

CHiLD POVERTY ACTION GROUP

www.cpag.org.nz

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Press release: Child advocates applaud home insulation boost

Child Poverty Action Group applauds today's announcement by the Green Party that all Housing New Zealand homes will be insulated over the next five years as part of Budget 08.

"Home insulation programmes are a tried and true, cost-effective way to help protect children's health and wellbeing," said CPAG health spokesperson Dr Nikki Turner. "Fifty percent of those living in state houses are children. Any move to improve their living conditions in this cold economic climate is welcome."

"Too many New Zealand children end up in hospital or facing permanent disability from diseases caused in large part by cold, draughty housing. This investment means some of our most vulnerable children will be less likely to get sick and have to take time off school or worse," Dr Turner said.

According to CPAG energy spokesperson Claire Dale, the insulation programme will also help families on low incomes deal with rising power prices. "This not only improves the value of the state housing stock, it means families on low incomes will have lower electricity bills in the future. This is an important gain and not only for the families concerned: with 21,000 homes being insulated, overall electricity consumption should drop too."

CPAG also noted that only a small part of the rental housing stock was state housing. "We hope this will encourage other landlords to upgrade their rental properties, especially those housing families with small children," added Dr Turner. "New Zealand houses are notoriously cold, and it is our smallest citizens who bear the brunt of it."

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