

# CHiLD POVERTY ACTION GROUP

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## **Media release**

**Wednesday, April 15, 2009**

### ***Left out again***

Child Poverty Action Group is disappointed by reports that National's promise to increase the amount beneficiaries can earn appears to have been shelved.

At present someone on a benefit can earn up to \$80 per week without being penalised. Prior to the election National promised that this would be increased to \$100 per week to encourage beneficiaries to take on part-time work. Even this token increase hardly compensated for inflation.

"Beneficiaries got nothing from tax cuts - in fact they are now even further behind everyone else - and now the break they were promised before the election has been axed. This hardly seems like an equitable way to share the pain of the recession," said CPAG spokesperson Donna Wynd. "Saying it will happen some time in the next three years is cold comfort to families struggling to afford food today."

"Linking this to reversing the policy requiring DPBs to find work when their children turn six is unfair. The income of parents shouldn't be tied to whimsical changes in policy, and there are plenty of beneficiaries don't have children who will also suffer," said Ms Wynd.

She notes that while the ability to earn an extra \$20 per week might not seem much for many families, for others it can mean the difference between going to a foodbank or getting medical treatment. "The Prime Minister made a great deal of helping the underclass leading up to the election. This mean-spirited delay won't help any of them improve their lot any time soon," she said.