

## **NCHENZ activities 2005-2006**

The Council had a busy and productive year, completing many of the projects started the year before.

Prior to the election we canvassed all political parties about their policies toward home education. Neither of the major parties National or Labour took the time to respond to us nor did United Future or the Greens. We received reasonably positive responses from ACT, the Maori Party and New Zealand First although all politicians seem fixated with "accountability." Jim Anderton's Progressive Party did not seem at all supportive. The only party with a hands off approach was Libertarians and they are not represented in parliament. (from Julie's report).

We try to meet with the ERO annually, and had an enjoyable meeting in August with Rob and other ERO personnel, whom we found helpful and receptive.

We had spent considerable time on our submission to the MoE about the exemption application form, and received a copy of the approved form from them at the end of 2005. There are a couple of things in the new form we would still challenge, in particular the clause about seeking information from the principal of the students previous school, but the MoE has made quite a few changes in response to the submissions received, and I would like to acknowledge their efforts which have resulted in an improved, although longer, form. Identifying common concerns among the different submissions, and accommodating them within their own policies can't have been a straightforward task

In November 2005 we forwarded the Cato Institute paper - *Homeschooling from Extreme to Mainstream* to all MOE offices which process exemption applications.

Early in the new year our co-ordinator, Julie Ward, met with the manager of the NZQA, Andrew Kear, and clarified the position of home-educators accessing NZQA.

She also met with Debbie Francis, CEO of The Correspondence School and asked that home educators be identified as stakeholders in any changes made to the enrolment policy of the school, and presented our view that as NZ citizens we should be entitled to somewhat better rates than non-residents, possibly getting one or two subjects at the same cheaper rate as students who want to take subjects that are unavailable at their school.

Julie also wrote to the new Minister of Education, Mr Maharey, welcoming him and outlining the issues the council would like to make progress on while he is in office, ie, more support for families with special needs children, access to LEOTC, preventing the exclusion of home-ed children from sports teams, cheaper access to TCS, and better access to NCEA qualifications.

We also received information about homeschooled students access to free dental care, and asTTle testing, (see govt liaison, MoE page).

The Secondary Futures Trust who wanted to interview home educated students for their views on the future shape of secondary education, approached us, and we facilitated a meeting with a group in Auckland, and a new website called *Kiwi Families* asked us for information to put on their site.

Still in progress is the updating of our website, which has been slower than we would have liked, a project to have a poster ready for home education week in October, and a documentary on home-ed has been made by Nicola Jones, the daughter of one of our members, which we hope to be able to use for promotional purposes.

Marianne