



# Rethinking the Welfare System for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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## Summit Theme

In 2018, it is widely acknowledged that there are inadequacies in the current design of the Welfare System in Aotearoa-New Zealand. Welfare payment levels and tax credits are too low to adequately support families. Policies for the receipt of benefits have been damaging and out of step in a modern world, and Working for Families has been neglected and eroded. While recent changes have been helpful for some, we need to see more meaningful changes so that the needs of all 21st century families can be met adequately. Today, thousands of parents have to go into debt just to meet their families' basic needs. A persistent and damaging focus on paid work is given priority over the needs of young children. In addition, the dominant rhetoric means that many families experience unjust discrimination.

***How can politicians and policy-makers reform the welfare system so that it is fit for families in the 21st century?***

Collectively we share a vision: that children's wellbeing should be at the heart of all policies. Children's needs should be met, and their wellbeing should not be compromised by policies that reduce family income. Reform must be based on principles of **compassion and caring**, and the **real needs of families, without stressful over-emphasis on paid work, and punitive, corrective methods**.

The purpose of the Summit - ***Rethinking the Welfare System for the 21st Century*** - is to fulfil an urgent need to influence the welfare reform agenda, which is a key focus for the current Government. Increasing awareness among the public, politicians and policy makers about chronic problems across the welfare system, and discussing developments to improve that system, could result in it working much better for families and children.

A full-day programme of speakers aligned to this cause will provide their perspectives and recommendations on an effective welfare system that would ensure all children in Aotearoa-New Zealand grow up thriving. We warmly invite audience participation and perspectives during Q&A sessions with the speakers. Working together, we can promote changes that will ensure that Aotearoa-New Zealand has a Welfare System that is fit for families and for children and their unique needs.

## Summit Programme

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Chair</b>
8.30 - 9.00	Registration		
9.00 - 9.05	Mihi whakatau		<b>Trevor McGlinchey</b>
9.05 - 9.40	Welfare reform	<b>Marama Davidson</b> 25 min presentation 10 min for questions	<b>Tony Dowell</b>
9.40 - 10.00	Summit introduction	<b>Susan St John</b> 20 min presentation	
10.00 - 10.30	Alternative frames and narratives for child poverty policy solutions	<b>Jess Berenston-Shaw</b> 20 min presentation 10 min for questions	
<b>10.30 – 10.50</b>		<b>Break</b>	
10.50 - 11.20	Social assistance for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century New Zealand labour market	<b>Michael Fletcher</b> 20 min presentation 10 min for questions	<b>Prudence Stone</b>
11.20 - 11.55	Community led development	<b>David Hanna</b> 25 min presentation 10 min for questions	
11.55 - 12.25	Cultural experiences in the context of village expressions of compassion and sharing, and how this could be translated in a western society.	<b>Efeso Collins</b> 20 min presentation 10 min for questions	
12.25 - 12.55	We Are Beneficiaries: hear from people with lived experience of hardship	<b>Sam Orchard</b> 20 min presentation 10 min for questions	
12.55 - 1.10	MSD's new strategy – Te Pae Tawhiti (Our Future)	<b>Nic Blakeley</b> 15 min presentation	
<b>1.10 - 2.00</b>		<b>Lunch</b>	
2.00 - 2.30	Lived experience of hardship	<b>Debbie Leyland</b> 20 min presentation 10 min for questions	<b>Janfrie Wakim</b>
2.30 - 3.00	Whānau Ora and a Mātauranga Māori Approach to Welfare	<b>Hirini Kaa</b> 20 min presentation 10 min for questions	
3.00 - 4.00	Panel discussion	<b>Bill Rosenberg, Alan Johnson, Amanda D'Souza, Trevor McGlinchey</b>	
4.00 - 4.30	Comments/questions	Audience questions for panel	
4.30 - 4.45	Closing remarks	<b>Mike O'Brien</b>	
4.45 – 5.30	Networking/refreshments	All welcome	

## Presenter abstracts and bios



**Marama Davidson** is a list MP and Green Party Co-Leader. She is passionate about social and Treaty justice, the environment, and ensuring marginalised and minority voices are represented in decision-making.

**Abstract:** Setting out the vision for welfare reform



**Honorary Associate Professor Susan St John**, QSO, Economics Department, University of Auckland and director of the Retirement Policy and Research Centre. She is a CPAG founding member, economics spokesperson, and co-author/editor of many of CPAG's flagship publications for over 20 years, including more recently, *The complexities of relationship in the welfare system and the consequences for children* (Dec 2014), *The further fraying of the welfare safety net* (Dec 2017), *Priorities for family income support* (June 2017) *Children and the Living Wage* (February 2017), *How effective are 2018 policy settings for the worst-off children?* Working paper (Feb 2018), *Institute for Governance and Policy Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, Progressive universalisation of Working for Families* (March 2018).

**Abstract:** This is CPAG's fifth summit on the welfare state. In 2018, the year of the promised welfare review, the Government's vision is for "a welfare system that ensures people have an adequate income and standard of living, are treated with and can live in dignity and are able to participate meaningfully in their communities". But how will that be made a practical reality?

While our focus is children we locate this concern for child poverty in the context of the welfare system the tax system and labour market. That context must be sound for children to thrive. The systematic and deliberate undermining of that context has now been halted but the hard work of reconstruction must begin. The purpose of today is to clarify the purpose and principles of the task proving input into the deliberations of the Welfare Expert Advisory Group.

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**Dr Jess Berentson-Shaw** is a New Zealand researcher, writer and communicator with an interest in how we build public and political support for more inclusive and evidence-based policy. Her current work focuses on the role of values and beliefs in the development and implementation of inclusive public policy. Jess was awarded a PhD in Health Psychology from Victoria University in 2003 and has worked in the UK and New Zealand applying evidence to achieving equity in a variety of settings. Her work spans the spectrum of health, wellbeing, social care and economics policy. In 2017 Jess published *Pennies from Heaven*, a book that investigates the most effective policy actions for moving families and children out of poverty.

In 2018 She published *A Matter of Fact. Talking Truth in a Post-Truth World*, a book exploring the research on how to talk about evidence in ways that achieve traction. She is co-director of the not-for-profit research and policy organisation *The Workshop*, and a research associate at the *Public Policy Institute* at the University of Auckland.

**Abstract:** Those of use who are interested in, research, and talk about policy solutions for child poverty care deeply about changing our systems for the better for children and families. There is a much brighter future possible for New Zealand families if only the evidence were followed. It is tantalisingly close. Presenting our evidence should, we feel, lead to policy change, or changes in public attitudes. This isn't the case. Why? Because people do not assimilate and act on good information in the way we think they should. Our model for information assimilation, logic and decision making is incomplete.

People process our information through their own well embedded explanations about why child poverty happens. These common core stories or cultural narratives that explain child poverty can hamper efforts to

convince the public and policy makers to accept solutions. They also create a double burden for children and parents living without enough. We can as researchers and communicators however construct narratives that are more effective in promoting policy change. There are alternative frames and stories to tell, ones that will help the public and policy makers act on the solutions that are needed to ensure all children and families thrive. I will discuss some of these narratives at the summit and give ideas on how to change the story.



**Dr Michael Fletcher** is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Governance and Policy Studies, Victoria University of Wellington. Prior to his current role Michael worked for seven years as a senior lecturer and senior research officer at Auckland University of Technology teaching in the areas of social policy, public policy and employment relations. He has extensive experience as an economic and social policy advisor, researcher and manager working in numerous New Zealand government agencies. Michael has published in the areas of employment, social welfare, child poverty and child support and his current research interests are focused on welfare and social assistance policies, child support, and their interactions with the labour market. He has been the New Zealand Correspondent for the Max Planck Institute for Social Law and Social Policy in Munich since 2015. Michael is currently the independent Specialist Advisor to the Government's Welfare Experts Advisory Group. The views expressed here are his own and do not represent those of the Group.

**Abstract: Social assistance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century New Zealand labour market.** New Zealand's social welfare and tax credit provisions are no longer well suited to the labour market they operate within. Many of the problems are historical – the decline of the principles of full-employment, a family wage and home-ownership that underpinned the 'wage-earner's welfare state'; cuts to real benefit rates and reliance on tight targeting of supplementary assistance to minimise fiscal costs; and the low level and poor quality of spending on active labour market and vocational training programmes. The result has been long-term high rates of poverty among beneficiaries, substantial in-work poverty, increased inequality and persistent ethnic disparities. Overlaid on these problems are new challenges arising from the impact of technological change on jobs and employment. The size and character of these changes are uncertain, but the biggest effect is likely to be a significant increase in redundancies and technological unemployment. This presentation focuses on what we know about parents' employment patterns with the aim of identifying key areas of change needed to create a social assistance system suited to the current and likely future New Zealand labour market.



**David Hanna** is a fourth generation Pākehā, a partner in a civil union, a father of four children, a Director of a Social Change/Service Organisation (Wesley Community Action) and National Coordinator of Inspiring Communities. He has worked as a national NGO youth director, a policy manager in Central Government, a consultant on youth development, a trainer in policy analysis and now a director. Key themes across his activities are bicultural/Treaty of Waitangi perspectives, systems/holistic action/thinking, positive child and youth development and grounding what we do in an authentic spirituality. David is currently working in dual roles with Inspiring Communities and as the Director of Wesley Community

Action.

**Abstract:** Effective reform is not just about the policy, it's also about HOW we do reform. Issues like child poverty involve every part of society, so the solutions need to involve and mobilise everyone. The Child Rich Communities project aims to grow a movement of people who think and work in community-led ways to improve child, family and whānau wellbeing. It recognises that children, families, whānau and communities have a unique basket of skills, knowledge, strengths and assets fundamental to achieving long term positive change. Across Aotearoa, there are many community-led initiatives making positive change for local children and families - the Child Rich Communities project is harnessing this knowledge and experience. It builds on research with communities and initiatives proudly taking community-led action in their places.

There is no single model or definition for what a Child Rich Community is. Rather it's a way of working that is driven by a set of principles that enable people in local places to make positive changes for themselves, their

children, their family and the wider community. This session will go over the importance of community-led development and the Child Rich Communities framework. It will also touch on the recent Weaving our Strengths Forum – where a range of stakeholders from the children’s sector, government, philanthropic sector, service providers, community groups and those with lived experiences got together at a one-day hui to talk about what’s needed to reduce child poverty and improve child wellbeing.



**Efeso Collins:** Efeso was born and raised in Otara, south Auckland. He is the youngest child of six and his parents emigrated from Samoa in the early 1960’s. He was the first in his family to attend and graduate from university and is currently serving his first term as an Auckland Councillor representing the residents of Manukau. A former university lecturer in Education and Youth Development, Collins is passionate about young people and seeing them realise their full potential. He has facilitated and designed youth development programmes over many years and advocate for the aspirations of youth and under-represented groups. He mentors young Pasifika men and speaks often on emerging and inclusive leadership, and cultural humility. Efeso is married with a young daughter and they currently live in Otahuhu, south Auckland. He is often seen shopping and swimming in his local area and well known for his love of coffee and community engagement. He holds the Samoan chiefly matai title Fa’anana from his mothers village in Satupaitea.

**Abstract:** Efeso will look at his cultural experiences in the context of village expressions of compassion and sharing, and how this could be translated in a western society.



**Sam Orchard** works in community development and art spaces. He is interested in finding new and accessible ways to communicate complex ideas, and telling stories that celebrate our differences

**Abstract: We Are Beneficiaries.** In mid-July 2017 Metiria Turei, the co-leader of the New Zealand Green Party, spoke at the party’s AGM about her time on social welfare in the 1990’s. She used her experiences to speak out about how the social welfare system was a broken safety net that needed to be mended. Within the month she had resigned as the co-leader. In the wake of her resignation a group of artists began creating art sharing their experiences as beneficiaries. ‘We Are Beneficiaries’ was set up on facebook, Instagram and twitter, in the hope of continuing the conversation Metiria Turei started - demanding a more compassionate welfare system. The group received hundreds of submissions and created masses of art – shedding light on the real-life stories of beneficiaries in New Zealand.

The first 200 stories were collected into a report, detailing the common themes and experiences shared. Alongside these themes were a number of recommendations for how the government could create a more compassionate welfare system. These reports were given to a number of Ministers, including the Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, and Minister for Social Development Carmel Sepuloni.

Sam Orchard, one of the founders of We Are Beneficiaries, will talk about:

- The emergence of this grass-roots initiative,
- Creating space to magnify voices
- Using art and social media to create change



**Nic Blakeley** is the Deputy Chief Executive Insights and Investment at the Ministry of Social Development. The Ministry's purpose is *Manaaki Tangata, Manaaki Whānau* - we help New Zealanders to be safe, strong and independent. The Insights and Investment group provides insights to support high-quality decision-making, whether that's decisions by Ministers on strategy and overall investment, right through to decisions by case managers at the front line. Nic has been at the Ministry since 2013. Before that, Nic worked at the New Zealand Treasury for almost ten years, including a period as economic advisor to the Minister of Finance

**Abstract:** MSD has recently adopted a new strategy – Te Pae Tawhiti (Our Future) – that aims to further enhance the social outcomes achieved through MSD's work. Nic Blakeley, Deputy Chief Executive of MSD's Insights and Investment group, will talk through the strategy and the reasons behind its adoption.



**Debbie Leyland** has vast experience in community campaigning, particularly in the area of health. She is the co-founder, coordinator and spokesperson for United Community Action Network UCAN) - a network of NGOs focused on improving health services in Aotearoa. Debbie is also on the steering group of the Equality Network and has served on the Board of the Newtown Union Health Service for the past 5 years

**Abstract:** Debbie will talk about her experience living on a benefit, and bring the home the reality of what it's like to live on a low income. She'll discuss the challenges and policies that would help make a difference.



**Dr Hirini Kaa** is of Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kahungunu and Rongowhakaata descent. Currently working as Kaiārahi in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Auckland, Hirini has worked in a range of areas including in the social services sector, for the Anglican Church and for his iwi. Hirini has extensive television experience including presenting, researching and co-writing the seven part historical documentary series 'The Prophets' for Māori Television. His PhD thesis was 'He Ngākau Hou: Te Hāhi Mihinare and the Renegotiation of Mātauranga, c.1800-1992' and his MA thesis was 'Te Wiwi Naati: The Cultural Economy of Ngati Porou, 1926-1939'.

**Abstract: Whānau Ora and a Mātauranga Māori Approach to Welfare.** Although it may be gone from Parliament, the legacy of the Māori Party lives on in a Whānau-centred approach to welfare policy. Based on Mātauranga Māori (a Māori worldview) and articulated in the work of the Waitangi Tribunal and their report *Wai262 Ko Aotearoa Tēnei*, as well as historical approaches to this issue it can be argued that Whānau Ora represents true Māori aspirations for welfare, rather than a solely state-centred approach.

## Panel



**Bill Rosenberg** is Economist and Director of Policy at the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions Te Kauae Kaimahi. Bill Rosenberg is widely published on labour issues, social welfare policy, globalisation and trade.

**Abstract:** One of the functions of the welfare system is to support people and families through structural change and job loss (such as redundancy due to firm closure or layoffs, and changing industry structure due to globalisation or climate change). That function has much in common with the support families need due to relationship breakup, illness and other personal and social causes, but there are additional needs. The evidence is that New Zealand is carrying out this poorly, yet it is increasingly important. This contribution will briefly sketch the evidence as to why it is needed and its weak current state, and then at what it good policies would look like.



**Alan Johnson** is a social policy analyst for The Salvation Army's Social Policy & Parliamentary Unit. He is author of the Salvation Army's State of the Nation reports, including 'Off the Track' in 2017. In his spare time he is a community activist in South Auckland, an administrator in local sports clubs and a school trustee. He is also a trustee of the Auckland Community Housing Trust and an executive member CPAG. Alan has an academic background in town planning and economics and has been involved in Auckland local government for over 15 years both as politician and bureaucrat. He wrote the housing chapter in CPAG's *Our children, our choice: priorities for policy*, 2014.

**Abstract:** My presentation/contribution will focus more on the conceptual and emotional changes we need to bring about a welfare system which is not only more effective but more compassionate and just. My main argument is that a decent welfare system depends fundamentally on the moral support of most citizens in order to create the political mandate and to provide the budgets for such a system. It is the erosion of this support over the past three decades which has allowed the erosion of our welfare system. My discussion will consider ways in which we might re-build and even re-cast public support for a decent welfare system as a basis for the other more administrative type reforms which are also required.



**Dr Amanda D'Souza** is a public health physician with a special interest in child health and wellbeing. Amanda is a senior lecturer at the University of Otago, Wellington, and is involved in undergraduate and postgraduate teaching. Amanda's research interests include: child health promotion; healthy public policy; early childhood; child maltreatment prevention; and children's rights. Her PhD research examined public policy for children in New Zealand compared to Sweden and Australia. Amanda is a Fellow of the NZ College of Public Health Medicine and a member of the Paediatric Society and the Public Health Association.

**Abstract: A new era for children in New Zealand? Embedding a wider culture of prioritising and respecting children.** Amanda's PhD research is a qualitative macro-level case study of how child-centred the public policy process has been in New Zealand compared to Australia and Sweden. She examined the key influences on policy development in each country using a framework based on political and sociological theory and data from 45 interviews with policy elites. She found that children's rights and wellbeing were far more coherently embedded in the policy process in Sweden. Sweden was an example of how a wider system of child-friendly public policy can be created and a "children in all policies" approach can become structurally embedded. A major explanation appeared to be the decades-long consensus across Swedish society that children were important and their wellbeing was a top priority for all. Children were viewed as individuals in their own right, the caregiving role was valued, and the concept of wellbeing was broad. This presentation will examine the implications for building our own system of public policy that prioritises and respects all children so that they can flourish. Embedding a wider culture that celebrates and values children is attainable in New Zealand with strong political and community leadership, sustained action at every level and in every organisation, and by widening the perspective on what matters for children.



**Trevor McGlinchey** (Kāi Tahu) spent the first 15 years of his working life as a meat worker, an apple picker and working in a many short-term jobs and Labour Department work schemes. He and his young family also spent times either without income or on an unemployment benefit between jobs. In the midst of the neoliberal reforms of the 1980s he established "Te Mahi o Waitaki" kaupapa Māori community trust based at Oamaru, near his tūrangawaewae, Moeraki. This Trust provided a backbone organisation for multiple social enterprises which provided education, training and employment for those impacted by the excesses of Rodgernomics. In the early 2000s Trevor joined the Public Service as a

Regional Advisor Māori for the Education and Training Support Agency (later for Skill New Zealand) before becoming the Southern Regional Manager of the Tertiary Education Commission. Trevor is now the long standing Executive Officer of the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services where he supports Council members in their mission to achieve a just and compassionate society in Aotearoa New Zealand. He remains

strongly linked with his home marae, Moeraki, where he is the Chair of their investment company, Moeraki Limited. He is also a governance member of a number of community organisations

**Abstract: NZCCSS Vision For an Effective Welfare System for Aotearoa NZ.** The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) advocates for a welfare system that delivers improved wellbeing for vulnerable people by achieving equity of outcomes, has an intergenerational focus and delivers a systemic approach that includes the range of supports needed to build and sustain wellbeing.

## Closing remarks



**Honorary Associate Professor Mike O'Brien** is an Honorary Academic in the School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work at the University of Auckland. He is a member of the CPAG Management Committee and contributed to the two recent CPAG reports on children. He has written extensively in New Zealand and internationally on child poverty, social security and social service changes and social policy. He chaired the Alternative Welfare Working Group in 2011 and is currently working on social investment and its implications for social services.

**Abstract:** Summary of the Summit presentations and questions from the floor, and closing remarks

## Chairpersons

**Tony Dowell** is Professor of Primary Health Care and General Practice, and Head of Department of Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Women's Health at the University of Otago, Wellington, and a General Practitioner in Wellington. He has previously worked in General Practice in the UK and Central Africa. His current academic interests include research in the areas of Mental Health, Health Systems Quality and communication between health practitioners and patients.

**Prudence Stone** is co-chair of the Public Health Association Wellington branch and steering group member of the United Community Action Network. Working for UNICEF NZ last year she administered the highly successful Tick 4 Kids campaign against child poverty in New Zealand. She was Executive Director of the Smokefree Coalition for seven years and was a post-doc Fellow for Victoria University's Stout Research Centre in New Zealand Studies. Her book *Black Inc. One nation's identity, a global politic* was published in 2012.

**Janfrie Wakim** co-convenor Child Poverty Action Group, was a founding member of CPAG in 1994 and has held numerous positions on the Management Committee. She is constantly motivated to keep fighting issues of inequality and social justice. Janfrie puts this down to her family background, her experience as a teacher in secondary and tertiary institutions and working in the family business. Her experiences as a mother and a grandmother highlight the effects and long term consequences of child poverty.

# Resources

## **CPAG resources**

### **Summit Proceedings**

CPAG Summit 2015, [Welfare fit for families](#), Proceedings.

CPAG Summit 2016, [Investing in children](#), Proceedings.

CPAG Summit 2017, [Beyond Social Investment](#), Proceedings.

### **Working for families**

[Will children get the help they need? An analysis of effectiveness of policies for children in the worst poverty in 2018 \(May 2018\)](#)

[Progressive universalisation of Working for Families \(March 2018\)](#)

[Priorities for family income support](#) (June 2017)

### **Welfare system reform & inadequacy of welfare benefits**

[The further fraying of the welfare safety net \(Dec 17\)](#)

[Barriers to Support: Uptake of the Child Disability Allowance in Otara](#) (Nov 2016)

[Proceedings Summit 2017: Beyond Social Investment \(Oct 2017\)](#)

[Proceedings: Social Security Summit – Investing in children](#) (Sept 2016)

### **Benefit sanctions**

[Benefit sanctions and children: an urgent need for greater clarity](#) (Sept 2014)

[Benefit Sanctions: Children not seen - not heard](#) ( June 2014)

[Benefit Sanctions: creating an invisible underclass of children?](#) ( Oct 2013)

### **Relationship status in the welfare system**

[Kathryn's Story: How the Government spent well over \\$100,000 and 15 years pursuing a chronically-ill beneficiary mother for a debt she should not have](#) (June 2016)

[The complexities of relationship in the welfare system and the consequences for children](#) (Dec 2014)

### **Budget**

[2018 CPAG budget analysis](#)

## Other background resources

Australian Council of Social Service and the Social Policy Research Centre, 2016, [Poverty in Australia 2016](#).

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Harman, R., 30 May 2017, 'The rise and rise of [Amy Adams](#)', politik.co.nz.

Hassall, Ian, [Why are so many young people killing themselves?](#) Butterworths family law journal, Sep 1997; v.2 n.7:p.153-158

Hill, Kim 24 June 2017, RNZ interview: [Rhema Vaithianathan – the algorithm ace](#).

Hyslop, I., 20 May 2017, [Practice Futures \(we shall overcome\)](#), Re-Imagining Social Work in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2015, [Being child-centred](#), Office of the Children's Commissioner.

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Reference Group on Welfare Reform to the Minister for Social Services, [A New System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes](#), February 2015, (the McClure Review).

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