

The newsletter of the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services

## Halving poverty by 2030

New Zealand has signed up to one target to reduce child poverty by half by 2030, but little progress is being made. It is time for the government to make a plan of how to reach this target, said [Children's Commissioner Andrew Becroft](#) last week at the release of the latest [Child Poverty Monitor](#) figures. The New Zealand Government has signed up, along with 193 other countries, to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. One of the 17 goals is a commitment to [reduce all forms of poverty by half by 2030](#), which for New Zealand would mean a return to levels of poverty not seen since the early 1980s.

Since the mid-2000s progress on reducing child poverty in New Zealand has largely halted, as the graph below shows. To achieve the goal of

halving poverty, there will have to be changes to the way the New Zealand government supports families with children. Auckland City Mission CEO Chris Farrelly speaks for many of us working with struggling families and their communities when he says that [poverty has hit a crisis point](#) and we need to take action as a country. The [NZCCSS Vulnerability Report](#) series reported how little progress has been made in recent years to reduce poverty and this led [NZCCSS Executive](#)

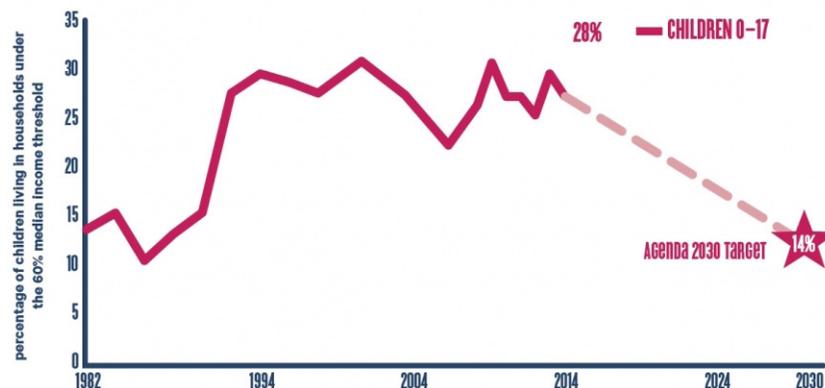
[Officer Trevor McGlinchey](#) to say that "Government must provide greater income to poor families, whether they are in work or on a benefit".

Some steps have been taken, such as the one-off increase in welfare benefits that came into effect in April 2016, but to really reduce poverty, more will have to be done. In June 2016 the Government described the actions it is taking to reduce

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**HALVING CHILD POVERTY** WOULD SEE RATES **RETURN TO LEVELS SEEN IN THE 1980S**

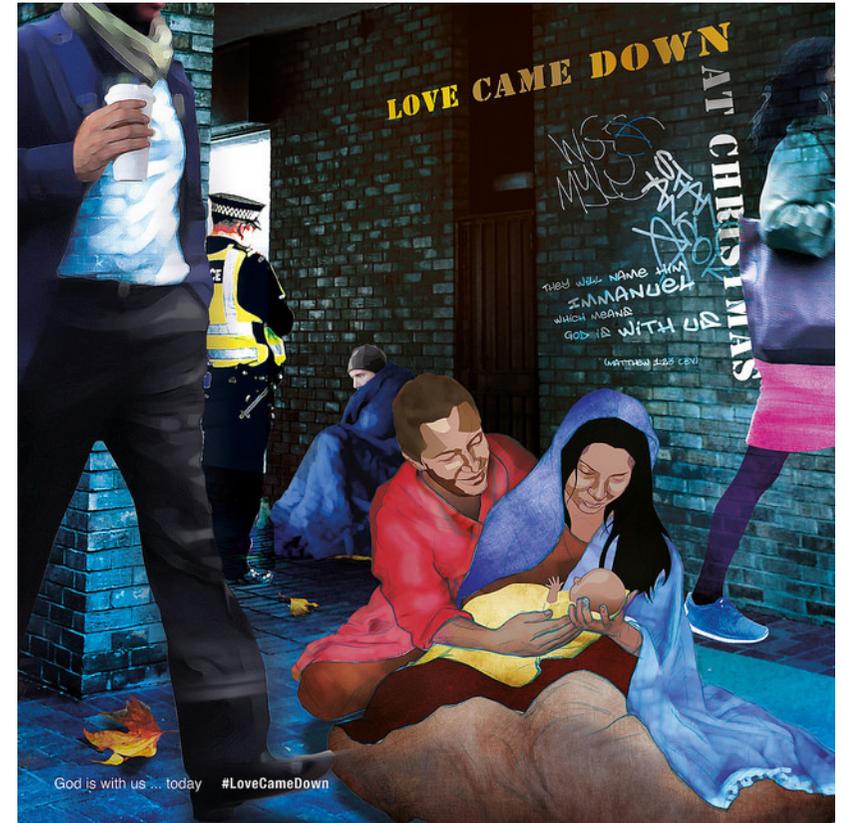
**HALVING POVERTY BY 2030 – CHILDREN IN LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS**



Source: [www.childpoverty.co.nz](http://www.childpoverty.co.nz)

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#LoveCameDown Salvation Army IHQ. See [www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/news/inf011216](http://www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/news/inf011216)

E ngā kaiāpai i ō tātou kaumātua, i ō tātou whānau rawakore huri noa i ngā motu, nei rā te mihi nui ki a koutou mā i te wā Kirihimete kei te haere. Mā te Atua koutou e tiaki.

To those who support our older people, our families in need Christmas Greetings to you all. May God protect and bless you. Warmest Christmas wishes from us all at the nzccss Secretariat.

*Our office will be closed from 23 December 2016 to 16 January 2017.*

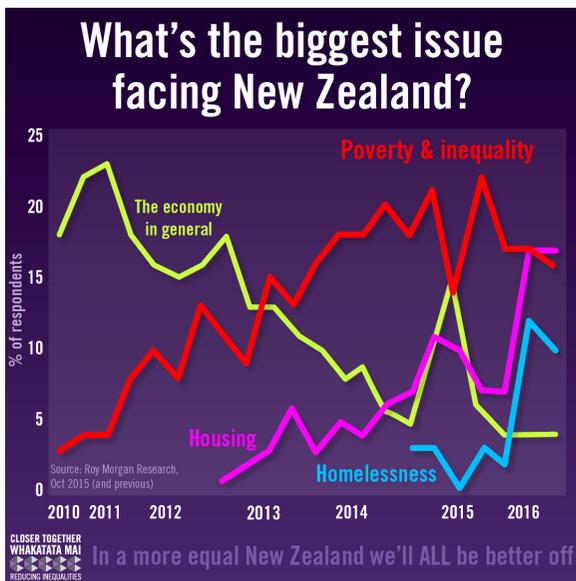
HALVING POVERTY BY 2030

poverty in its report to the [Ministerial Committee on Poverty](#). That report limits itself to simply listing the various activities the Government is involved in without making any clear links to how those activities will actually reduce poverty overall. It is difficult to gain any sense of whether all the activity that is listed is achieving progress or whether the amounts being spent or “invested” are actually sufficient to overcome the extent of the problem that our communities are facing.

In places where targets have been set, such as child immunisation, participation in early childhood education or reducing benefit numbers, some progress has been achieved. There can be some confidence that more children immunised against preventable illnesses and more children having access to good quality ECE will help those children to have a better chance in life. On the other hand, reducing numbers of people on welfare benefits in itself achieves nothing, if there is no clear evidence that those

no longer receiving a benefit are actually moving into good, sustainable employment that lifts their income. If people no longer receiving the benefit are simply being driven away to fend for themselves without support, then that cannot be counted as a success in reducing poverty.

The Children’s Commissioner has repeated the call for the Government to develop a proper plan to reduce poverty and achieve the goal it has agreed to in seeking to halve poverty in the next 14 years. New Zealanders have consistently identified poverty and inequality as one of the biggest problems (see the [October 2016 Roy Morgan poll](#)) facing this country and a government that commits to such a plan is sure to find strong support. ■



# New rental laws: A better deal for renters?

New laws and rules have been in place since July 2016 that aim to make rental housing better and safer for those who living there. The Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) has been changed and for the first time in this country there are minimum standards coming into force for all rental housing that require smoke alarms and minimum levels of insulation. NZCCSS and many others called for even stronger standards in the consultation around the new laws (see the [NZCCSS submission February 2016](#)), but the changes are still a step forward in managing private rentals. The new laws also give tenants stronger rights to challenge “retaliatory eviction” when a landlord ends a tenancy because of a complaint made by the tenant and increases the powers of government agencies to take action against landlords that do not comply with the law. The government’s Tenancy Services group is responsible for managing many aspects of the new laws and they have produced a useful summary at [www.tenancy.govt.nz](#).

Seven out of ten of the children in poverty in this country live in rental housing and most of them are in private market rental properties, not in social housing like Housing NZ or

**CHILDREN LIVING IN PRIVATE RENTALS ARE 3 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE IN HOUSES WITH MAJOR DAMPNESS AND MOULD PROBLEMS THAN THOSE IN OWNER-OCCUPIED HOMES**

Source: www.childpoverty.co.nz

community housing. This fact alone shows how important it is to improve the quality of private rental housing. There is an urgent need to make renting a better experience for people, especially those on low incomes who have few choices about where and how they rent. As the [Child Poverty Monitor reports](#), children living in private rentals are 3 times more likely to be in houses with major dampness and mould problems than children in owner-occupied homes.

The [Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment](#) is

tasked with enforcing the new rules and has established a compliance team to actively monitor landlords’ and their properties to ensure that they are following the new requirements around smoke alarms, insulation and other issues. A recent [visit to some of Dunedin’s student flats](#) showed that some landlords are not complying with new laws and also not following up promptly on maintenance issues relating to the warmth and dryness of their rental properties. “We take breaches of residential tenancy law seriously, and are working to crack down on poor landlord behaviour across New Zealand,” says Paul Coggan, Manager of

the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment’s new Tenancy Compliance and Investigations Team.

If you are looking for information about the new rules or have concerns about the condition of your rental housing, there is good advice about [heating and ventilation on the Tenancy Services site](#). There are several tenancy support organisations around New Zealand, including [Tenants Protection Christchurch](#), whose website includes good advice about renting. ■



## Client level data

In the [October Kete Kupu issue](#), NZCCSS Executive Officer Trevor McGlinchey signaled the major concerns in the community sector about the way the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is seeking to require sharing of client information held by non-government organisations that are contracted to the Ministry to provide social services in all contracts by mid-2017. Social service providers are independent agencies that wish to provide support to people in often very challenging situations and see this new requirement as a major problem.

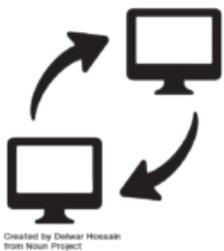
In response to these concerns, the combined community sector organisations ComVoices group drafted up an issues paper [The Community Sector and the Collection of Individual Client Level Data](#) that was presented to MSD in November. Following on from this, a working party has been established between the MSD, the CommVoices group, and MSD's NGO Advisory Group to continue the discussion about agreeing appropriate ways to deal with data sharing.

The issues covered in the paper include:

- The rationale for collecting individual data
- MSD's protocols for collecting and holding personal information
- Compliance and infrastructure
- Privacy considerations
- Liability if Privacy is Breached
- Lack of consultation
- Potential for Rationing of Services

As the paper makes clear, "there are significant risks for both MSD and providers in implementing requirements for collecting and providing Individual Client Level Data in contracts before appropriate protocols and mechanisms have been worked through. We would like to work urgently with MSD to ensure that these risks are jointly identified and strategies are developed to mitigate them. This should include a thorough and system wide Privacy Impact Assessment and joint planning to mitigate risk exposure and manage implementation."

Read the full issues paper on the [ComVoices website \(www.comvoices.org.nz\)](http://www.comvoices.org.nz), for further information contact ComVoices administration, email [admin@comvoices.org.nz](mailto:admin@comvoices.org.nz)



## A snapshot of our membership

Over the past year NZCCSS has been overhauling and refreshing our membership database to help us better understand the range and scope of the services provided by the six church social services networks that are the NZCCSS members. The criteria for inclusion in our database is that the organisations are registered charities or part of the larger charitable structures of our member networks and that they carried out structured social work in the areas of children and families, support for older people, or working with the impacts of poverty and inequality.

There are 213 separate providers delivering 37 general types of

services via 1,024 programmes located in 55 town and cities throughout the country. Our services employ some 11,600 people either full-time or part-time as well as working with almost 16,000 volunteers. This does not include the huge contribution of church congregations make in their communities in addition to the work of the social service agencies. The diagram below shows how these services are split amongst the member denominations:

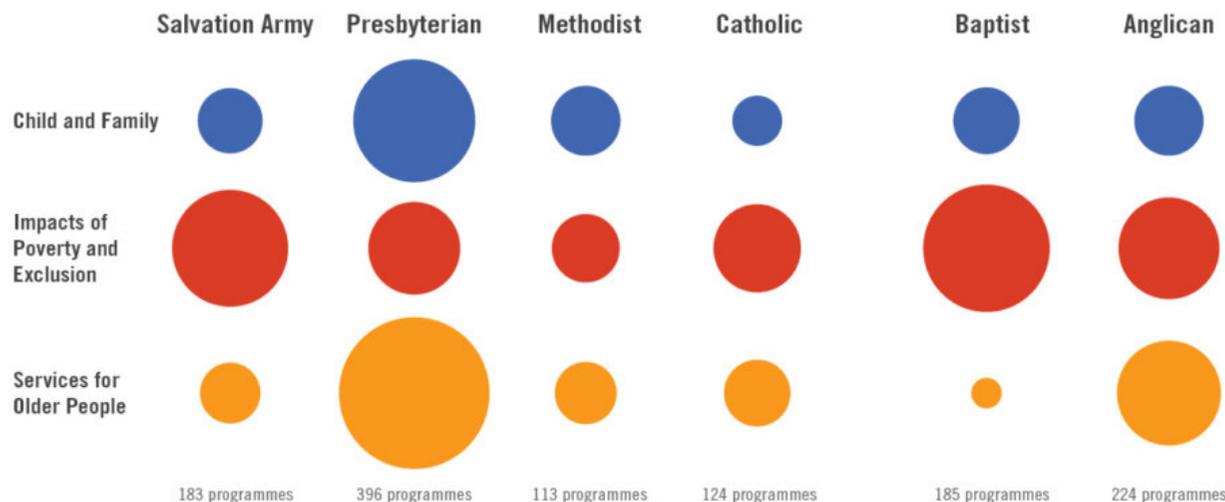
FUNDING SOURCES



Collectively these member organisations generate \$671 million in income, around two-thirds of which is from government sources via fees for service or operational grants. Another \$228 million comes from members' own resources and trading activities, with some \$16 million from philanthropic sources.

Find out more about NZCCSS and its work on our website or [download the full NZCCSS Annual Report 2015-16](#).

PROGRAMME DELIVERY



# Research for Social Justice

Each year NZCCSS organises a Researchers Network meeting to bring together people involved with the social services in our networks and share the research results or projects that they are involved with. The research undertaken within our networks covers a wide range of issues including loneliness and isolation among older people, the experience of prisoners on release, youth unemployment, the migrant worker experience, measuring outcomes in the community sector, how the churches should respond to the SDGs and wider environmental impacts in the Pacific. Here are some of the results and reports that have appeared this year with links to follow up for more information.

## RESEARCH REPORTS

### Youth Unemployment and Life After Prison

The [Salvation Army Parliamentary and Social Policy Unit](#) has continued to generate a series of high quality reports and analysis of social issues. The two most recent reports have focused on two important issues: youth unemployment and the experiences of people leaving prison.

The 2016 [What Next?](#) report argues that no young person must be allowed to leave school to nothing – no job, no further training, no

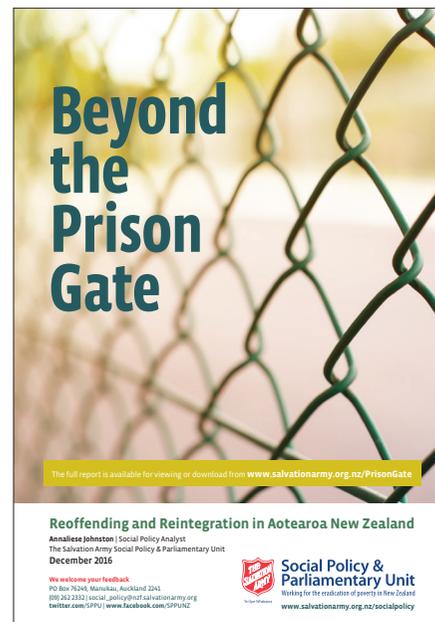
hope. The Salvation Army has issued a challenge to Government, educators and industries, calling for more meaningful training and employment opportunities for New Zealand young people – especially those from poorer communities. With around 75,000 young people aged between 15–24 not in training, education or employment, there is a crucial generation of young people missing out and more active measures are needed to overcome the many barriers these young people face to get on in life.

The [Beyond the Prison Gate: Reoffending and Reintegration in Aotearoa New Zealand](#) report released in early December, turns the focus to the experiences of past inmates for a first-hand look at how the system impacts those who have been released and how things might be improved. The report argues that the prison system is failing prisoners and the public and recommends reducing spending on custodial prison sentences and moving investment to programmes that will reduce crime and support reintegration for the around 15,000 people released from prison in New Zealand each year. Such programmes would include better access to accommodation and health services, private-public partnerships to provide employment, and mentors.

### Measuring Outcomes in Community Organisations

'Purchasing better outcomes' has become a kind of "Holy Grail" for government in its dealings with the voluntary and community sector over the past 30 years. But has it simply become a "black hole" into which a lot of effort has been expended with no real effect? These are some of the questions that Garth Nowland-Foreman, from the LEAD Centre for Not-for-Profit Leadership, asks in his recent paper looking at measuring outcomes in community organisations. Garth is an experienced researcher and educator on management and leadership in the non-for-profit sector and his paper [Outcomes, Accountability and Community and Voluntary Organisations: Holy Grail, Black Hole or Wholly Possible?](#), is online on the [Community Research website](#).

In a realistic assessment of the whole complex development of outcomes measurement in the sector, he concludes that community and voluntary organisations need to "seize their own destiny" in the outcomes measurement process. He reports that successful organisations keep a clear sense of purpose and an emphasis of the theories of change being used in the work they are doing



that will actually lead to the changes desired. Effective organisations also develop their own learning systems by being transparent about how they work and listening to all involved. A "double set of books" is also needed - organisations making sure they measure and report on what they know is important for the success of their work, in addition to reporting what funders might want to know.

### Migrant Worker Experience in New Zealand

The recent Caritas report exposed some of the unfair treatment and unreasonable working conditions that migrant workers face when coming to New Zealand. The [Stand up for what's right: Supporting migrant workers](#) report is based on a series of

qualitative interviews with new migrants who agreed to share their stories with Caritas. As Caritas Director Julie Hickey pointed out when the report was released, "people who took jobs that paid below the minimum wage felt they had 'no choice'. Below minimum work conditions were depicted as 'normal' by the employer and then taken on as a 'necessary sacrifice' by some migrant workers." The report identifies the role that community and churches can play in supporting migrants and helping them to advocate for their rights. It also calls for employers to recognise their responsibilities for good employment practices and for the government agencies to do more to proactively monitor workplaces.

## RESEARCH FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

## NEW PROJECTS

**Social Isolation and Loneliness**

The [Family Centre in Lower Hutt](#) has received funding to begin a project on social isolation and loneliness among older Māori and Pacific people. Researchers Charles Waldegrave and Taimalieutu Kiwi Tamasese and Professor Chris Cunningham from Massey University will be working on the study [Loneliness and Social Isolation among Older Maori and Pacific People: Critical processes, events and mitigating factors](#), that aims to enable early detection of pathways that lead to loneliness and social isolation for older Māori and Pacific people in New Zealand, and the mitigating factors that will facilitate social connection and enduring relationships during old age. This will contribute to better-targeted services and policies will improve the quality of life of older Māori and Pacific people and increase the cost-effectiveness of services.

**Sustainable Development Goals**

The [Methodist Public Issues Network](#) has been exploring more about how churches can respond to the Sustainable Development Goals. Network coordinator Betsan Martin shared a report on the [August churches workshop on climate](#)

[issues](#) involving a wide cross section of church and NGO representatives, and the [Public Issues resources website](#) includes links to a range of other analysis and ideas for action by churches and communities.

**Hunger and Thirst in the Pacific**

Another recent Caritas report, [Hungry for Justice, Thirsty for Change](#), follows a similar theme of social impacts of climate change in the Pacific. Up to 4.7 million people in the Pacific region were affected with water and food issues at the peak of the most recent drought. This combined with extreme weather events like cyclones and floods means Caritas upped the level of threat to safe water and food supplies to “severe” in 2016. The report assesses the situation across a number of countries where Caritas works and makes a number of recommendations for actions including calling for the New Zealand and Australian governments to fund programmes in the region that are better targeted to supporting resilience in times of climate change. It also calls on both governments take urgent steps to transition their economies to low carbon and reduce emissions below the targets agreed internationally to limit the impact of climate change. ■

## Legislation and submissions

**Children, Young Persons and Their Families Bill**

The legislation that will implement the Government’s planned changes to Child, Youth and Family work is now in Parliament and open for submissions from the public. NZCCSS will be commenting and analysing the Bill based on what we have learned and shared already through our networks.

The new law is a further part of what this Government calls the modernisation of Child Youth and Family (see our [analysis of the 2015 report on CYF reform](#)). The Bill is the second of two pieces of legislation on this issue in 2016. The first Bill was passed into law in early December and you can read the NZCCSS submission on this from July 2016 on [our website under Publications](#). Key issues that have been identified in our networks include concerns that the proposed [new approach will not help Tamariki Māori](#) and huge concerns about how MSD plans to approach [sharing of individual client data](#).



The Government says that the aims of the Bill are to create “a more child-centred approach” for the new Ministry of Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki. It aims to help government to respond more flexibly to reports of concern and enable early intervention. It will bring in national care standards and a better approach to financial support for caregivers of children in state care. The also includes 17-year-olds in the youth justice jurisdiction and offers greater support for young people leaving state care. The Bill also includes the aim to recognise “mana tamaiti (tamariki), whakapapa, and whanaungatanga for Māori children”.

**Take Action: Make a submission**

Submissions are open on the Bill until Wednesday 17th February 2017. Go to the Parliament website to find out more about [the Bill and how to make a submission](#), and there is more information about the Bill and links to supporting documents and reports on the [Parliament web page for this Bill](#). ■

# Kete Kupu

## Word Basket

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