

# Poverty in New Zealand – what needs to happen next?

## Professor Innes Asher & Child Poverty Action Group, July 2006

### *Actions on child poverty*

Large redistribution of resources needed to rectify the harm to a generation, protect children from poverty now and in the future.

#### 1. Measurement

Measurement and monitoring of child poverty must continue:

- Establish poverty measures and keep to them
- Household economic survey every 3 years (poverty level)
- Living standards every 4 years (hardship levels)
- Enshrine in legislation

#### 2. Income

- Needs of children should be the basis of the level of support, not the work status of parents
- Beneficiaries should receive child payments to the same level as parent in work
- Support legislation for a realistic minimum wage for raising a family today: at least \$12 per hour

#### 3. Health

- For children & young people under 18yrs, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:
  - Free primary health care
  - Free prescriptions
- Free good quality breakfasts for children in decile one and two schools

#### 4. Housing

Improve access to quality housing:

- WOF (eg insulation) on all housing where family receives public subsidy
- State housing supply needs to be increased
- Improve access to home ownership opportunities for low income families in areas where housing demand is high
- Enhance the ability of 3rd sector providers to provide affordable housing

#### 5. Education

- Reconfigure equity funding to better service children in poverty
- Reduce economic barriers to educational access for low income children – preschool, school & tertiary

**We will know that poverty in children is improving when these 3 outcomes are happening *at the same time*:**

- Absolute poverty is decreasing
- Relative poverty is decreasing
- Living standards are improving