



PIE Quarterly Newsletter June 2026

PIE supports the progressive evolution of New Zealand's major social insurance programmes to meet the needs of a changing society: pensions for those over 65 (NZ Superannuation (NZS) and KiwiSaver), Working for Families (WFF) for children, welfare benefits for working age, and accident compensation (ACC) for the injured.

To achieve intergenerational equity, strong social programmes are essential, but they become threatened in bad times, the very time they are most needed.

PIE contends the fortunes of the old and the young are inextricably linked and that intergenerational equity requires a fair sharing of resources between and among the generations now, and in the future.

With that lens, we have asked our PIE research associates to pick up on an issue for a commentary series that concerns them post budget and going into 2026 election campaigns.

Post budget and pre-election commentaries from PIE Research Associates.

To set the scene, in [NZS and Intergenerational Equity](#), *Susan St John* argues there are strongly held views that NZ Superannuation (NZS) is either 'affordable' or 'unaffordable'. This contribution to the post budget, pre-election debate suggests that while the affordability lens can be useful, it fails to identify the actual problem: the immediate intergenerational inequity and poverty crisis. *Dr Brian Easton*, economist, in [Necessary NZS changes](#), discusses how there is no perfect way to deal with the rising cost of NZS, but there is a simple way which would address the worst of the inequities and threats it generates.

In [NZS is no sacred cow](#), *Alec Waugh*, retirement policy advocate, suggests NZS should not be viewed as a 'Sacred Cow'. It is deserving of scrutiny, but we must not lose sight of the critical public policy role it plays in providing the safety platform for all New Zealanders from age 65. *Michael Littlewood*, former RPRC co-director, in [Is Roger Douglas right about our Super Disaster?](#), exposes the fallacies in the proposals from Sir Roger Douglas, formerly Minister of Finance (1984-1988), author of the 1975 compulsory superannuation savings scheme and a long-time critic of its abolition.

In [The missing link – a labour market strategy](#), former Government Statistician *Len Cook* draws attention to the critical demographic aged 15-39 on whom an ageing population will be dependent in a rapidly changing AI technological world. Māori and Pacific are continuing to increase as a share of this group and are an important potential resource that we neglect at our peril. Emeritus Professor *Tim Hazledine* in [Full](#)

[employment should be the goal](#), argues that the blight of unemployment should be the focus of monetary policy, not inflation.

Dr Jeremy Beckham, in [The gaping hole in families' back pockets](#), analyses the chief tool for redistribution for children: 'Working for Families', and draws attention to the little appreciated, but harsh, disincentives for paid work that are now baked in the structure. Susan St John expands by discussing in [Is public debt or rampant child poverty the real crisis?](#) how the child poverty focus, along with working for Families reform has been lost in the 2026 budget.

Professor Ngaire Kears and Dr Claire Dale in [Election priorities for a healthier future](#) draw attention to some of the broader issues confronting our ageing population especially in the provision of health and long-term care. Noting the critical housing subsidy issues, Claire Dale further expands in [Changes needed to housing subsidies](#). New Zealand has a very low level of public housing within the OECD, yet the 2026 budget announced significantly increased income-related rents and fails to reform the poorly designed private sector accommodation supplement. The changes will adversely impact more than 462,000 households, including 70,000 seniors, all of whom are already suffering from the weak economy.

PIE in the Media

June 2026

- Susan St John interviewed by Heather du Plessi-Allan on Newstalk ZB ['Complex': UOA economic expert offers solution to retirement debate](#) 25th June 2026
- Susan St John interviewed by Miriam Bell [Means testing NZ Super: Why it's more complicated than you think](#), 12th June 2026 the Sunday Star Times and the Post
- St John, S (2026a) interviewed for Australian CPA journal INTHEBLACK [Why Australia's HECS-HELP system is under pressure](#). June 2026
- Susan St John with Bernard Hickey [A mini-Hoon with Susan St John on Budget 2026 and child poverty](#), 3rd June 2026
- [The Budget 2026 Child Poverty Report with the University of Auckland's Honorary Associate Professor Susan St John: 3rd June, 2026 | 95bFM](#) 3rd June
- Susan St John talks to Dale Husband [Child Poverty Warning: NZ 'Off Track' as Hardship Bites Deeper - Waatea News: Māori Radio Station](#) 3rd June
- St John, S (2026): [What is the real crisis: public debt, or private destitution along with rampant child poverty?](#) Substack 2nd June

May 2026

- Susan St John panellist, CTU budget analysis 28th May 2026. CTU letter "[This Budget conjures the mirage of an operating surplus by reducing the incomes of those with the least and cutting the public services we all rely on.](#)"
- Susan St John interviewed by Dale Husband [Equity Concerns For Māori And Pacific Communities](#) Waitea News, 19th May 2026
- M.Claire Dale quoted by Mary Holm in NZ Herald, 23 May 2026, on numbers of people aged 65+ not claiming NZS: "very, very few".
- St John, S (2026) [We are not broke: it is time to talk about the bogeyman of government's debt](#) Substack, 15th May 2026
- Susan St John interviewed by Chelsea Daniels (Herald): [Should New Zealand raise the age of NZ Super? – The Front Page](#) 13th May
- Susan St John comment, [How do we stop the economy being so shit?](#) Hayden Donnell Spinoff 11th May

April 2026

- St John. S (2026) The Budget is coming up all too quickly, [Substack Home - Susan's Substack, 18th April](#)
- St John. S (2026) [We are adrift without a vision except one of fiscal rectitude – The Daily Blog](#)

PIE Submissions

[Submission 2026-3 Unpaid Carers new draft Action Plan, by Claire Dale](#)

[Submission 2026-4 Data and Statistics \(Census\) Amendment Bill, by Len Cook](#)

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