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12 April 2010

**Post Budget Breakfast- Friday May 21st
7.30 am Please save this date & time!**

This year's Budget is looming as one of great concern to all who are interested in the welfare of our children. Pre-budget commentary and announcements from the Government are pushing us to a status of "alarm". The impact of the fiscal policies of the 1990s is being still felt keenly today and this Government appears to not only be willing to ignore this impact, but also determined to drive the wedge of inequality deeper into our society. The response to the present recession is primarily aimed at cost-cutting, which increases the exposure of the vulnerable, especially children. The proposed tax changes will do nothing to improve the position of at risk families in New Zealand. Of particular concern is the proposal to raise GST which will directly hit the pockets of the poorest families.

CPAG's annual Post-Budget Breakfast will this year feature two of CPAG's own Executive. **Susan St John**, Associate Professor of Economics at University of Auckland dissects the budget. "Is this 1991 all over again? Were the welfare reforms just to soften us up? Where are the children in this budget?"

Alan Johnson, Economist and Salvation Army social policy analyst will reframe poverty through the lens of the "deserving and the undeserving". Alan will examine our treatment of the children of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, and compare our treatment of the young and the elderly.

Friday 21 May-put it in your diary now!

This is CPAG's stellar event on our annual calendar and is considered one of the most stimulating and discerning discussions around the Budget. Further information on the Post-Budget Breakfast will be sent to you soon but you can **register your interest now** by emailing us at admin@cpag.org.nz

Welfare Reform

The recently announced changes to welfare and their impact on children have caused alarm to all who share our vision of an equitable society for all New Zealanders. You can read our media release on this here: [Bennett dreams up nightmare](#). We also have two very good commentaries on these proposed changes on our website. **Anne Else** connects two recent policy proposals in her incisive article [Mining the land and undermining the children](#) and **Susan St John** analyses the claimed savings of the reforms and shows them to be inaccurate in the article [Welfare reforms - savings? I don't think so....](#).

International Debates: Inequality:

Left Behind- a monograph published by CPAG in 2008, emphasised the growing inequalities in New Zealand society and the resultant damage to children and other vulnerable members of society. Unfortunately, New Zealand is now one of the most unequal nations in the OECD and we are deeply concerned that present policy considerations will entrench this inequality.

The NZ Institute recently published a "report card" of New Zealand's social, economic and environmental wellbeing. The Institute is aiming to "measure New Zealand's performance so it can be improved" You can join the discussion on this project by going to: [NZahead](#) We urge you to write to your MP's asking that the upcoming Budget reflect the need to reverse this trend.

Debate on this topic is extensive at the international level. We draw your attention to a major new report in the UK- [Anatomy of Inequality](#)

Child Support Paper:

CPAG is pleased to publish this backgrounder on child support. It is a policy issue that is well-overdue for attention. Inappropriate Child Support policy is part of a wider picture that keeps one in five New Zealand children below the poverty line. The full report has been prepared by Oscar Casswell-Laird who is the first recipient of the CPAG Summer Scholarship and can be accessed here: [Child Support](#). The scholarship will be offered each year to a suitably qualified student to research a topic relevant to our current activities.

Submissions:

The CPAG submission on income splitting may be read here: [Income Splitting](#). Obviously we recognise the value of a parent able to be at home raising children, but we do not consider income splitting to be an appropriate policy response as it benefits the better off yet again. Members from the CPAG Management Committee appeared before the Maori Affairs Select Committee on the tobacco industry in Aotearoa-NZ and the consequences for Maori. The full submission can be read here: [Tobacco use](#). A submission was made to the Local Government (Auckland Law Reform) Bill. This submission urges the government to make Auckland a "child-friendly" city and can be read in full here: [Auckland City](#).

Media Releases:

Recent CPAG Press Releases available at this link: [Media Releases](#) have brought considerable attention to the issues involved, resulting in an exceptionally busy time for CPAG. . In particular, the comments on [Loan Sharks](#) and the Welfare Reform [Minister dreams up a nightmare!](#) created a lot of attention and debate.

Loan Shark Bill:

Carol Beaumont has re-introduced the Credit Reform (Responsible Lending) Bill. It follows the lead of most other developed countries and sets a maximum interest rate for loans, thus preventing the worst excesses of the fringe lenders. It would also impose a duty on the lender to ensure the borrower has the capacity to repay the loan. The Bill will go before Parliament on April 28. For more information, and to support the Bill, visit <http://carolbeaumont.org.nz/>

Membership, subscriptions and donations:

Thank you to everyone who recently responded to our call for subscriptions to be renewed. We are extremely grateful for the continued support from our members and for the generous donations received. The need for the work in which CPAG is engaged is becoming more and more compelling. We ask you to distribute our call for assistance among your networks and to encourage people to join our membership.

We are most grateful to **Sovereign Sunshine** for a recent donation and to people who supported us by registering a vote on their website. CPAG's applauds this initiative which helps children's charities every month and is delighted that CPAG was one of the favoured recipients in March.

Subscriptions: organisations \$100; individuals \$20; and unwaged \$10.

Please make cheques out to: **Child Poverty Action Group Inc** and post to:
Child Poverty Action Group, PO Box 56 150, Mt Eden, Auckland, NEW ZEALAND;
or you can bank money directly into our account: **Kiwibank 38-9003-0066858-00**
Details for donating and membership can be found at [Make a donation](#)

If you are receiving this newsletter by post, either we do not have your current email address, or you have asked for mail-only news. If you would like to receive our more frequent e-news, please email Julie at admin@cpag.org.nz. Email saves us time and money – thanks.

21st May, 2010 – Save a date for the Post Budget Breakfast!