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**Policy developers breach children's rights.**

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The Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) welcomes Dr Janine Mardani's University of Otago research showing the government failed to consider children's rights in the initial development of Working for Families.

This failure was a breach of binding international law. Despite New Zealand being a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC), the Convention was not considered during policy development for Working for Families. The relevant UNCROC principles are: participation of the policy's stakeholders, equality and freedom from discrimination, the best interests of children as a primary consideration, and the right to life with healthy development.

Dr Mardani's research found government failed to consult appropriate stakeholders, including the Office of the Commissioner for Children. Despite CPAG's earlier human rights complaint over existing discrimination, policy developers also did not allow participation by the group.

Furthermore Dr Mardani found that while the WFF package has benefited many thousands of children, it discriminates against the children most at risk: those who have parents reliant on state benefits. The package offers them little or no advantage, leaving them in relative disadvantage compared to less vulnerable children.

These findings are confirmed in the Household Incomes Report released last week. Disadvantage has deepened for one in every five of our poorest children.

CPAG asks "How much more proof do we need before this government, or the next, will take real action and stop tinkering around the edges of the problem? We know the huge costs poverty carries now and will bring in the future, as the consequences of preventable poor health and compromised education can follow children throughout their lives.

The CPAG v Attorney General case currently before the Human Rights Tribunal alleges that the discrimination against the poorest children within the Working for Families package has entrenched their poverty.

Associate Professor Mike O'Brien has challenged all the political parties to state their proposed actions to end child poverty in New Zealand. We want to hear what they have to say.

*CPAG's case before the Human Rights Review Tribunal is in recess currently and will hear final legal submissions in Wellington from July 14-18.*

