



New Zealand Council Of
Christian Social Services

**NZCCSS Submission on:
Supplementary Order Papers No.20,21,22.
Child Poverty Reduction Bill: Proposed amendment**

Background

New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services has submitted on the Child Poverty Reduction Bill (CPR). The following is in response to three Supplementary Order papers (20,21,22) prepared by Hon Alfred Ngaro.

Child poverty-related indicators and targets

The setting of Child Poverty Reduction indicators is an important step in the evaluation of public policies on child poverty reduction. However, NZCCSS supports the view that the wellbeing strategy is the best place to develop (sector specific) indicators, which should be aligned with our international agreements (United Nations Convention Charter on the Rights of the Child, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Regarding the setting of specific targets for each of the indicators identified, NZCCSS believes the long-term and intermediate target requirements set in the CPR Bill, alongside reporting obligations offer sufficient to provide necessary accountability to government and to the public.

Target: 100,000 in 3 years

NZCCSS is concerned that setting in legislation a requirement for a child poverty reduction targets, without setting a specific number, could allow for a wavering of commitment to ongoing and substantial child poverty reduction. Any improvement to rates of child poverty requires a sustained and long-term, cross party commitment. However, we accept the argument that this provides flexibility to enable each successive government to set its own target in response to their policy commitments and priorities at the time. We would hope this flexibility would contribute to cross-party support for the Bill.

Principles of the social investment approach

NZCCSS acknowledges the intentions of the social investment approach to improving the lives of vulnerable New Zealanders. This is also the intent of the work undertaken by our member services. However, we believe the use of identifiable data collected by government agencies (via contracts) to predict at-risk children and families and target social services is not effective and likely to do more harm than good.

In contrast, NZCCSS supports:

- the collection of a broad range of evidence to inform policy decisions so service delivery alongside broad consultation with the social service and health sector, and
- the practical application of proportionate universalism to deliver (without criteria) publicly funded services to the general population, alongside highly targeted resources and services based on a range of measures (including income and material hardship).

We believe that addressing structural determinates of poverty (i.e. low income, precariat employment, high cost and poor-quality housing, limited access to health food) will go further to alleviate poverty than a focus on individual behaviour and what is not going well, without understanding the social and cultural context in which people live.

Finally, NZCCSS supports cross-party consensus on the Child Poverty Reduction Bill and encourage National MPs to support the Bill through Parliament so that we can address New Zealander's unacceptable rate of child poverty.

Appendix

New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) works for a just and compassionate society in Aotearoa New Zealand. We see this as a continuation of the mission of Jesus Christ. In seeking to fulfil this mission, we are committed to: (a) giving priority to the poor and vulnerable members of our; society and (b) Te Tiriti O Waitangi.

NZCCSS has six foundation members; the Anglican Care Network, Baptist Churches of New Zealand, Catholic Social Services, Presbyterian Support and the Methodist and Salvation Army Churches.

Nationally the range and scope of our six member networks is extensive and comprises 213 separate provider sites, delivering a range of 37 types of services via 1024 specific programmes, located in 55 towns and cities throughout New Zealand. Further details on NZCCSS can be found on our website www.nzccss.org.nz

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