



Media Release | For immediate release – 15 May 2025

Community-based Social Sector welcomes \$190m Social Investment Fund – calls for a fair and sustainable approach

Te Pai Ora SSPA and the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) welcome today's announcement from Social Investment Minister, Hon Nicola Willis of a new \$190 million Social Investment Fund.

"This announcement is an exciting opportunity to take a longer term, sustainable focus on the work we do every day in communities" says Belinda Himiona, Chief Executive of Te Pai Ora SSPA. "Every day through the mahi of providers, our sector turns around the lives of children and whānau. That's what this funding needs to support."

Te Pai Ora SSPA and NZCCSS represent community-based social service providers across Aotearoa who are focused on improving outcomes for tamariki, rangatahi, and whānau.

"Social service providers are critical to a thriving Aotearoa. This Social Investment Fund is an opportunity to better recognise the work of our incredible social sector providers. We want to ensure that next steps for delivering this fund are done with community as partners and reflect the aspirations people have for themselves," says Alicia Sudden, Chief Executive Officer, NZCCSS.

"We're keen that the community sector is involved as the Social Investment Agency develops its approach," says Belinda. "What we want to see is a social investment model that truly understands and responds to community need – and that is fair, robust, and workable."

The organisations say lessons must be learned from past processes. Both NZCCSS and Te Pai Ora SSPA believe commissioning needs to be done in good faith, guided by evidence, and with children and whānau firmly at the centre.

The potential of the new fund centres on the detail: "The sector has the capability and experience to deliver early and effective support – but that work takes time, care, and trust. Our people work intensively with complex cases. That must be properly recognised in how the fund is rolled out."

"We are pleased to see a stronger focus through this fund on preventative approaches, particularly in light of New Zealand's poor child wellbeing ranking in the recently released UNICEF Innocenti report, and NZCCSS hopes to see further positive budget announcements that will benefit the wellbeing and needs of children and whānau in the Budget next week," says Alicia.

As the Government looks ahead to Budget 2025, both Te Pai Ora SSPA and NZCCSS say the sector will be looking for long-term commitment to early support, prevention, and sustainable funding.

“This is a sector that shows up every day for communities. We’re ready to work together on a social investment approach that’s grounded in evidence, guided by community voice, and driven by a genuine commitment to improving lives,” says Belinda.

ENDS

Belinda Himiona and Alicia Sudden are available for interviews upon request:

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Editor’s Notes:

ABOUT SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS TE PAI ORA O AOTEAROA | www.sspa.org.nz

Te Pai Ora SSPA is a membership-based organisation, representing more than 250 non-profit, community-based social service organisations from around Aotearoa New Zealand. Our member organisations are diverse, including small rural organisations, Iwi and kaupapa Māori service providers, Pacific providers, and large national children’s organisations. Our member organisations provide life-changing and often life-saving services and support in their communities.

Te Pai Ora SSPA’s full members are funded by government to deliver social services in our communities every day, with a predominant focus on children, rangatahi, families and whānau. Our affiliate members are organisations that deliver social services for these people, and organisations and individuals working in areas aligned to the interests of children, young people, whānau or communities.

Te Pai Ora SSPA’s vision is that Aotearoa New Zealand’s community-based social services are sustainable, making a positive impact every day in our communities and hāpori, supporting children, young people and whānau to thrive now and into the future. Te Pai Ora SSPA works to strengthen Aotearoa New Zealand’s social sector through advocacy and engagement, learning and development, relationships and sector leadership.

ABOUT NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL SERVICES | www.nzccss.org.nz

NZCCSS has six foundation members; the Anglican Care Network, Baptist Churches of New Zealand, Catholic Social Services, Presbyterian Support and the Methodist and Salvation Army Churches. Through this membership, NZCCSS represents over 100 organisations providing a range of social support services across Aotearoa. Our mission is to call forth a just and compassionate society for Aotearoa, through our commitment to our faith and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Further details on NZCCSS can be found on our website - www.nzccss.org.nz.