

# Minister defends counselling

Opposition to the idea of increased counselling services for domestic purposes beneficiaries has confounded the Minister of Social Welfare (Mr Walker).

"I am at a loss to understand why the New Zealand Association of Social Workers is opposed to increased counselling services being made available to domestic purpose beneficiaries," said Mr Walker.

He was referring to a statement by the association in "The Press," of July 12 that counselling such beneficiaries infringed their rights.

"Surely any move to help domestic purposes beneficiaries save their marriages should be encouraged for the sake of themselves and their children," he said.

"As I have said earlier, there are now about 50,000 children being supported by solo parents on domestic purposes benefits.

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"The domestic purposes benefit review committee which included an executive member of the association said that the ready availability of the domestic purposes benefit so soon after the marriage break-down could be a decisive factor in respect of a relationship that might otherwise be capable of some repair."

It appeared that the association had now chosen to disagree with the committee, which was its prerogative. Mr Walker said the recent alarming increase in the number of domestic purposes beneficiaries supported the view of the committee.