



MANAAKITIA A TĀTOU TAMARIKI

**Children's
Commissioner**

Media release – Budget 2017 good news for Kiwi kids

26 May 2017

The Family Incomes Package revealed in Budget 2017 has been welcomed by the Children's Commissioner as good news for children living in families experiencing severe poverty.

"According to the Child Poverty Monitor released in December 2016, 85-90,000 Kiwi kids live in severe hardship. The latest changes to tax thresholds and assistance build on the benefit rate increases in 2016 to relieve the pressure for those Kiwis who are just getting by," said Judge Andrew Becroft.

"In particular, lifting the Accommodation Supplement - which hasn't increased since 2003 - and changing how the areas are defined will be a positive boost for families who spend a significant part of their weekly budget on housing costs. Bringing the family tax credit rates up to the level of older children targets families where poverty is highest, and will also put more money in household budgets for Kiwi kids who currently have to do without essential items.

"These changes are exactly what we had been urging the Government to consider, and represent a deliberate and significant step in the right direction.

"We are pleased that the Government is now actively making progress on more than half of the 78 recommendations made by the Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty in 2012. We are hopeful that future changes could include indexation of the Family Tax Credit benefits and the Accommodation Supplement and re-examining the Working for Families abatement rates and levels.

"If improvements like this take place every year, these separate steps will result in a giant stride in dealing with child poverty. We support the New Zealand Government's commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and first on that list is to halve the number of people living in poverty by 2030."

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About the Office of the Children's Commissioner

The Children's Commissioner is an Independent Crown Entity, appointed by the Governor-General, carrying out responsibilities and functions set out in the Children's Commissioner Act 2003. The Children's Commissioner has a range of statutory powers to promote the rights, health, welfare, and wellbeing of children and young people from 0 to 18 years. These functions are undertaken through advocacy, public awareness, consultation, research, and investigations and monitoring. The role includes specific functions in respect of monitoring activities completed under the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989. The Children's Commissioner also undertakes systemic advocacy functions and investigates particular issues with potential to threaten the health, safety, or wellbeing of children and young people. The Children's Commissioner has a particular responsibility to raise awareness and understanding of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Children's Commissioner's activities must comply with the relevant provisions of the Public Finance Act 1989, Crown Entities Act 2004 and any other relevant legislation.

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