

Earth Day

By *Beate Matthies*, Chair, Auckland District Council of Social Services

April is a month of change – here, in the Southern Hemisphere, the weather is changing from the summer warmth to fresh mornings during autumn. This change of seasons has been accompanied with record floods in several areas of New Zealand and reminds us of the importance of looking after our environment.

47 years ago, when many people didn't worry too much about the environment, *Gaylord Nelson*, then a US Senator, initiated the **Earth Day** for which he chose 22 April. A day to demonstrate support for environmental protection. It started as a national day and today has reached 193 countries that are actively involved. The annual date has been used to create awareness for the environment and for our own behaviour which is interconnected with the environment. It was disappointing to hear from some scientists at this year's *Community Development Conference* (15-17 February 2017 in Auckland), that in the United States funds for research on Climate Change had been cut or stopped, as the current administration doesn't seem to believe that Climate Change is real.



In the last two issues of our ADCOSS magazine we had articles about increasing concerns of the storage of Big Data. However, it is not just the collection of data which is of concern, but also the fact that there is often no transparency about why some data is published and other information kept hidden or secret. *Deborah Netburn* wrote recently for *The Los Angeles Times* (9 February, 2017) that "Researchers have spoken out against new restrictions on how

government scientists at the EPA and other federal agencies communicate with the public. Others have been collecting and storing the government's copious climate data for fear that it may soon become unavailable to the public or deleted entirely. Many have lamented that nearly a month into his presidency, Trump has still not selected a science advisor."¹

This year, on **Earth Day**, several scientists in the USA are going to rally officially against turning a blind eye to Climate Change. The freedom to stand up for one's beliefs and demonstrate peacefully is part of our democratic society.

The season of change also brought some changes for ADCOSS. Our Chairman, *David Haigh* has stepped down. We thank him for his valuable contribution to ADCOSS and hope he will continue to contribute.

The Executive Committee has fixed the date for our **AGM**. Please note that we will meet from 12:00 noon to 2:00pm on Thursday, 29 June in the Western Springs Garden Community Hall. We welcome new members. We also welcome members who would volunteer to serve on the Executive Committee. Nomination Forms will be sent to all members.

Robert Louis Stevenson once said:

“Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap,
but by the seeds that you plant.”

During the last months we have planted many seeds and we are looking forward to a year with interesting forums and workshops and engagement from members and non-members.

1. www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-scientists-politics-trump-20170209-story.html