

CHiLD POVERTY ACTION GROUP

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Media Release 23 May 2008

BUDGET: Poorest children fall even further behind

The poorest 150,000 children in New Zealand will be left even further behind after yesterday's Budget says the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG).

"Families receiving a benefit will gain an extra \$3-4 a week per child from this Budget from October, however this just compensates for inflation since April 2007. There is no new money for these children in real terms," says Dr Steven Poletti from Auckland University's Economics Department.

"There has been no base benefit increase, and the In-Work tax credit still is denied to the children who are in most hardship," Dr Poletti says.

Dr Poletti says that, far from being fair, this budget has further accentuated the gap between rich and poor.

"Everyone gets 'a bone' from this budget, except the approximately 150,000 children and their parents who have the greatest needs in the country.

"These are the children who are three to four times more likely to end up recurrently sick and filling up hospital beds, going to school hungry, struggling to learn and suffering the long term consequences of growing up in poverty," he says.

"Against a background of rising food, rental and energy costs the consequences of further marginalising so many of our children will be grim and costly," Dr Poletti concludes.