

Public Issues Newsletter June 2018

Child Poverty Reduction Oral Submission Notes 16 May 2018

For the Public issues presentation on the Child Poverty Reduction Bill at Select Committee, Betsan was joined by Professor Fele Nokise, to bring a particular focus to Pacific families.

The main purpose of the Child Poverty Reduction Bill is to require the government to set Measures and Targets for reducing poverty. There will be several measures so as to capture both hardship and income poverty, with use of both 50% of the median income before and after housing, and 60%. We proposed using the 60% measure as the main measure since the median income is \$49,900; and 60% of that is \$29,000.

The Living Wage is \$54,000 *“income necessary to provide workers and their families with the basic necessities of life”* that enable workers to *“live with dignity and to participate as active citizens in society.”*

Public Issues brought special focus on those who are most affected by poverty. There is sparse information on Pacific families, and Revd. Prof Nokise spoke of Pacific people who are New Zealanders and their particular identity and contributions to NZ and this needs to be better documented.

The 2012 Expert Advisory Group Working Paper on Pacific Families, and Te Ara Hou emphasizes the need to identify aspirations for Pacific families as a measure, rather than an aggregated measure based on mainstream values.

The Treasury documents on Living Standards are drawn from wide references to arrive at indicators for NZ, and include the addition of cultural identity to the OECD framework. We ask ‘What might indicators be for Pacific people, on the?’ Positives:

- Means for generosity – remittances
- High focus on community and dedication to church communities with leadership within communities to address

Needing attention:

- Pacific initiatives on Family Violence
- Suicide - Pacific peoples, and in particular Pacific young peoples (12–18 years of age), are disproportionately three times more likely to attempt suicide, at 8.6% in comparison to New Zealand Europeans at 2.7%.

We spoke to the importance of a cross party agreement for child poverty legislation, as this is the best way of making sure that the commitments to reducing poverty are not undone by changes in government. National Party wants a targeted approach:

- Set target of reducing children in material hardship by 100,000 in 3 years (not supported by Children’s Commissioner because didn’t work in UK)

- Use Social Investment Approach (need to make sure this about prevention not cost savings and problems of setting up to fail with predictive risk assessments)

At the Child Poverty Action Budget Breakfast, Susan St John keyed in again on the severe poverty of children in benefit families- because they are excluded from the In-Work-Tax-credit - CPAG has long advocated for changing this to a Child Tax Credit so that children in benefit families are eligible – to improve income for all children.