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“THINK OF THE CHILDREN, DR BRASH!”

The welfare proposals Don Brash put forward at Orewa this week have already been tried - and they failed, the Child Poverty Action Group has pointed out.

``Dr Brash's proposals of work for the dole and compulsory work for sole parents were tried by the National Government in the 1990s and failed badly,'' says CPAG spokesperson Associate Professor Mike O'Brien.

``The government departments which reviewed the benefit reforms and the community wage in the 1990s showed how ineffective those reforms were at reducing numbers on the benefit and improving the circumstances of beneficiaries. It seems odd to attempt to reintroduce policy that has already failed.'

Assoc-Prof O'Brien noted that Brash's plans ignore the vast amount of national and international research which shows clearly that beneficiaries are motivated to work. That research also provides no evidence that children are being groomed for a life on welfare.

``Where are the plans to sustain viable work at an adequate wage? Where is the commitment to providing good quality affordable child care?

``These are the types of policies which the evidence shows are necessary for people to go into work, and yet they're conspicuously absent from National's agenda.''

``Dr Brash talks of ensuring that children are not deprived. Yet his plans would do nothing to reduce the already awful levels of child poverty, particularly among those children relying on a benefit. In fact they would make the position of already deprived children much worse.''