

Children's advocacy groups united in their support for a cross-party accord on child poverty

ACYA Media Statement

Twenty nine groups issued a joint statement today, supporting the Children's Commissioner's call to take the politics out of addressing child poverty. And the list of those supporting the initiative continues to grow.

Earlier this week the Commissioner called for cross-party agreement in setting measures on child poverty and agreement on an obligation for current and future governments to set and reach targets for substantial and sustained reductions in child poverty

Children's advocacy groups are united in their support for Parliamentarians to work together and ensure major and long-term reductions in the extent of child poverty in New Zealand.

"The strength of the response we have had to this joint statement, from across the child advocacy community, is tremendous" says Dr Amanda D'Souza, spokesperson for ACYA and one of those who drafted the joint statement.

"It confirms to us that the time is right. There is widespread, collective support for initiatives that promote the rights and wellbeing of all children. Too many children, particularly Māori and Pasifika and those with disabilities, are unable to enjoy their rights to the same standards of living and opportunities as their peers.

"All the evidence tells us that having a good childhood is critical to positive life outcomes" says Dr D'Souza "And we mustn't forget that children are individuals in their own right. Right now, the daily life experiences of children throughout Aotearoa New Zealand are impacting, positively and negatively, on their wellbeing.

"When we plan for children and develop public policy responses that meet their needs and rights the likelihood of positive childhoods and successful, long-term outcomes for all children is increased, says Dr D'Souza.

"A cross-party accord to address child poverty would provide a basis for co-ordinated planning for children and enable us all to work together with common purpose. There is enormous willingness to do this."

Taking a systematic approach to addressing child poverty, in particular for Māori and Pasifika children, and establishing a national definition of poverty was a priority recommendation of the UN last year, when New Zealand reported on progress under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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About Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa

Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa (ACYA) is a non-profit organisation made up of non-governmental organisations, families and individuals. ACYA's vision is to work towards a New Zealand where the rights of children and young people are upheld and embedded in law,

policy, practice and wider society. 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.

ACYA is a permanent member of the UNCROC Monitoring Group and the Country Focal Point for reporting to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.