

News release

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Little bread and butter support in Budget for those in most need

Child and Family Poverty

The Government's 2023 Budget support for Early Childhood Education for young families and free public transport for children is welcome as is the removal of the charge on prescriptions.

But Justice and Peace Commission spokesperson Loraine Elliott said 'We are disappointed that Budget 2023 contains very little to alleviate intergenerational family poverty.

'The implementation of the key recommendation of the May 2019 Welfare Expert Advisory Group to substantially increase basic Social Welfare payments so that families can support themselves continues to be ignored.

'And the promised relief for families in the face of rising costs seems to be completely missing in action.

'What sort of society are we when 71 billion dollars can be found for very necessary infrastructure but only scraps of funding for families who are so overwhelmed by rising food and rent costs, they are being forced to choose between paying the rent to avoid homelessness and feeding hungry children?'

Housing

Affordable housing is critical for families to provide a stable home from where they can provide continuity of education for their children.

'While an extra 3000 public housing units by June 2025 is a positive step it will have only minimal effect taking into account the large number of households still on the waiting list and the unpublished number of demolitions of existing housing stock. Additional support for Māori housing is gratifying, especially for whanau displaced by extreme weather events across the North Island.

‘It is a disappointment that the Budget has not provided more significant funding to extend the Progressive Home Ownership Scheme which helps NZ families to purchase homes through shared ownership. The Commission urges the Government in partnership with Community Housing Providers to put large resources of land and money towards tackling the ongoing critical housing shortage.’

Climate Change

Government’s support to establish a national network of charging stations for electric vehicles is welcome as is the continuation of the Warmer Kiwi Homes initiative which helps fund heating and insulation upgrades for low-income households.

But apart from the post-Budget announcement of support for the electrification of the Glenbrook steel mill furnace, little action seems to be being taken to do our share to take Climate Change seriously by reducing our emissions particularly in transport and agriculture.

Health & Disability Services

The Commission is very pleased with Budget 2023’s increase in funding for disability services including the allocation of \$27.3m to end the Minimum Wage Exemption, which allows disabled people to be paid at rates lower than minimum wage but urges that this injustice be rectified immediately rather than wait till 2025.

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