

Our history

Budgeting advice given free by a mainly volunteer workforce is unique to New Zealand. It owes its origins to the close relationship that developed in the late 1950s between Gray Vuglar, the then District Agent for the Department of Social Security and Dr Manahi Nitama Paewai, a local general practitioner in Kaikohe.

The number of budgeting services grew under support given first by the Department of Maori Affairs throughout the 1960s and later by the Department of Social Welfare. The New Zealand Federation of Family Budgeting Services Inc (NZFFBS) was registered as an incorporated society on 21 December 1973. Records indicate that this was a little pre-emptive as it is generally now accepted that the first national meeting of interested people took place in 1974.

The ongoing support that budgeting attracted from Government was formalised in March 1978 with the formation by the Minister of Social Welfare of the Home Budgeting Advisory Committee. This committee travelled the country to establish how the various ad hoc groups were operating and what their needs were. The committee then employed consultants (later to become Budget Liaison Workers) as staff of the Department of Social Welfare whose duties included training, coordination and promotional activities.

At the same time, the NZFFBS had volunteers appointed as District Representatives, whose roles were to represent the needs of geographically clustered budgeting organisations and to participate in national decision-making. The NZFFBS assumed responsibility from the Home Budgeting Advisory Committee for the allocation of the Government grant to new budgeting services. In March 1988 the committee was disbanded and the coordination functions were assumed by the NZFFBS and the positions of Budget Liaison Workers were disestablished.

The NZFFBS opened its first National Office in 1991 in Auckland and relocated this to Wellington in 1999. A network of Maori-based budgeting organisations was formed and this developed gradually, until in 1997 that network registered as a separate incorporated society, Te Roopu Awhi Whanau ki te Penapena Putea Inc. Attempts to develop partnership continued through the appointment of representatives of each body to serve on the executive of the other and through a joint working party but this work was halted in May 1999 when Te Roopu Awhi Whanau ki te Penapena Putea requested Te Waa (time-out). The NZFFBS has since pursued its own Te Tiriti partnership path.

In November 2002 the NZFFBS Rules were changed to allow for up to two Maori Representatives to sit on the National Board. More recently the National Board has been well assisted with its own Kaumatua advising on Maori protocol. The NZFFBS governance body was restructured in 1993 with the election of seven Regional Representatives to form the governance committee, first known as the National Committee, now known as the National Board. That committee produced its first management plan in 1994. This concentrated on improving the standards of all aspects of budgeting and in ensuing years the NZFFBS:

- Introduced a standardised national training programme for budget advisers in 1994 (this was externally reviewed in 1998).
- Commenced a national certification of competency of budget advisers in 1994.
- Released the first chapters of a comprehensive policy and procedures manual released in 1996.
- Formalised (by negotiating individual contracts) the network of accredited Tutors in 1999.

- Implemented greater structure to the annual checks for compliance to the affiliation criteria in 2000.
- Started a series of ongoing training modules in 2000.
- Began performance appraisals for all NZFFBS representatives in 2003.
- Introduced a distance learning version of the standardised training programme conducted by correspondence in 2002 and allowed recognition of external training to increase the flexibility of NZFFBS training needs in 2004.
- Developed a fully structured community education course entitled Budgeting for Change in 2004.
- Updated the annual checks process, which became the annual Service Capability Review, a comprehensive service audit.
- Established Field Officer positions to provide our membership with hands-on support to help improve their services and ultimately their communities.
- The NZQA recognised the Budget Adviser Introductory Course, allowing participants to gain unit standards towards the National Certificate in Social Services.
- These measures have the approval of the majority of the membership and the quality assurance measures have proved a catalyst to attract professionally resourced, more holistic, and higher quality organisations into budgeting. Not all of the services, tutors and individual advisers were able to make these necessary adjustments and regrettably chose to leave the NZFFBS. Some of these services continue to work outside of the NZFFBS and may not offer the same level of training, quality assurance, and escalating complaints procedure that NZFFBS services guarantee.