

## Have Your Say About Aged Care

Some of the lowest paid workers in New Zealand, mostly female carers in the aged care sector, are turning up at public meetings to have their say in a New Zealand Human Rights Commission Inquiry.

The Inquiry into the Equal Employment Opportunities Issues in the Aged Care Sector is currently underway and in the next six months regional visits to Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch, Dunedin and Southland will be undertaken so interested members of the public can have their say.

The Commission is holding public and face-to-face meetings, visiting facilities, speaking with providers and DHBs and talking with as many people as possible who are interested in the sector-whether it be residential or home-based care.

"We want to hear the views of nurses and carers, GPs, those receiving care as well as the views of DHBs, employers, managers and anyone who has an interest in improving conditions in the sector," says Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner, Dr Judy McGregor.

"We've had some very lively public meetings with carers telling members of the public just how important their job is and how they feel about their pay and working conditions."

Greypower is involved in helping the Commission hold public meetings to talk with people receiving care and their families and numbers of residential facility owners and health care assistants have also attended these public meetings.

Good practice and new innovative models of aged care are being looked at and will be reported in the inquiry, including responses to Christchurch's earthquakes.

The Commission is also asking for written submissions until December 31, 2011, and has an electronic submission process at

<http://www.neon.org.nz/agedcareinquiry/> or emails can be sent to [emilias@hrc.co.nz](mailto:emilias@hrc.co.nz)

The Inquiry's Terms of Reference include:

- The regulatory frameworks in the aged care sector and their impact on progressing equal employment opportunities, including decent work
- Workforce supply issues, including recruitment and retention, and their impact on equal employment opportunities
- Training and qualifications in the aged care sector and the related equal employment opportunities issues
- Conditions of work, including staff to resident ratios and managerial competence, and the implications for equal employment opportunities
- Wages of nurses, health care assistants and others in the aged care sectors, and equal pay, pay parity and pay equity issues
- The role of men and women in the aged care sector and the equal employment opportunities issues for both men and women

- Equal employment opportunities and migrant workers in the aged care sector
- Other equal employment opportunities issues that are raised during the course of the inquiry by submitters and participants, employers, employees and those receiving care.

People can speak to the Inquiry confidentially if they wish and the information is collected and written up so that people can talk safely without being individually identified.