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## Report on child poverty a breakthrough for kiwi children

– Children's Commissioner

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Children's Commissioner Dr Russell Wills says the final report from the Expert Advisory Group (EAG) on Solutions to Child Poverty represents a breakthrough for New Zealand's disadvantaged children.

"It is extraordinary to achieve a level of consensus on such a complex and values-driven issue as solutions to child poverty. Yet the 13 EAG members and the vast majority of the over 330 submissions and responses to the original proposals showed there is a clear consensus.

"New Zealanders understand that child poverty is a major issue that needs concerted action. We know that the impact reaches beyond the individual children missing out now. The effect of child poverty on health and educational outcomes costs all of us.

"Feedback from the draft report showed there is also a growing understanding that difficult choices will have to be made to ensure that the most vulnerable of children have their needs met.

"We now have the evidence we need to take action. The final report released today by the EAG clearly shows there are solutions to child poverty that are pragmatic, robust, well-informed and cost-effective.

"The government understands that child poverty is a problem in New Zealand and is already doing many things for children that I endorse. These include supporting beneficiary parents into work, reducing rates of acute rheumatic fever, improving on-time immunisation rates, reducing child abuse and neglect, and efforts to improve the mental health of young people.

"Despite the various efforts underway, more needs to be done. The report released today is a turning point for those missing out and for the future well-being of New Zealand.

"The government now needs time to consider the recommendations in this report. I am looking forward to their response."

Ends.