



Valuing Children
— INITIATIVE —



Child Poverty Reduction Act

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Every night in Australia, more than 700,000 children live in poverty. Of those children, 200,000 live in severe poverty. Children get no say in the choices adults and society make for them. We need to ask ourselves, 'when is it ever ok to leave a child in poverty?'. Australia needs to prioritise the value of children and adopt a Child Poverty Reduction Act to start to measure, identify and act on reducing rates of child poverty in this country.

What is a Child Poverty Reduction Act?

While the statistics on child poverty in Australia are alarming, they are not accurate, localised or up to date. A Child Poverty Reduction Act seeks to measure, inform and transparently report real time statistics about child poverty so we as a whole community can take action and target services where and when children need them.

Reporting to Parliament every year, governments are annually held accountable to measures and targets, set at three and ten years, while providing transparency to the community about the extent of child poverty. Governments of all levels would then be required to give greater focus to the wellbeing of children in Australia.

New Zealand

In 2018, in New Zealand under the Prime Ministership of Jacinta Ardern, legislated to reduce child poverty and improve child wellbeing. Claiming herself as the Minister for Child Poverty Reduction the bill passed less than a year after it was introduced. The act is underpinned by three and ten-year targets and a suite of measures across income, employment, housing, education and health which is mandatorily reported to Parliament every year.

In New Zealand the Child Poverty Reduction act purpose is to: (a) specifies and requires child poverty measures: (b) requires the setting of child poverty reduction targets: (c) requires reports relating to child poverty: (d) requires the identification of child poverty related indicators: (e) requires monitoring reports related to identified indicators.

The act sets Child Poverty Indicators, including health, education, housing and income and employment.

A statistician will detail a breakdown of child poverty for all cohorts of children including but not limited to First Nations, disability and mental health, and location. These reports are tabled in Parliament by the Minister every year.

The New Zealand Government also passed a **Children's Amendment Act** which requires successive government to develop and publish a strategy to improve the wellbeing of all children and young people with a shared understanding of child wellbeing, what government is doing and what others can do to help.

Canada

The Canadian Government has introduced a Poverty Reduction Act with the Minister for Families, Children and Social Development establishing the nation's first Poverty Reduction Strategy. The Poverty Reduction Act also ensures transparent indicators, clear targets and tangible actions. The targets are to reduce poverty by 20% by 2020 and 50% by 2030.

The United States

First Focus Campaign for Children are campaigning for a Child Poverty Reduction Act to establish a national child poverty reduction target and solidify the nation's commitment to ultimately ending child poverty in the United States. More than 100 US Organisations back the Bill including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Save the Children Action Network, SchoolHouse Connection, ZERO TO THREE and dozens of others, petitioned Congressional leadership to swiftly pass the Child Poverty Reduction Act (H.R. 1558/S. 643).

Child poverty is a long-term problem in need of long-term solutions. The National Academy of Sciences confirms that a permanent, fully refundable child allowance delivered monthly is the most effective policy to address child poverty in the United States, but it is not the only one. A child poverty reduction target would create the accountability needed to get a permanent child allowance and other policies over the finish line and ultimately end child poverty in the United States.

New York

In 2021, New York passed the Child Poverty Reduction Act, committing the State to reducing child poverty by 50% over the next decade. A Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council was authorised by the act and established in October 2022: The council is charged with developing evidence-based recommendations for reducing child poverty in New York State by 50 percent over the next ten years. As part of this effort, the council will conduct comprehensive data analyses, create a timeline with annual benchmarks, determine effective metrics for measuring the state's progress reducing child poverty, and issue reports.

Next steps

The Valuing Children Initiative auspiced by Centrecare is organising interested parties to develop a campaign committee to pass a Child Poverty Reduction Act in Australia.

To be part of the campaign – please contact:

Sarah Quinton
Development Executive
Valuing Children Initiative
SQuinton@valuingchildren.com.au





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