

CHILD  
POVERTY  
ACTION  
GROUP

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# Annual Report

March 2018



# Our vision is to have an Aotearoa where all children flourish, free from poverty

***He kai tahu me kikini, he kai tahu me tīhore, mā te tamaiti te iho***

"Pinch off a bit, peel off a bit, the inside is for the child" (said of the potted bird)

## Our mission

CPAG strives to achieve the elimination of child poverty in Aotearoa New Zealand. We work to provide evidence-based research about the causes and effects of poverty on children and their families, and to inform the public, policy makers, media and politicians of the changes to policy needed to reduce child poverty.

Our activities and decisions honour Te Tiriti O Waitangi, and other cultural perspectives.

## Management Committee 2017-18

Elected: Innes Asher, Helen Bull, Gerry Cotterell, Alan Johnson, Therese Luxton, Mike O'Brien, Jessica Suri, Jennifer Braithwaite, George Makapatama, Frank Hogan, Janfrie Wakim.

Co-opted: Susan St John, John O'Neill, Nikki Turner, M.Claire Dale, Frances Everard.

## Staff

Celia Hayes - Executive Officer

Jeni Cartwright - Communications Advisor

Claire Dale - Researcher

Yun So - Researcher

Georgia Harris - Office Assistant

### **All supported by volunteer leaders in regional networks:**

Sonja Lamers (Nelson-Tasman), Emily Keddell (Dunedin), Sara Epperson (Christchurch), Ngaire Rae (Whangarei), Sherry Carne (Whangarei), Lisa Woods (Wellington).

# Our last 12 months of activity have produced positive results

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# Co-Convenor's report

*E ngā iwi, e ngā reo, e ngā karangatanga maha ngā hau e whā, tēnei te mihi atu ki a koutou katoa.*

*All peoples, all voices, all the alliances from the four winds, greetings to you all.*

At this time last year CPAG was in campaign mode as the general election approached. CPAG supporters were reminded that "more and more effort is needed to influence the public, politicians and commentators and abolish child poverty in Aotearoa". Auspiciously, the Labour-led Government elected in November 2017 made children a policy priority. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern took on the role of Minister for Child Poverty Reduction and New Zealand First's Tracey Martin, Minister of Children. These historic appointments signalled a serious intention to reverse the failed attempts over the past decade to reduce levels of child poverty.

The focus of CPAG activities in 2017-18 was the election; preparing for it, responding to enquiries and requests during the election, then providing information and policy recommendations to the incoming Government afterwards. CPAG compiled recommendations to all parties on the areas of health, education, family incomes, social investment and housing for duration of the election campaign. It was extraordinary to witness the two major parties competing to demonstrate how many children would be lifted out of poverty by their party's policies.

Following the election the compilation of CPAG recommendations became a Briefing Paper to the Incoming Government entitled *A New Zealand where all children can flourish*.

CPAG has been heartened by the distinct change in direction and gratefully acknowledges the immense value of working in partnership of various groups seeking change too, for example Action for Children and Youth in Aotearoa (ACYA), New Zealand Psychological Society, Ngā Tangata Microfinance, Equality Network, and ActionStation.

These groups, with CPAG and the broader Child Wellbeing sector have consistently called for a cross-party accord to end child poverty. This particular initiative was intended to encourage all political parties and MPs to be unanimous in the goal to make significant changes for needy children and their families/whanau. Such a call is consistent with the Children's Commissioner Andrew Becroft's unwavering support for substantial and meaningful policy developments and brought his considerable mana to influence policy-makers.

Pre-election the Labour Party announced its Families Package, and after the election promised to implement it from 1 July this year. Working for Families (WFF) had been undermined and eroded by National-led government budget cuts and policy changes so this increase is well overdue. While the package provides a much needed boost to low-income families this boost really only replaces cuts made by National since 2010. CPAG remains concerned that there is no commitment by the Government to further increases in WFF budgets such as through a provision for annual indexation.

Changes to the Vulnerable Children's Act (2014) and the introduction of Child Poverty Reduction Bill were two other important steps undertaken by the Labour-led Government. The CPR Bill provides for a focus on child poverty reduction and will facilitate political accountability against published targets. While the proposed comprehensive multi-tiered poverty lines will provide a broader picture of the depth of child poverty, CPAG has argued for a range of qualitative data including health outcomes to supplement these measures, to give a more rounded picture of levels of child and family poverty. CPAG has also submitted to the Select Committee that the 40% (After Housing Costs) measure should be a primary measure; currently there are 140,000 children at this lowest end of the income poverty spectrum. These children and their parents are not helped nearly enough by the Families Package and CPAG continues to advocate for them.

It is one thing to set targets, but quite another to achieve them. A systemic and non-discriminative approach to improving living standards for both beneficiary families and low-income working families is fundamental. For CPAG this means that policies should reach across sectors to include education and housing as well as income support. CPAG and its partners are determined to see progress and argue for an overhaul of the work-based bias of present income support and welfare policies that sees the worst-off families continue to miss out on a substantial part of WFF.

The diverse activities of CPAG over the past year are summarised below and have been achieved by operating on a very modest budget which continues to be backed by volunteer energy and expertise. We have also made

renewed efforts to incorporate Māori values into our mahi. Management Committee is deeply grateful to everyone who has generously devoted their time, knowledge and energy to CPAG over the past year both here in Auckland and in many other parts of country.

It is our paid staff who keep the organisation humming and Management Committee appreciates the devotion to duty and commitment of Executive Officer Celia Hayes and Communications Advisor, Jeni Cartwright with help in the office, Georgia Harris. Yun So and Prathihba Sural assisted with research projects and Dr Claire Dale provided organisational support for the Summit.

CPAG has a long-standing cooperative relationship established with the Auckland City Mission and have enjoyed the close connection with the City Missioner Chris Farrelly who has facilitated CPAG events at the ACM and has enabled us to continue occupy office space.

Terry Levenberg and Apropos continue to support CPAG providing their expertise, sustaining our impressive website and branding without charge.

CPAG is also indebted to J R McKenzie Trust for its substantial financial support over many years. Due to the Trust's other priorities this support has been reduced by 50% although will continue for a further three years. This reduction means that we are seeking expertise in fundraising to make up the shortfall. We are extremely grateful to all members and donors who boosted numbers and funds this past year. Particular mention must be made of Joe Carson who continues to support CPAG very generously and a first time older donor who in 2017 provided our most substantial donation ever, out of his deep concern for children affected by poverty. We are delighted to have had the support of an enthusiastic and engaged base of fund-raisers, volunteers and can report increased numbers of regular donors over the past year.

As Convenors we offer personal thanks to the elected Management Committee, co-opted members and regional networkers for contributing their impressive collective talent and expertise, and their sustained commitment to the goals of CPAG and to children.

The Management Committee offers its sincere and profound thanks to every person, who has contributed to, supported and encouraged the work of CPAG in 2017-2018. In the 1980s child poverty was half what it is now. Given the current depth of poverty, homelessness and inequality the task ahead to abolish child poverty remains daunting but has become more achievable on account of growing public and political support. CPAG and our allies are more determined than ever to make Aotearoa New Zealand a place where all children can flourish.

***Ko te ahurei o te tamaiti arahia ō tātou māhi  
Let the uniqueness of the child guide our work.***



**Janfrie Wakim**  
CPAG Co-Convenor



**Alan Johnson**  
CPAG Co-Convenor



# Highlights of 2017-18



Post Budget Breakfast 2017 - Auckland May 18, 2017



Post Budget Breakfast Wellington, May 2017



Absolutely positively no to child poverty campaigning workshop Wellington, August 2017



Beyond Social Investment Summit Auckland, September 2017



Further fraying of the welfare safety net Report launch, Auckland - December 2017

## The year at a glance

Research & reports	12
Submissions	5
Press Releases	62
Speaker presentations	25
Articles & Blogs	39
Events	13
Campaigns	1
Workshops	2
Partnership events	6
Number of website visits total	212,555
Number of unique visitors total	142,001
Facebook supporters	13,270
Twitter followers	3416

## Accomplishments

An important aspect of the work that is done by CPAG and our associates is the gathering and publishing of researched evidence to demonstrate the causes and impacts of child poverty. We develop and update our policy recommendations based on the most recent Government policies, so that we are promoting the best possible changes to reduce the burden of child poverty on families and our society. 2017 was a productive year for this kind of work, with our various election campaign documents, a delve into the history of welfare changes that have impacted on families and children and a range of submissions to Select Committees on new legislation that will impact on children's outcomes, such as the Child Poverty Reduction Bill and Changes to the Vulnerable Children Act 2014. We invited the views of like-minded thinkers, and those with alternative and international perspectives to speak about how to progress policies in New Zealand with regard to supporting families in our Beyond Social Investment Summit in September.

### Some highlights include:

#### **Child poverty and mental health: a literature review (May 2017)**

With the rate of youth suicide in New Zealand now the highest in the OECD, it was clear that more work needed to be done to raise awareness of the critical link between poverty and children's mental health. In collaboration with the New Zealand Psychological Society we published, *Child poverty and mental health: a literature review* in May

of 2017. The report – a significant output for the 2017 year – was the result of a joint effort by Kerry Gibson, Quentin Abraham, Innes Asher, Rose Black, Nikki Turner, Waikaremoana Waitoki, and Natasha McMillan. The review revealed a strong link between poverty and its effects on mental health and wellbeing of children in Aotearoa-New Zealand, with evidence to support the claims that mental health problems throughout the life-span could be reduced through addressing the causes of child poverty and associated factors.

#### **CPAG Summit: Beyond Social Investment (Sept 2017)**

On 8 September, CPAG held its annual Summit examining and critiquing the Government's view of welfare provision, discussing what a welfare system that genuinely put "the well-being of children at the centre" would look like. The full-day event, featuring guest speakers from a wide range of backgrounds, explored what changes to policies and budgets would make the difference required for all children to thrive. The Summit was held in partnership by Child Poverty Action Group, The Retirement Policy and Research Centre (RPRC) and the Centre for Applied Research in Economics (CARE) at the University of Auckland Business School.

#### **Further fraying of the welfare safety net (Dec 2017)**

The combined research efforts of Dr Gerard Cotterell and Associate Professor Susan St John produced a report documenting the continued degradation of the welfare system in Aotearoa-New Zealand, since the 2008 Caritas report *The Unravelling of the Welfare Safety Net*, which found that there had been a continual dismantling of key aspects of the 'safety net', regardless of the political party in power, since the early 1990s. CPAG's report updated the evaluation of policy changes between 2008 and 2017, with a focus on changes to welfare benefits, the Working for Families (WFF) system of tax credits, and social security legislation and regulation. A report launch at the Ellen Melville Centre that was packed to capacity proved the thirst for this kind of evidence and documentation. Guest speakers included Auimatagi Joe Moeono-Kolio from Caritas; Helen Robinson, Auckland City Mission, Vanessa Cole - former co-ordinator, AAAP.

#### **Submitting on the Child Poverty Reduction Bill and changes to the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 (March 2018)**

CPAG submitted on the Child Poverty Reduction Bill in March ahead of the April 4 deadline to allow other network allies to access the submission for their purposes. The submission stated that the Bill would be a first step toward helping to reduce child poverty as it would require this and future governments to commit and be accountable for measuring, setting targets, planning and publicly reporting on child poverty reduction progress. CPAG recommended that a range of qualitative studies should supplement the proposed measures, and that the 40% after housing costs (AHC) relative poverty line should be a primary measure.



# Election 2017 Campaign

A New Zealand where children can flourish (May - November 2017)

CPAG's priority during the lead up to the 2017 election was for political parties to commit to ensuring New Zealand could be a place in which all children can flourish, and we asked all political parties to set a target of reducing the annual number of child hospital admissions for poverty related preventable diseases from 40,000 to 20,000 by 2022. During the course of our campaign we released five documents on key election topics, looking at how evidence-based policy changes can reduce child poverty if implemented after the next election.

We asked that parties specifically address: ensuring all children have access to adequate and age-appropriate healthcare services and education; reducing income poverty and material hardship; providing solutions for affordable and healthy housing. In our five key documents we offered policy solutions for achieving each of those goals.

With the help of our associate and supporter, Terry Levenberg and his design bureau Apropos, we produced

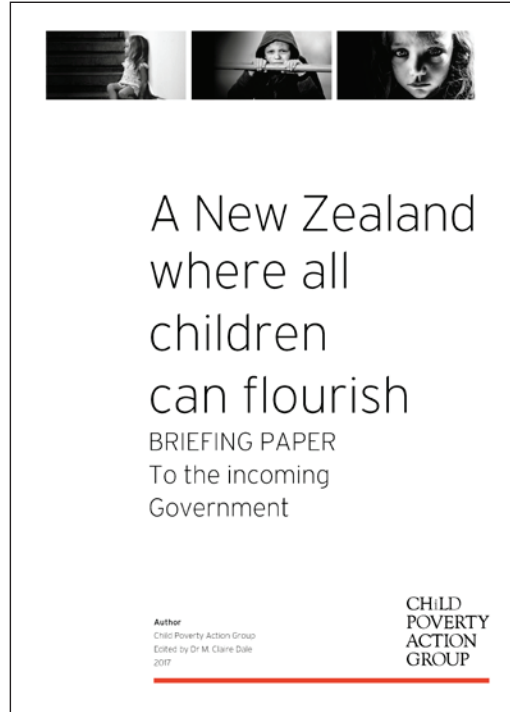
social media graphics that could be downloaded from our website. We also produced policy score cards on incomes and housing, to demonstrate to the public how well each party's policies corresponded with CPAG's asks. The five documents were compiled into one overarching document – *A New Zealand where all children can flourish: Briefing paper to the incoming Government* that was submitted to the new Labour coalition Government in November.



**Is this the New Zealand you want?**  
Building more state houses, instating a rental housing Warrant of Fitness and creating greater rights for tenants are things a New Zealand government should do to help children. #Tick4Kids

**CHILD POVERTY ACTION GROUP**

Authorised by Child Poverty Action Group, 140 Hobson Street, Auckland.



**Party policy score card**

How will each party provide families the certainty of secure safe housing and good health, to reduce the number of poverty-related child hospital admissions? We investigated each party's policies on health and housing and asked them this critical question: **Here is how they answered.**

	Housing	Health
<b>Labour</b>	Build more state homes, with a range of options for different family models, including care leavers.	Fully funded primary healthcare for under 18s.
<b>Green</b>	Stop the sell-off of state homes.	
<b>NZ First</b>	Create more affordable home options for low-income families and first home buyers.	
<b>Māori</b>	Introduce a mandatory Warrant of Fitness on all rental properties to ensure that they are safe to live in and secure.	
<b>TOP</b>	Restore tenure security for renters including the requirement that rent increases are set out in the rental contract.	
<b>ACT</b>	Make all emergency housing grants non-recoupable.	

Labour intends to restore housing affordability through tax reform.  
TOP will gift HNZ housing to not-for-profits.  
Māori supports Healthy Homes (Guarantee 100) (No. 7).  
Authorised by Child Poverty Action Group, 140 Hobson Street, Auckland.

**#FWFF** FIXED WORKING FOR FAMILIES **Party policy score card**

How will each party support and restore Working for Families (WFF) so that all families have the income they need to flourish? We investigated all party's policies on WFF and them this critical question: **Here is how they answered.**

	Working for Families	Wages
<b>Labour</b>	Extend all low-income children equally. Allow all low-income families to receive the \$72.50 to work tax credit, by increasing the paid work offset.	Increase the at-risk of child benefit reduction.
<b>Green</b>	Make the WFF tax credits available for more families and children. Raise the abatement threshold for maximum pay-week.	Increase the at-risk of child benefit reduction.
<b>NZ First</b>	Make every dollar earned count for low-income working parents by reducing the rate of abatement to 26% (down from 33% in 2017), and set to increase again to 25% 1 April 2018 under normal policy.	Increase the at-risk of child benefit reduction.
<b>Māori</b>	Increase the Family Tax Credit (FTC).	Increase the at-risk of child benefit reduction.
<b>TOP</b>	Restore the Parental Tax Credit with all allowed FTC for ALL households for the first year.	Increase the at-risk of child benefit reduction.
<b>ACT</b>	Increase the at-risk of child benefit reduction.	Increase the at-risk of child benefit reduction.

Labour's best child policy goes \$50 for all children for their first year and extended to three years of age for low-income families.  
TOP will pay \$200 per week to all families with young children.  
Green party will extend parental tax credit to all families (irrespective of work hours) and extend to three years of age for low-income families.  
Party will adjust benefits based on average wage inflation (not WFF specifically).  
\*currently \$36000 falling to \$35000 on 1 April 2018 if National re-elected.  
Authorised by Child Poverty Action Group, 140 Hobson Street, Auckland.



## Fundraisers

2017 was a great year of fundraising for CPAG by our generous supporters. Tanisha and Hugh Brocklebank, together with four talented young children, created "Kids Art by Kids" greeting cards. Artwork by the children was reproduced to be sold in packs of greeting cards as a fundraiser to support raising awareness and reduction of child poverty. A group of musically talented children busked to raise money towards ending child poverty at the Grey Lynn Markets in December, and law firm Minter Ellison Rudd Watts chose CPAG to be recipient of a large sum of money raised in the MERW fundraising month, through bake sales, charity auctions and sports classes! At the start of 2018 our newly established CPAG Youth team held a film fundraiser, and a CPAG supporter raised money towards our work with a subsequent community film screening. Ports of Auckland Round the Bays is becoming a yearly event for CPAG and we had more participants than ever this year. Between October 2017 and March 2018, all our supporters who organised and participated in fundraisers for CPAG raised \$23,191.00 towards our ongoing research and work toward ending child poverty in Aotearoa-New Zealand. CPAG is grateful for the efforts of all involved.





## Te Ao Māori at CPAG

### Whakatauki and CPAG's four pou

Child Poverty Action Group has been developing better understanding of Te Ao Māori and incorporating Māori values into our kaupapa, with the purpose of strengthening CPAG commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and to the tamariki of Aotearoa-New Zealand.

We acknowledge with deep gratitude the guidance and support of Dr Hirini Kaa and Michael Tamihere with this mahi.

CPAG as adopted this whakatauki as being expressive of our kaupapa:

“He kai tahu me kikini, he kai tahu me tihore, mā te tamaiti te iho” “Pinch off a bit, peel off a bit, the inside is for the child” (said of the potted bird)

And four pou (underlying values):

- Mana: We acknowledge and uphold the mana of all children.
- Manaakitanga: We believe that our society should show respect, generosity and care for all children as taonga.
- Kotahitanga: We work collectively to uphold the mana of all children and to ensure they flourish.
- Mātauranga: We believe that child-centred knowledge is essential to upholding their mana and enabling them to thrive.



Highlights from CPAG's 2017 Annual General Meeting and Political Forum

## Full list of outputs and events

[Child Poverty and mental health: a literature review](#) (May 2017) and report launch

[CPAG Post-Budget Breakfast Series](#) (May-June 17)

Background paper: [Supporting family incomes in New Zealand and Australia](#) (June 2017)

Wellington - [Absolutely positively no to child poverty workshop](#) (August 2017)

“Be the voice NZ children need” Info night (August 2017)

Dunedin - [Child political forum](#) (August 2017)

Whangarei - [Eliminating Child Poverty in Northland Political Forum](#) (September 2017)

[A New Zealand where children can flourish](#) background paper series (May 2017 - September 2017)

Wellington - [Housing Election Forum](#) (September 2017)

[Submission: Making Tax Simpler](#) - to the IRD (Sept 2017)

[Summit 2017: Beyond Social Investment](#) (September 2017) and published [Proceedings](#) (October 2017)

[End Child Poverty Campaign and Advocacy Workshop](#) (October 2017)

[A New Zealand where children can flourish - Briefing paper to the incoming Government](#) (November 2017)

[Whakapono: End child poverty in Māori whānau](#) - A preliminary report (Dec 2017) Dr M. Claire Dale

[Further fraying of the welfare safety net](#) report and launch event (Dec 2017)

[Progressive universalisation of Working for Families](#) (March 2018) Associate Professor Susan St John

[Submission on the Budget Policy Statement 2018](#) (Jan 2018)

[Joint submission with Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa \(ACYA\) to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the fourth periodic report of New Zealand](#) (February 2018)

[Submission on the Child Poverty Reduction Bill and changes to the Vulnerable Children Act 2014](#) (March 2018)



# Ngā Tangata Microfinance

## Highlights March 2017 - February 2018

Dr M.Claire Dale - Director

This is the eighth year Ngā Tangata Microfinance Limited (NTM) has delivered safe, fair, no-interest loans to low income people, with the principle aim of improving social justice and financial inclusion. NTM works in partnership with financial mentors to deliver the loans alongside financial education. Kiwibank provides the loan capital and mentoring, the J R Mckenzie Trust pays most administration costs, and a team of volunteers provide governance of the organisation and membership of the Loans Committees.

NTM's loans, with the support of 35-40 Budgeting Services, are available throughout Auckland, and in Northland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Gisborne, Hawkes Bay, Manawatu, Taranaki, Levin and Dunedin.

In the past year NTM approved 119 loans (asset-building NILS loans x 26 and high-cost debt relief DRLS loans x 93); with total loans valuing \$252,403 (NILS \$38,499 and DRLS 213,904), a 7% increase over 2017.

In 2017, the Ministry of Social Development introduced a new regime to the budgeting sector focusing on 'building financial capability'. This ended the New Zealand Federation of Family Budgeting Services, one of NTM's original partner organisations, along with Child Poverty Action Group and New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services. NTM has engaged well with the new umbrella organisation, the National Building Financial Capability Charitable Trust (NBFCCT), contributing to huis in 4 locations, discussing microfinance issues affecting the sector, and working together on a project opportunity afforded by the Peter McKenzie Trust.

In early 2018, an event celebrating NTM's 300th loan, the release of the full evaluation report, and the increase in capital from Kiwibank, was attended by around 70 people, including the Minister for Social Development Carmel Sepuloni and staff, 18 Financial Mentors, senior Kiwibank representatives, NTM Trustees Directors staff and volunteers, other partners and stakeholders.

Advocacy and media communications promoting a safe, fair credit environment in the past year have included press releases, video, radio, blogs, newsletters, websites, Facebook, Money Week and community forums. NTM is very pleased to see that the new Minister for Commerce and Consumer Affairs Kris Faafoi has signalled the intention to incorporate a total cost of credit cap or similar in the review of the CCCFA legislation. This change would provide vitally necessary protection for those on low incomes who need to borrow.

### Ngā Tangata Microfinance Limited

Charity Registration CC45547, Company 3035163



Dr M. Claire Dale addresses the audience at NTM's celebration event on February 23, 2018