

CPAG heads back to Court

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Assoc. Professor Susan St John CPAG's economics spokesperson says "CPAG's case was first heard in the Human Rights Review Tribunal in 2008. We are seeking a declaration from the Court of Appeal that the In Work Tax Credit discriminates against the poorest children on grounds of their parents' employment status"

For the caregiver to be paid the In Work Tax Credit to help with the costs of children and alleviate child poverty, a sole parent must be in paid work at least 20 hours a week and a two parent family at least 30 hours to qualify. Moreover the family must not be receiving any benefit or part benefit.

The point of the case is to reassert the fundamental New Zealand ethos of equality of treatment. The needs of children don't change when a parent's circumstances change. "Until we give all low income children the same rights to state assistance we will make little progress in tackling the worst of child poverty in New Zealand" says St John, noting that "Maori and Pasifika children are affected disproportionately".

"The In Work Tax Credit is worth at least \$60 a week to a poor family and would go a long way to help feed the family and pay for the basics that children need to be healthy. If it is supposed to be a work incentive, it is very poorly designed and there are lots of other more effective ways to make work pay that don't penalise 230,000 of New Zealand's poorest children"

The case will be heard in Wellington next week in the Court of Appeal on Tues May 28th and Wed May 29th.