

## Policy / Legislation Changes:

A summary of the Social Security (Youth Support and Work Focus) Amendment Bill can be found here: <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/bill/government/2012/0010/latest/DLM4360201.html>

Part of the Policy for youth is that a non-government organisation will oversee benefit payments, with essential costs such as rent and utility bills paid directly to the provider. Special cards will be issued for living costs, which won't be able to be spent on liquor or tobacco.

Our Youth analysis: Whilst the Government is trying to look like it is helping people, we mustn't forget they are trying to save money and that is their motivation! I genuinely hope these new changes really do help some people, but for many others who are I independent and capable young people, it is quite an insult to suddenly take control away from them. It is also offensive to assume someone is less capable because they are a (single) parent! This system of partially administering benefits for youth is done for 16-17 yr olds and 18 yr olds on the DPB. Why is it only 18 yr olds on the DPB? If the Government is concerned about teen parents, then more education in school, free options of contraception and allowing parents of teenagers to stay home with them (rather than forcing them into full time work) would be more appropriate and helpful.

More on changes in the next newsletter!

## BAS is grateful for the assistance of

- The Canterbury Community Trust
- The Lottery Grants Board
- Ministry of Social Development for Earthquake Response Fund
- Community Organised Grants Scheme
- United Way
- Dominican Sisters
- Christchurch City Council
- Lion Foundation
- Pub Charity
- Donations from Community
- Our Volunteers and Staff



**BAS is still open and we are keen to hear from you. Like many other groups in Christchurch, we do not currently have an office, but are still working hard for the good of our clients. ▼ Kia Kaha ▼**

## To Contact BAS:

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9.30 am—3.30 pm Monday to Thursday  
9.30 am—2.00 pm Friday

Beneficiary Advisory Service

**Newsletter: March 2012**

**Kia Ora Tatou!**

This is the first newsletter for 2012. It is now over a year since the February Earthquake made our office uninhabitable. We have all been working from home since then. We wish to assure you that we are still operating and helping people! We can be contacted by phone on (03) 379 8787 or by email: [bas.cprc@gmail.com](mailto:bas.cprc@gmail.com)

We are looking for new premises and will let you know when we have a residential address. Our postal address is on this newsletter and we can still be found on Facebook under “Beneficiary Advisory Service (BAS)” (There is a Page to “like” and a Group you can join).

We are very pleased to announce that we now have our own website! You can check us out at [bas.org.nz](http://bas.org.nz)

We have a lot of issues for this newsletter so we will have to continue them in the next one!

## Surviving on a Budget:

### This Quarter our Title is Resources

Living on a budget is indisputably hard. One of the ways we can make it a bit easier is to look at the resources you have—what you need and what you can give. For example, if you have a fruit tree, you may be able to bottle fruit to last more than just the ripe season or to share some with friends / the community who may then be able to share something with you. Perhaps you have a lot of a certain type of vegetable in your garden. Look around for opportunities for [swapping](#) resources. Kindy, School, Churches, Mother's groups or other Community organisations can be great places to do this. If there is not already something set up, why not start one yourself?

For some swapping childcare works well—if you have a friend with children (especially if they are of similar ages) you can look after their children one day and they may take yours on another. It makes such a difference if you can have a day to yourself sometimes. If it is regular, you may be lucky enough to find some part-time work. If you can find a parent's group that suits you, you will have friends to talk to, which also helps no end.

So think about what you need and what you can give—time is an important resource too—to contribute and participate in your community.

## Declaring Income to Work & Income

Recently we have had a few clients who are being investigated for not declaring information or for giving incorrect information. What we think is going on is that many clients do not realise exactly what it is they have to declare.

The first thing that is worth clearing up is what sort of income has to be declared. When you declare your income to Work and Income, this must be the [Gross](#) income. This is the amount of money before the tax etc is taken off. What you receive from your employer is [Nett](#) income. These days, most people are not given payslips so believe that what is received is the income.

It is important when you get work and are on a benefit, that you ask your employer to give you a record of your income stating [Gross](#) income, tax, student loan, child support, kiwisaver and your [nett](#) income. You will then know what your [gross](#) income is and can declare it to WINZ. If your income varies every week, ensure you know your [gross](#) income each time.

Some people have been told that they can earn a certain amount before it affects their benefit. This is the main benefit but income will affect your [Special Benefit](#) or [TAS](#) straight away. To be on the safe side, it is best to declare any income to WINZ as soon as you earn.

## Case Studies

Aaron (\*) was on [Sickness Benefit](#) and applied for [IB](#) but was declined. He came to us so WINZ relooked at it and changed their mind that he does qualify. He received \$1400 backpayment for a few months.

Maria (\*) was declined [Child Disability Allowance](#), but WINZ changed their mind as soon as we reviewed it. It is interesting to note that us getting involved in a client's case is sometimes enough. So if you have a problem or a decision you disagree with, feel free to give us a call and we will be happy to help.

\* names changed to protect the privacy of the clients

Please let us know if you are personally having problems with WINZ' new policies as we need stories for the media and newsletters – it is important we know what is actually happening with beneficiaries so we can help individuals and try to make things better for everyone. If you are happy to talk to the media about your personal experiences, please let us know.