

CHiLD
POVERTY
ACTION
GROUP

Annual Report

April 2018 - March 2019



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 2018-19

Elected: Innes Asher, Jennifer Braithwaite, Helen Bull, Gerry Cotterell, M.Claire Dale, Frank Hogan, Alan Johnson, Therese Luxton, George Makapatama, Jessica Suri and Michael Quirke.

Co-opted: Talavao Ngata, Peter O'Connor, John O'Neill, Susan St John, Nikki Turner, Janfrie Wakim.

Research Committee 2018-19

Innes Asher, Toni Ashton, Gerry Cotterell, M.Claire Dale, Alan Johnson, Mike O'Brien, Susan St John, Janfrie Wakim.

Staff

Celia Hayes - Executive Officer

Jeni Cartwright - Communications Advisor

Claire Dale - Researcher

Janet McAllister - Researcher

Carmelite Müller - Administration and Communications Assistant

**All supported by regional network volunteers in:
Nelson-Tasman, Dunedin, Christchurch, Whangarei and Wellington**

Our last 12 months of activity has seen exciting developments

Contents

Co-Convenors' report	2
Highlights of the 2018/19 year	4
The year at a glance	5
Accomplishments	5
Working together to create change	6
Welfare fit for Families campaign	7
Te Ao Māori at CPAG	8
Full list of outputs and events	8
Ngā Tangata Microfinance report	9

Co-Convenors' report

*E ngā iwi, e ngā reo, e ngā karangatanga maha o 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.

The child poverty agenda has moved considerably since the election of the Labour-led coalition Government but not nearly enough for many of us involved in CPAG and in anti-poverty activism more generally. We have for the first time a Prime Minister who has wagered some of her political capital on the reduction of child poverty. We have Government talking about human wellbeing rather than just economic growth and business cycles. And we have a media still interested in the wellbeing of all New Zealand children despite the obvious distraction that these political gestures offer for it to move onto the next big topic.

While we have meaningful child poverty reduction targets for the first time, we are still a long way from seeing meaningful budgets to reduce income poverty of those living on welfare benefits.

It is possible that the road block here isn't a lack of understanding or empathy on the part of key cabinet Ministers but rather the disparate political interests of the coalition parties. A large proportion of the New Zealand public still despise the poor and especially those on benefits and their attitudes and values cannot be ignored in an MMP political system which relies on middle ground support to take government. And pervasive racism featured notably when Taika Waititi commented sharply on attitudes to Maori and the resistance to acknowledging the profound intergenerational effects of colonisation. Our challenge in our quest to change public policy – meaningful, substantial, systemic change and especially around income support - is to change hearts and minds.

In considering this challenge we need to consider how far we have already come in shifting the agenda around poverty and equity. As Prime Minister, Helen Clark would not even talk of child poverty but instead insisted on referring to disadvantage or deprivation. John Key embraced the child poverty narrative but then cleverly diminished it by claiming that the numbers of children in poverty were quite small and that their circumstances were exceptional and not due to systemic failures. To now have a Minister for Child Poverty Reduction is remarkable progress and the efforts and successes of those involved in re-shaping the agenda needs to be acknowledged and honoured.

Organisationally CPAG is in fine health. We continue to have a vibrant and engaged Management Committee as well as active and energised branches and effective sub-committees. Our organisational model of distributed leadership based on high levels of trust and scope appears to still be serving us and our cause well. This model continues to work well and the dedication and skills of our staff are gratefully acknowledged: our long-serving and steadfast Executive Officer Celia (Hayes) Thompson, Communications Advisor Jeni Cartwright who energetically pushes CPAG's story in the media and Carmelite Müller who quietly and efficiently assisted them both. As a contracted researcher Janet McAllister provided vital, high quality support.

The CPAG office moved with the Auckland City Mission to its new temporary home in Union Street. CPAG is very fortunate indeed to be located within such a supportive environment and is deeply grateful for this ongoing arrangement that strengthens our mahi and relationship.

Financially CPAG remains sound although our financial future continues to be uncertain. The long-time financial support which we have received from JR McKenzie Trust ended as expected in 2018. We have been fortunate to be chosen by the New Internalist periodical to be a beneficiary on the termination of its operation in New Zealand. And a most generous benefactor, Lloyd Morris, a US-born social justice advocate now retired and living with family in NZ, offered substantial support to both CPAG and ActionStation having observed the valuable effects possible when the two organisations work together. This and other funding too will end over the short to medium term

and we remain mindful that such support has been critical to maintaining our capacity and volume of work over the past decade. While our membership contributions and various fundraising efforts are significant and truly appreciated, they will not be sufficient to sustain our current efforts without significant support from a philanthropic donors.

Over the past ten years our financial survival has depended critically on the efforts and wise counsel of our treasurer Helen Bull. The role has become very demanding and thankfully she has found able and just as willing assistance in Sakthy Wijeyesinghe. We have truly appreciated Helen's wisdom and good humour and have appreciated her dedication to resolving issues imposed on us by new regulations.

Sir Ian Hassall and Mary Mowbray were made CPAG Life Members in 2018 for contributing their expertise and support over many years and it was gratifying to see Ian knighted for his decades of advocacy for children. In the year past the Management Committee has been enhanced by the co-option of some younger, enthusiastic and committed members who are willing to continue to serve. Our gratitude to each and everyone who has contributed to operation of CPAG throughout Aotearoa.

In closing we are reminded of a whakatauki from the well-known Ngāpuhi leader Sir James Henare:

He tāwhiti ke tō koutou haerenga, ki te kore haere tōnu.

He tino nui rawa ō koutou mahi, kia kore mahi tōnu.

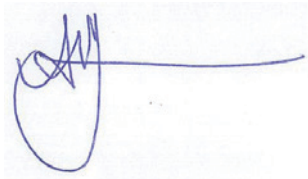
You have come too far, not to go further.

You have done too much, not to do more

As a movement and as a group of friends CPAG has certainly come a long way in its service to New Zealand's poorest children and their families. Let us be encouraged by this progress and renewed in our commitment to eradicate child poverty here in our Aotearoa.

Ko te ahurei o te tamaiti arahia ō tātou māhi

Let the uniqueness of the child guide our work.



Alan Johnson
CPAG Co-Convenor



Janfrie Wakim
CPAG Co-Convenor

Highlights of 2018-19



Guest speaker Len Cook at CPAG AGM Auckland, July 2018



John Hancock from the Human Rights Commission presents on the Child Poverty Reduction Bill/Act Wellington, March 2019



Round the Bays (fundraiser) Auckland, March 2019.



Child Poverty Monitor 2018 launch event with Eat My Lunch. Chaired by CPAG's Frank Hogan. Auckland, December 2018.

Summit: Rethinking the welfare system for the 21st century. Wellington, September 2018.



Sam Orchard (We Are Beneficiaries)



Professor Tony Dowell, University of Otago, and Marama Davidson (Co-Leader, Green Party)

The year at a glance

Research & reports	7
Submissions	10
Press Releases	53
Speaker presentations	22
Articles & Blogs	27
Events	11
Campaigns	1
Workshops	1
Partnership events	1
Number of website visits total	127,783
Number of unique visitors total	72,662
Facebook supporters	13,763
Twitter followers	3,586

Accomplishments

An important aspect of the work of 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 the best possible changes are promoted to reduce the burden of child poverty on families and our society. 2018 was a productive year for this kind of work; collaborative projects, submissions, a Welfare fit for Families campaign, a closer look at the health implications of child poverty in terms of oral health, and analysing deprivation at a local level based on a wide range of indicators with the Measuring Deprivation in New Zealand regions series. We invited the views of like-minded thinkers, and those with alternative and international perspectives to speak about how to progress policies in Aotearoa that support families at our *Rethinking Welfare fit for the 21st Century Summit*.

Some highlights include:

Submission to the Tax Working Group

CPAG considers that New Zealand's tax system is no longer fit for purpose as it does not fulfil the 1980s promise of broad base/low rate and does not serve the needs of families well. A child-centred re-envisioning of tax policy is required urgently. Despite tax-based initiatives over the

years such as Working for Families (WFF) that have helped offset the tax burden for low-income families, families have been increasingly affected negatively by the interactions of tax with welfare provisions. CPAG's submission to the Government's Tax Working Group on April 27 2018 viewed the current system of taxation through a child-focused lens, and offered evidence-informed recommendations for policy reform intended to promote a system of fairer taxation and wealth distribution in Aotearoa-New Zealand, which enabled all children to thrive.

Too soon for the tooth fairy: The implications of child poverty for oral health (April 2018)

Every year, New Zealand hospitals see over 40,000 admissions for poverty-related and potentially preventable health issues in children. Chronic poor physical health in children can lead to problems lasting into adulthood, and poor dental health is no exception to the rule. CPAG released a new report on May 7, "Too soon for the tooth fairy: the implications of child poverty for oral health", which summarised current knowledge about the prevalence of poor oral health among children in Aotearoa-New Zealand, and offered policy recommendations for addressing the significant issues raised. The report was co-authored by oral health researcher Dr Prathibha Sural and public health specialist Dr Rob Beaglehole, and was prepared to stimulate action on this major, public health issue.

CPAG Summit: Rethinking the Welfare System for the 21st Century (Sept 2018)

On 12 September, CPAG held its annual Summit in Wellington, the first time the event has been held in the capital. The day-long event featured guest speakers from all walks of life, including experts across a range of disciplines and those with a lived experience of surviving on welfare in New Zealand. They examined the urgent need to influence the welfare reform agenda - a key focus for the current Government, with a Welfare Expert Advisory Group dedicated to identifying areas for transformation. The Summit explored the failings of the welfare system, and what policies could improve it and meet the current needs of families and children. Holding the event in Wellington was a great success. The venue, generously provided by the University of Otago who partnered with CPAG to hold the Summit, was packed to capacity, and the feedback CPAG received was very positive, with many considering that the event had a valuable point of difference with a balance of lived experiences and policy discussion.

Submissions

CPAG has made submissions on a vast range of legislative changes (including new legislation), Government consultations, and United Nations reporting in 2018-19. We are grateful to all who have contributed to these submissions; our CPAG members, as well as our associates and partners, ensuring every opportunity we have to offer commentary on eliminating child poverty is fully explored and supported.

Working together to create change

Child Poverty Action Group staff and voluntary members have worked diligently to provide a unified voice on children's income needs, welfare reform and children's rights. Through multiple media channels and projects, we have worked to amplify the messages so that they are reflected in public and political discourse as well as legislation.

Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa (ACYA)

ACYA is a coalition of non-governmental organisations (including CPAG) as well as families and individuals. The umbrella organisation has the crucial role of promoting the rights and wellbeing of our children and youth through advocacy and education using the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) and other international human rights instruments. CPAG has worked with ACYA and the Child Wellbeing Network on a range of different projects, and notably contributing to a Children's Sector Joint Submission on the Child Poverty Reduction Bill, facilitated by ACYA. We worked with ACYA on a joint submission to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: fourth periodic report of Aotearoa New Zealand (with support from Unicef New Zealand), and submitted a collaborative Children's Rights Report to the United Nations Human Rights Council ahead of the 3rd Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Aotearoa New Zealand's Human Rights Performance - prepared by ACYA, CPAG, Save the Children NZ, and IHC in consultation with a wide range of civil society organisations and individuals.

ActionStation

CPAG's relationship with ActionStation, an organisation dedicated to creating a better Aotearoa through people-powered change, has flourished over the past few years. CPAG is working closely with the organisation both to amplify CPAG's welfare recommendations and to grow CPAG's supporter database. In 2018 we secured funding from a generous benefactor, Lloyd Morris, to support this alliance. Among our achievements working together in

2018 are a crowd-sourced report "Welfare for Wellbeing" and submission to the Government-appointed Welfare Expert Advisory Group, as well as a petition calling on the Government to "Put children and whānau wellbeing at the heart of welfare", which is currently still open. We have produced joint press releases and have created a valuable working relationship which will develop and prosper in 2019 and beyond.

We are Beneficiaries

CPAG is excited to have produced the Welfare fit for Families video series with the highly talented Sam Orchard, founder of the We Are Beneficiaries campaign. Sam, a multi-skilled artist and writer, worked with us to provide contacts through his successful social media campaign, recorded interviews, and created the animated videos with project management from CPAG staff. While Sam provided his services as a contractor for the campaign, the collaboration was a unique opportunity to connect CPAG and We Are Beneficiaries in our shared kaupapa, and to continue supporting the voices of people who experienced first hand the problems inherent in Work and Income culture and income policy. Sam said that when he first launched We Are Beneficiaries, the responses from those who came forward to share their stories were overwhelmingly from sole parents. It was an absolute pleasure working with Sam, and we had a partnership launch of the videos at the Pocket Bar in Grey Lynn on November 19, 2018.

Auckland City Mission

Every year we are so grateful to the Auckland City Mission for sharing their office space. A special concession was made to accommodate CPAG in their new temporary premises located at 23 Union Street until September 2020 when the new Homeground facility on Hobson Street is due to open. Sharing a diverse new space has created opportunities for CPAG staff to connect and work alongside Auckland City Mission staff, adding value to CPAG's work and cementing our relationship. We are enjoying many new benefits of being a part of the Mission whānau.



welfare
fit for families

Welfare fit for Families campaign

(From September 2018)

CPAG launched a campaign, "Welfare fit for Families", asking for Government to reform the welfare system so that it is better equipped to provide for the unique needs of all families and individuals when they may need social assistance, so they can continue to thrive. The campaign includes personal stories, videos, exemplary cartoon narratives, and was supported by CPAG's evidence-informed policy recommendations, summarised in a background paper entitled "What will it take to have welfare that is fit for families in the 21st century?" Featured as part of the campaign was our collaborative work with We Are Beneficiaries and ActionStation. A launch event, attended by members of CPAG, ActionStation and We Are Beneficiaries was held on November 19 in Auckland. For more information and to view the video series visit:

<https://www.cpag.org.nz/campaigns/the-latest-welfare-fit-for-families-campaign/>

welfare fit for families

What it will take to have a welfare system fit for families in the 21st century

Child Poverty Action Group

Introduction

No-one is immune from life's challenges, and in the 21st century families face many uncertainties and hazards, including rising costs of living that outstrip benefits and wages, and the precarity of paid work. Policy settings of successive governments, over the last 30 years, have ensured those challenges have become greater for New Zealand families. Shamefully, instead of ensuring we all have enough to live on no matter what our circumstances, New Zealand's system of welfare is now part of the problem, providing too little, to too few. Many of us experience barriers when we seek help, including unfair treatment by those whose job it is to support us. Families need better help than this.

CPAG welcomes 2018 developments such as the Families Package, the Child Poverty Reduction Bill and the Government's acknowledgement – in the form of the Welfare Expert Advisory Group – that a concentrated effort is required to reverse generations of poverty entrenchment. We are pleased that the Government's vision is for a welfare system that ensures people have an adequate income and standard of living, are treated with and can live in dignity and are able to participate meaningfully in their communities" (WEAG Terms of Reference para 2). The WEAG – and the nation with it – has a great opportunity to ensure this vision is realised.

Informed by more than 25 years of observation and research on the welfare system and welfare changes, this paper is designed to assist the deliberations of the WEAG. CPAG outlines recommendations of the minimum welfare policy changes required for families to have an adequate income, standard of living, dignity and meaningful social participation.

Reform should be guided by principles of compassion and caring, and the real needs of families, acknowledging that parenting itself is significant work without stressful over-emphasis on past employment requirements, and punitive, coercive methods. It is encouraging to see that the terms of reference of WEAG makes this goal clear.

This Government acknowledges that an improved social welfare system is also an important lever to achieve one of its main priorities of improving the wellbeing of children, especially those who are economically disadvantaged, and to reduce the rates of children experiencing poverty. The emphasis of our social welfare system is on delivering compassionate, timely and appropriate support for those in need.

(WEAG's 2nd paragraph 4)

CPAG's policy recommendations specific to benefits, tax credits, benefit sanctions and relationships could be easily and cost-effectively implemented. For more information on CPAG's recommendations please refer to the "Further reading" material listed at the end of this document.

Inadequacy of welfare benefits, tax credits and other supplementary payments

As a first and immediate response to the need for improved incomes for low-income families, to improve children's chances of living, and to increase their capacity for participation in society, CPAG recommends that the Government:

CHILD POVERTY ACTION GROUP

Welfare Recommendations 2018

> Campaign graphics by Sam Orchard of We Are Beneficiaries

IMAGINE OPENNESS



Video series by CPAG and Sam Orchard of We Are Beneficiaries



Te Ao Māori at CPAG

Whakatauki and CPAG's four pou

Child Poverty Action Group has been developing a 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 and pernicious effects of colonisation on tangata whenua. We acknowledge gratefully 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.
- Maturanga: We believe that child-centred knowledge is essential to upholding their mana and enabling them to thrive.

Full list of outputs and events

Submission: [To the Tax Working Group "Taking a child-focused lens to tax"](#) (April 2018)

Background paper: [Will children get the help they need?](#) (May 2018)

Report: [Too soon for the tooth fairy: The implications of child poverty for oral health](#) (April 2019)

Event: [Understanding multiple deprivation](#) (Nelson-Tasman, April 2018)

Events: [Post Budget Event series](#) (May-June 2018 Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Whangarei, Nelson)

Submission: [To the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction](#) (June 2018)

Submission: [Submission on The Treasury's Living Standards Dashboard Proposal](#) (July 2018)

Event: [CPAG 2018 AGM and Guest Speaker Len Cook](#) (July 2018)

Recommendation document: [What it will take to have a welfare system fit for families in the 21st century](#) (September 2018)

Event: Summit 2018: [Rethinking the Welfare system for the 21st century](#) (Wellington, September 2018)

Background paper: [Strategic Responses to the review of the Residential Tenancies Act](#) (September 2018)

Submission: [Submission on the Electricity Price Review](#) (October 2018)

Submission: [On the Reform of the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 \(RTA\)](#) (October 2018)

Report: [Proceedings Summit 2018: Rethinking the Welfare System for the 21st Century](#) (November 2018)

Event: [Launch of Welfare fit for Families campaign and We Are Beneficiaries/CPAG videos](#) (November 2018)

Event: CPAG Dunedin viewing event of Welfare fit for Families videos (December 2018)

Report: [Youth service and money management in New Zealand: Preliminary research findings](#) (December 2018)

Submission: [To the DPMC on the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy](#) (December 2018)

Submission: [Budget Policy Statement 2019](#) (Jan 2019)

Background paper: [Strategic Responses to the draft Early Learning Strategic Plan](#) (Feb 2019)

Submission: [On the Early Learning Strategic Plan](#) (March 2019)

Event: [Guest Seminar: The Child Poverty Reduction Act and its ramifications](#) (Wellington) (March 2019)

Event: [Launch of the Deprivation in New Zealand regions series](#) (Nelson-Tasman, March 2019)

Fundraiser: Round the Bays (March 2019)

Report: [Deprivation in Nelson Marlborough Region](#) (March 2019)

Report: [Deprivation in Otago region](#) (March 2019)

Report: [Deprivation in Canterbury region](#) (March 2019)

Report: [Deprivation in Northland region](#) (March 2019)

Note: Links active in online version of 2018 Annual Report

Ngā Tangata Microfinance

Highlights March 2018 - February 2019

Dr M.Claire Dale - Director

Ngā Tangata Microfinance Limited

Charity Registration CC45547, Company 3035163

This is the ninth 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 ensure financial education can be delivered alongside the loans, supporting enduring improved financial capability and control.

Kiwibank provides the loan capital and mentoring, the J R McKenzie Trust pays most of the costs of the small team of Executive Officer, Loan Co-ordinator and Loan Officer. 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, Northland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Gisborne, Hawkes Bay, Manawatu, Taranaki, Levin and Dunedin. A new transitional housing support commenced with funding from MSD

In the past year NTM approved 130 loans of up to \$3,000 for asset-building, family wellbeing, or for relief from high interest debt. Since NTM began, we have provided 450 no interest, no fee loans, totalling over \$950,000 This lending has been enabled by nearly \$300,000 of capital from Kiwibank, illustrating the leveraging power of revolving capital. We know these loans have helped to keep food on the table and stress out the door for many families.

Until the Ministry of Social Development introduced a new regime in 2017 to the budgeting sector focusing on 'building financial capability' the New Zealand Federation of Family Budgeting Services (NZFFBS), and New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services were NTM's partner organisations, along with Child Poverty Action Group. The new umbrella organisation replacing NZFFBS, FinCap, has engaged strongly with NTM, working together to improve the debt and credit environment for low income consumers.

NTM is hopeful that the Minister for Commerce and Consumer Affairs, Kris Faafoi, will introduce adequate measures in the review of the CCCFA legislation to provide vitally necessary protection for those on low incomes who need to borrow.

A continuing high level of advocacy and media communications occurred in the past year, with the increased public interest in the review of the CCCFA, high cost debt as a cause of poverty and safe, fair lending as a solution. NTM wrote or was directly mentioned in over 30 communication pieces, ranging from press releases, video, radio, television, blogs, newsletters, websites, talks, submissions, media shoots and Money Week. Kiwibank sponsored a Newsroom video series on the exploitative nature of predatory lending and mobile trucks featuring NTM's Chair.

Our thanks to CPAG for support in promoting our issues and advocacy in the media.

CHiLD
POVERTY
ACTION
GROUP

Child Poverty Action Group Inc.
PO Box 5611
Wellesley St
Auckland 1141
New Zealand