



MEDIA RELEASE

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LITANY OF MISSED OPPORTUNITIES HURTS NZ CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE MOST

A 23-year litany of missed opportunities by successive governments has led to a grim picture for New Zealand's children, with more living in poverty, more homeless and more children being hurt and killed by those looking after them.

This is according to a report by Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa (ACYA), an NGO, submitted to the United Nations about how the New Zealand Government is implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC).

UNCROC is a legally-binding international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities.

The Government are due to report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva on 15 and 16 September (NZ time).

ACYA spokesperson Andrea Jamison said our Alternative Report shows that New Zealand's child poverty and child neglect issues are worsening.

"ACYA is deeply concerned about the quality of life and wellbeing of a significant number of children and young people in Aotearoa New Zealand, especially the disproportionate burden of inequalities borne by Māori, Pacific, disabled and ethnic minority children."

Ms Jamison said the information and data in ACYA's report to the UN Committee painted a picture of the pervasive and cumulative effects of poverty and violence on Kiwi children.

"It highlights a lack of attention to the determinants of child health and wellbeing and concerns about the quality, inclusiveness and cultural responsiveness of education.

"Many of these failures to fully respect and realise children's rights are rooted in inequality."

ACYA spokesperson Vanushi Walters said successive governments have missed countless opportunities to enhance children's wellbeing and to mitigate the effects of inequalities by embedding a children's rights approach in decision making processes, policies, legislation and practice.

She said the ACYA report identified six priority areas for addressing the significant impacts on children and young people in New Zealand.

“We are at a turning point in the way we regard children and their rights. We cannot take an ad hoc approach anymore.”

Ms Walters said income levels for many families are too low to provide living conditions necessary for a child’s development.

“This includes those families who are subject to benefit sanctions, or who are ineligible for tax credits or are not earning a living wage.”

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About Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa

Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa (ACYA) is a non-profit coalition of non-governmental organisations, families and individuals, whose purpose is to promote and enhance the wellbeing of children and young people in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

ACYA promotes the rights of our children and young people through advocacy and monitoring of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international human rights instruments.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child covers all those aged under 18.

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