

Good on ya Lizz!

What does it take to be voted the person who made a difference in Otara? According to Lizz Jenkins, Child Support Community Liaison Officer in Manukau, it's just a matter of doing the job well.

Every month the South Auckland community of Otara recognise work done in their community by an individual or group. They recently voted Lizz as the person most worthy of this award.

"Otara is really diverse, multicultural and very welcoming. Residents are passionate about Otara and have got a real sense of community. They are also appreciative of the assistance that we provide," says Lizz.

Lizz attends monthly meetings in Otara to talk about issues affecting the community.

"Otara is one of the largest communities that I work with, they are not afraid to ask for help and they often proactively solve issues and problems.

"I really enjoy my job and it's nice to see people recognising the benefits we can provide to local groups and individuals," she says.

Lizz Jenkins, Child Support Community Liaison Officer, Manukau

Child Support Community Liaison Officers, what do they do?

- » talk with and educate communities about child support and how it works
- » help those who pay child support to comply with their responsibilities



* what's up?

- Queenstown** come and hear our Community Liaison Officer speak at the Queenstown Lakes District inter-agency meetings
- * 28 November 2 – 4 pm at the Queenstown Police Station
 - * 29 November 2 – 3 pm at Muzza's Cafe and Bar, 59 Helwick St
- visit the Family Assistance roadshow
- * 28 November 11 – 1 pm at the Salvation Army Building, Camp St
- Cromwell** visit the Family Assistance roadshow
- * 27 November 11:30 – 1 pm at the Resource Centre, 5 Murray Tce
- Wanaka** visit the Family Assistance roadshow
- * 29 November 1 – 2 pm at Muzza's Cafe and Bar, 59 Helwick St

Inland Revenue Child Support

We assess and collect child support from parents not living with their children

Common questions over Christmas



Q Will Child Support be open over the holidays?

A Inland Revenue Child Support offices will be closed from 4:30 pm on Monday 24 December 2001 and reopen on Thursday 3 January 2002.

Q Will child support payments be late because of the holidays?

A No. Custodians should still receive their payments by the 7th of the month.

Q Can custodians receive their child support payments before Christmas?

A No. Child Support cannot pay custodians their child support in advance.

Q If children are staying with the paying parent over the holidays, do parents still have to pay child support for this period?

A Paying parents would still be required to pay because the custodian is still considered to be the principal caregiver. If the change in care is a permanent arrangement, parents should advise us.

Q Will child support be deducted from a parent's holiday pay?

A Yes. If a paying parent is paid in advance, their employer should also deduct child support in advance. If an employer does not make the deduction, it is up to the paying parent to ensure their payments are made.

Q Do parents still have to pay child support if their child has a job over the holidays?

A Every family's circumstances are different, parents are therefore encouraged to ring us to discuss their situation, as the support parents pay or receive may be affected.

Q Can a paying parent defer their child support payments until after the holidays?

A No. The paying parent is still required to pay their child support on time and in full.

Parents have a new option

Normally we can't discuss a parent's child support affairs with a third party. Parents can, however, elect a person or organisation to act on their behalf in their dealings with Child Support. For example, a parent could elect the Citizens Advice Bureau, who could then deal with the parent's child support affairs.

If a parent wishes to elect someone to act on their behalf they must provide written authorisation that states the authority only applies to their child support affairs. Or they could fill in our form, *Elect someone to make child support enquiries on your behalf (IR 146)*, available from our website or by calling INFOexpress on 0800 257 773.

Once a parent elects someone to act on their behalf, the person or organisation cannot lodge or sign forms on behalf of the parent, only make enquiries on behalf of the parent.

questions? call us on our freephone or check our website

0800 221 221 221

www.ird.govt.nz/childsupport

New legislation from 1 April 2002

Two changes to the Child Support Act 1991 that will take effect from 1 April 2002 were enacted by Parliament recently.

The first change is to increase the minimum weekly payment under a formula assessment from \$10 to \$12.75 per week. The payments will be adjusted by the rate of inflation for every subsequent year.

The second change is to increase the maximum income amount from twice the average New Zealand wage to 2.5 times. Parents will receive a letter in November outlining these changes.

Assessments for parents

Annual assessments and notices of entitlement will be sent out during February and March 2002. Paying parents will be sent a notice of assessment which shows how much child support they are required to pay from 1 April 2002. Custodians will receive a notice of entitlement showing how much support they will receive.

We encourage parents to check their notices to ensure their details are correct. If parents' circumstances have changed, or their details are wrong, they should contact us.

frequently asked questions

What is child support?

Child support is money paid by parents not living with their children to help financially support those children.

I can't make my child support payments, what can I do?

One of the most important things for community organisations to do is to encourage paying parents to contact us if they are having trouble making payments, before they incur debt, so we can negotiate repayment terms to suit them. As long as parents repay their debt within an agreed timeframe, no incremental penalties will be charged from the date an arrangement was made. Overdue payments attract a 10% penalty after the first month, and a further 2% penalty is added for each extra month the amount remains unpaid.

Will a change in my circumstances affect my child support?

Yes. Parents need to let Child Support know of any changes to their personal circumstances as it can affect the amount of child support they pay or receive. Custodians should let us know if their address changes, they go on or off a benefit, a child becomes financially independent, a child starts living with them or leaves their care or if they enter into a shared custody arrangement. Paying parents should advise us if their address changes, a child starts living with them or leaves their care, they enter into a shared custody arrangement or they start living with the person they are paying child support to. If any of these circumstances apply, the parent should call us on freephone 0800 221 221.

★ key dates

January	notices of assessment (paying parents)	February	notices of assessment (paying parents)	employer deduction notices (paying parents)	notices of entitlement (custodians)	March	April	May	account summary (all parents)	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
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Our community liaison officers

If you would like to speak to one of our Community Liaison Officers, or if you would like them to come and talk with you or your group, call freephone 0800 221 221 and ask for:

officers

Lynley Ballantine
Peter Read
Pip McArtney
Carol Wilson
Hannah McLean
Paul Smith
Jo Damen
Wendy King
Diana van den Akker
Denise Skinner
Margaret Trevarthen
Mary Clark
Lizz Jenkins
Anne White
Jocelyn Pindred

...who cover the following locations

Invercargill and surrounding areas
Dunedin and surrounding areas
Christchurch and surrounding areas
Nelson and surrounding areas
Wellington and surrounding areas
Palmerston North and surrounding areas
Napier and surrounding areas
New Plymouth and surrounding areas
Rotorua and surrounding areas
Tauranga and surrounding areas
Hamilton and surrounding areas
Gisborne and surrounding areas
Manukau and surrounding areas
Takapuna and surrounding areas
Whangarei and surrounding areas

feedback

Thanks for the feedback you provided, as you can see we've implemented your suggestions into the new format. Keep the feedback coming, we can't improve our communication to you if we don't know what you need.

And now you have a choice! Feedback has told us that many of you would prefer to receive the newsletter electronically. To sign up for this free service, please visit our website and click on Community Groups and Organisations to provide us with your email address.

If we don't hear from you, we will continue to send your organisation copies of the newsletter.



David Udy
National Manager Child Support

glossary ❖

» paying parent

The parent who isn't living with their children but who is helping to financially support those children by paying child support.

» custodian

The caregiver who is looking after the children, usually the other parent but it can also be an aunt, uncle, grandparent, legal guardian, or any other person who cares for the children most of the time.

» notice of assessment

These are sent to paying parents showing how much child support they are liable to pay.

» notice of entitlement

These are sent to custodians showing how much child support they will receive.

» qualifying child

For a child to qualify to receive child support they must be under 19, a New Zealand resident or citizen, financially dependent and not married or living in a de facto relationship.

contact us!

freephone

0800 221 221

email

child.support@ird.govt.nz

website

www.ird.govt.nz/childsupport/