



MANAAKITIA A TĀTOU TAMARIKI

**Children's
Commissioner**

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Child Poverty Reduction Act: “An historic cause for celebration” – Children’s Commissioner

Children’s Commissioner Andrew Becroft says the passing of the Child Poverty Reduction legislation third reading today is “an historic cause for celebration”.

It represents a cross-party commitment to a fundamental shift of policy for our most disadvantaged children and should help undo 30 years of damage to children from our most vulnerable families.

“It’s great news. The real beneficiaries of this new legislation will be those 100,000 New Zealand children who are doing it really tough,” the Commissioner says.

“It’s hard to exaggerate the importance of what this could achieve - nothing less than the reversal of 30 years of marginalisation for our poorest children.

“Make no mistake. Child poverty continues to be a persistently harsh reality for far too many New Zealanders,” the Commissioner says. “The Child Poverty Reduction Act is good news because it demands a concerted focus to make life better for these children.”

Addressing child poverty has been a focus for the Office of the Children’s Commissioner for more than 20 years. It has worked long and hard to keep the issue in front of New Zealanders.

“Especially over the last 18 months, there has been a groundswell in public concern demanding change. Ordinary Kiwis have made it clear they will not tolerate things remaining as they are,” the Commissioner says.

“We are genuinely delighted that Parliament has listened and acted decisively with such shared commitment. It reflects a determination, shared by almost all members of Parliament, to act effectively and collaboratively.

The Act will also help New Zealand meet its international obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

“The passing of the legislation today changes the game,” Commissioner Becroft says.

"It demonstrates a willingness to change the system in the interests of moving children out of poverty. And it puts in place measures to identify progress.

"Today's vote is an affirmation of the years of work by many, many people in New Zealand. We'll all be celebrating.

"But the job isn't done yet. We will also be watching closely to make sure the legislation is implemented to make the difference we hope it will."

ENDS

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 Oranga Tamariki 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.