

OUR POSITION

Grandparents play a vital role in many families, supporting family resilience in numerous ways. As New Zealand families evolve, so do the roles of grandparents. Kiwi grandparents, especially those raising grandchildren, need support to help them fulfil their changing roles within families.

OUR GOAL

Grandparents' needs will be considered in the development of family policies, workplace policies, and the provision of services.

WHAT THE COMMISSION HAS DONE SO FAR

2006: *Grandfathers: Their changing family roles and contributions* Blue Skies Fund report.

2008: *Elder Abuse and Neglect* Research Report No 1/08

2008: *Grandparents in Rural Families* Blue Skies Fund report.

2007: *Older Adults' Experience of Family Life*. Blue Skies Fund report.

2009: *Age of First Becoming A Grandparent* (Telephone Survey Omnibus Results)

2009: *Changing Roles of Grandparents* (Telephone Survey Report)

2010: *Changing Roles: The pleasures and pressures of being a grandparent in New Zealand* research report.

2011: Māori grandparents resource (forthcoming).

COMMISSION'S VIEW

- > Grandparents today are as varied and diverse as the families they belong to and their roles are changing; they are not all 'older' people (they can range from their 30s onwards).
- > Grandparents may be part of varied and complex family structures which are likely to increase over time due to separation and repartnering across generations, cross-cultural relationships, and global mobility.
- > Most grandparents are faring well and really enjoy being grandparents but a small number are struggling
- > In particular grandparents raising grandchildren can find it difficult to obtain clear information about their

legal rights and eligibility for financial support, flexible work arrangements and family leave.

- > Some grandparents' finances are being stretched due to contributions that they make to grandchildren and their families.
- > Māori grandparents frequently have whānau/hapu/iwi responsibilities in addition to their grandparenting roles and may need more support to fulfil these roles. They can face challenges maintaining traditional grandparent-mokopuna relationships, particularly if isolated from whānau support networks.
- > Migrant grandparents can be vulnerable to social, cultural and geographic isolation.

REFERENCES**Press release and related documents:**

<http://www.familiescommission.org.nz/news-events/grandparents/kiwi-grandparents-face-new-challenges-and-changing-roles>

Grandparents raising grandchildren:

www.raisinggrandchildren.org.nz

