

# CHiLD POVERTY ACTION GROUP

[www.cpag.org.nz](http://www.cpag.org.nz)

## ***Media release:***

### **Pledge to end child poverty welcomed by advocates**

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Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) commends the Maori Party for putting children at the forefront of their policies, and pledging to end child poverty by 2020.

Election promises need to attend to what is most urgently needed, says CPAG. "Families with children, especially if on benefits, are still more likely to be in poverty and to be in more severe hardship," CPAG economics spokesperson Dr Susan St John says. "Blanket tax cuts are a blunt instrument when it comes to helping children out of poverty."

"Parties proposing billion-dollar packages to cut tax would be better off looking first at improving family assistance, which is an internationally-proven policy to help children in our poorest families get the basics, including food," Dr St John says.

As unemployment starts to rise and more people find themselves on benefits, the inadequacy of the safety net will become clear.

"Increasing emergency assistance for beneficiaries and emergency food grants are no substitute for an adequate income" says St John. "A top priority for poverty relief measures must also be to extend \$60 per week of Working for Families tax credits to those families who are excluded because their parents are on a benefit they or fail to meet the hours-worked criterion. Benefits must also rise."

CPAG totally endorses the Maori party policy to extend the in work payment to all low-income families as the most cost-effective and immediate way to improve the lives of poor children.