau, and whakapapa. Rangatiratanga—*in action*. Looking towards 2025, solidifying our obligations as tangata whenua, tangata Tiriti, and social workers in Aotearoa to the continued protection and sustenance of mokopuna will be critical to ensure that, like the uri of Whakaotirangi, we flourish.

In this issue

Most of the articles in this final issue for 2024 were submitted in response to a call for papers with the title of this editorial: "Resistance and rangatiratanga in a time of political change". In the call for papers in this special issue, we invited reflections on the impact of Aotearoa New Zealand's current coalition government and sought ideas for projects of resistance and frameworks that might help counter the renewed neoliberal assault on progressive change in Aotearoa New Zealand that we have described above. We begin the issue with a commentary "The Empire Strikes Back: Māori and the 2023 coalition government" by editorial collective member and Te Komako editor Anaru Eketone (Ngāti Maniapoto, Waikato). Eketone considers the attacks on Māori in the present by reminding us that such responses have always happened when Māori have made gains.

Echoing the themes in this editorial and in Eketone's commentary, in "The possibilities and dissonances of abolitionist social work" Erin Silver explores social work as situated in the justice system with its twin pillars of colonialism and carceralism. Silver employs the three-stage framework of Emancipatory Social Science of Erik Olin Wright (Wright, 2010) to provide a critique of colonial carceralism and colonial carceral social work. Silver considers the potential for transformation offered by abolitionist perspectives in instilling thinking and practice that may strengthen the possibilities of a world beyond colonial carceralism and its role in perpetuating inequity and human suffering.

Wright's work appears again as the central focus of the next article. Social work draws on many different theoretical perspectives, many of which directly address aspects of human oppression, discrimination and marginalisation. Grouped under the umbrella term of *anti-oppressive practice* (Baines et al., 2022), these include anti-discriminatory practice, anti-racist practice, feminist social work, green/ecological and Marxist perspectives. In "Emancipatory social science and anti-oppressive social work: The legacy of Erik Olin Wright", Neil Ballantyne explores the work of the US analytical Marxist sociologist Erik Olin Wright to consider how his concept of emancipatory social science might be applied in the context of anti-oppressive social work (Wright, 2010, 2019). Ballantyne's theoretical article makes the case that Wright's framework offers a valuable complement to existing anti-oppressive social work practice. It is open and flexible, providing space for inclusion of different political traditions and cultural contexts, including Indigenous perspectives. Ballantyne notes that, in these highly challenging times, emancipatory social science provides a common ground on which diverse social groups can connect and work collectively to craft 'real utopias' to offer a vision of a much better world.

The focus of the next article is this very journal: "Not social workers, but social fighters': Navigating the search for macro social work identity in the *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work Journal*" by Olivia LaMontagne, Yvonne Crichton-Hill and Jane Maidment. The authors conducted qualitative interpretive meta-synthesis was conducted on publications of the *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work Journal* since it began in 1965 and up to 2020. The research reported in this article sought to assess both historical and current discourses about macro social work in Aotearoa New Zealand. The themes illuminated key tensions between micro and macro social work in the nature of professional identity visible in the journal over this period. The authors make a case for an integrated professional identity by increasing the discussion of macro social work in the professional discourse in the journal and beyond.

In "Galvanising criticality: Analysing trans health policy in a hostile political context", Rebecca Howe explores how pathologisation has impacted on access to gender-affirming care. She notes that a revision of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health's (WPATH) Standards of Care includes an explicit orientation towards human rights. Howe's article employs the What's the Problem Represented to be? approach to policy analysis (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016) to undertake a comparison of approaches to depathologisation in the WPATH Standards for Care, version 7 (SOC-7), and an alternative best practices guide created by the Spanish Network for Depathologization of Trans Identities. Howe's analysis argues that, while a rights approach seeks to replace harmful practices, it does little to address underlying colonial mechanisms.

In "'Suicide prevention … I hate that word.' Women's experiences of carceral logics whilst supporting loved ones with suicidal distress in rural Australia", Charlotte Finlayson explores how neoliberal states discipline subjects through state power by making individuals both the object of, and subject of, disciplinary gaze. Caring work in mental health systems is often devalued, carried out mainly by women who occupy marginal positions. Finlayson conducted semi-structured interviews with carers and workers and volunteers in welfare and community sectors from a rural part of Eastern Australia. She found that women's experiences of the mental health system are characterised by carceral logics which limit their choices and impact on relationships with their loved ones. However, this study found examples of resistance in forms of relational feminist justice. Finlayson concludes with several recommendations for social workers: first, it is important for social workers in the mental health system to develop critical self-awareness

of their engagement in responsibilising discourses; secondly, social workers can explore alternatives underpinned by feminist knowledges beyond carceralism. Finally, social workers should engage in actions which oppose involuntary treatment and carceral logics in the mental health system, policy and legislation.

Liz Beddoe, Sonya Hunt, Barbara Staniforth, and Kendra Cox (Te Ure o Uenukukōpako, Te Whakatōhea, Ngāi Tūhoe, Ngāti Porou) report on social work student wellbeing in a further article from the University of Auckland Student hardship study (see Bartley et al., 2024 and Beddoe et al., 2023). In "The impact of studying social work on student social wellbeing in Aotearoa New Zealand: Struggling with incongruent demands" Beddoe et al. report on one element in the findings of the mixed methods study incorporating a survey ($N = 353$) and 31 semi-structured interviews conducted in Aotearoa New Zealand in 2019. Participants in the study were then current students or new graduates in their first 2 years of practice. The findings reported in this article are drawn from analysis of the responses to the relevant open-ended questions in the survey and from qualitative interviews. Social work students and recent graduates reported various challenges of their engagement in a social work qualifying programme and the impacts in their personal and family relationships, social and cultural participation, social activism and physical and emotional wellbeing. The lack of congruence between social work's stated values of social participation and the student experience reported here suggests a dissonance that limits student inclusion and success. The authors recommend the development of meaningful opportunities for stakeholders—students, educators, the professional associations and the regulator—to discuss the implications of this research and consider how the disjuncture it reports can be addressed. It is notable that the impacts are likely to impact on student recruitment and retention (see Kim, 2024 and O'Donoghue in this issue).

In a Viewpoint article, "Sustaining the social work workforce in Aotearoa: A whole system challenge", Kieran O'Donoghue responds to a commentary on the same topic published in our last issue (Kim, 2024). O'Donoghue argues that, while Kim (2024) provided an overview of professionalisation and social work education developments, his focus was on the undergraduate degree and its sustainability rather than considering the wider social work workforce system. O'Donoghue draws extensively on Social Workers Registration Board workforce related reports to show that there is extensive information about the extent of the problem, but the solutions need to come from the wider profession, considering the multiple structural factors that impact on recruitment and retention to the profession.

Lilley and Reid's article "Exploring palliative care debates: Equitable access and the role of social workers" reflects on current palliative care debates relating to equitable access for older adults in Aotearoa New Zealand. The authors present the findings of a literature review that has its roots in postgraduate study. The article highlights many of the tensions faced by palliative care social workers as they work alongside their clients. To do this it reflects on the changing nature of the field and presents considerations for those engaging with a predominantly older client group. The author also engages with literature to explore Māori and social work perspectives. The exploration of literature enables the reader to think about how social workers can use their role to advocate for their clients within this setting, but also acknowledges the complexity of the field including the implications and obligations for social workers to ensure equity of access to quality end-of-life care for older adults.

In "Exploring courage and compassion in social work", Nicki Weld and Liz Beddoe consider how courage and compassion can support social workers' safety and wellbeing, helping to mitigate the emotional impacts

of the work. The article draws on Weld's doctoral research which noted these steps in her participants facing adversity: recognising adversity; making a conscious decision to act; connecting to motivational sources; managing emotions; and acting. The authors argue that courage and compassion can help social workers commit to upholding the worth of people in distress and strive to see them as they were before the hurt and harm.

Finally in this issue, Eileen Joy reviews *Practising Feminism for Social Welfare: A Global Perspective* by Ruth Phillips and Blake Gardiner reviews *Becoming Pākehā* by John Bluck.

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