

# Being Child-Centred: Fad or Foundation? (and other important challenges)

Neonatal Nurses College Aotearoa  
Wellington, 2 November 2017

Judge Andrew Becroft  
Children's Commissioner for New Zealand  
Te Kaikōmihana mō ngā Tamariki o Aotearoa



MANAAKITIA A TĀTOU TAMARIKI

Children's  
Commissioner

# Interruptions welcome



# New Zealand's children (under 18 years old)



**New Zealand  
has 1,123,000 children  
– that's 23% of the population**



(Stats NZ estimate as at 30 June 2017)

# Aotearoa/NZ's children... an overview

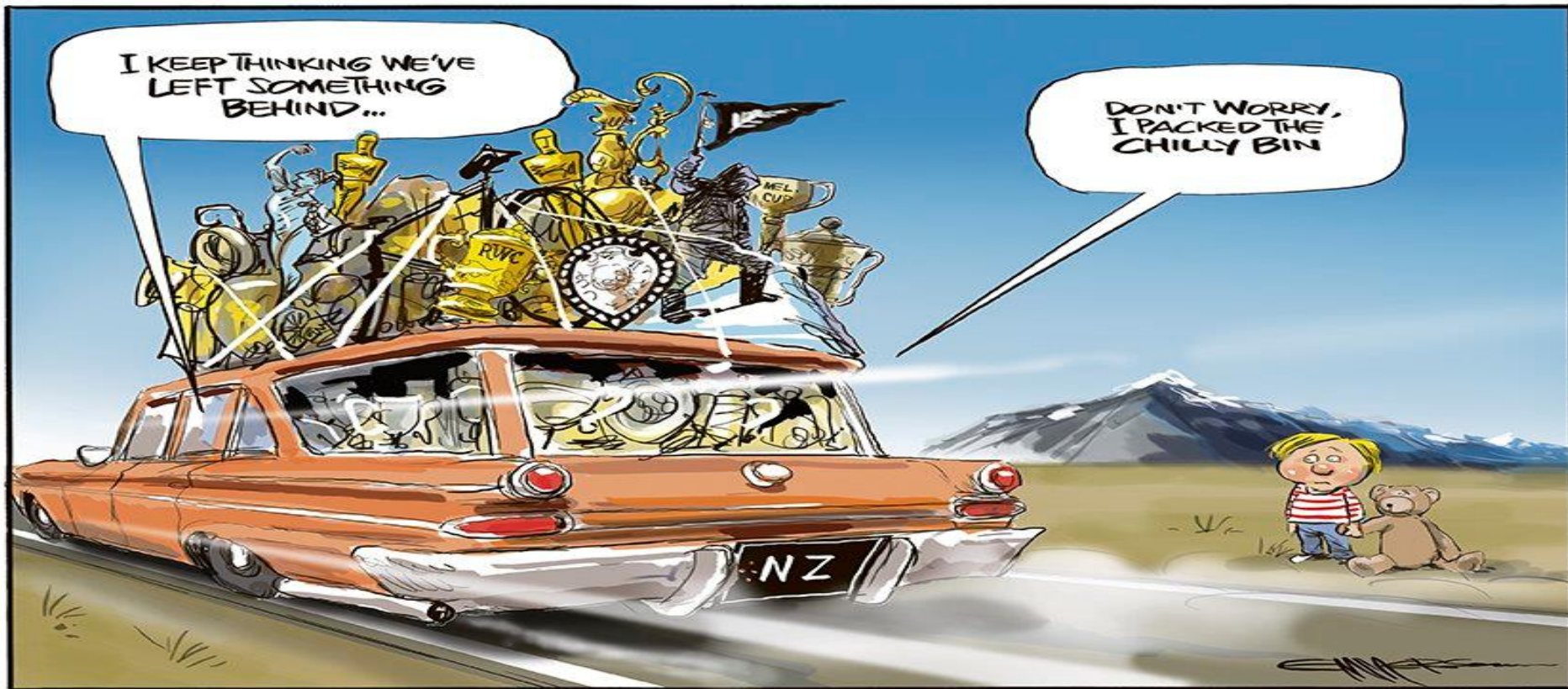
70

20

10

# Who's being left behind???

WE ARE BETTER THAN THIS



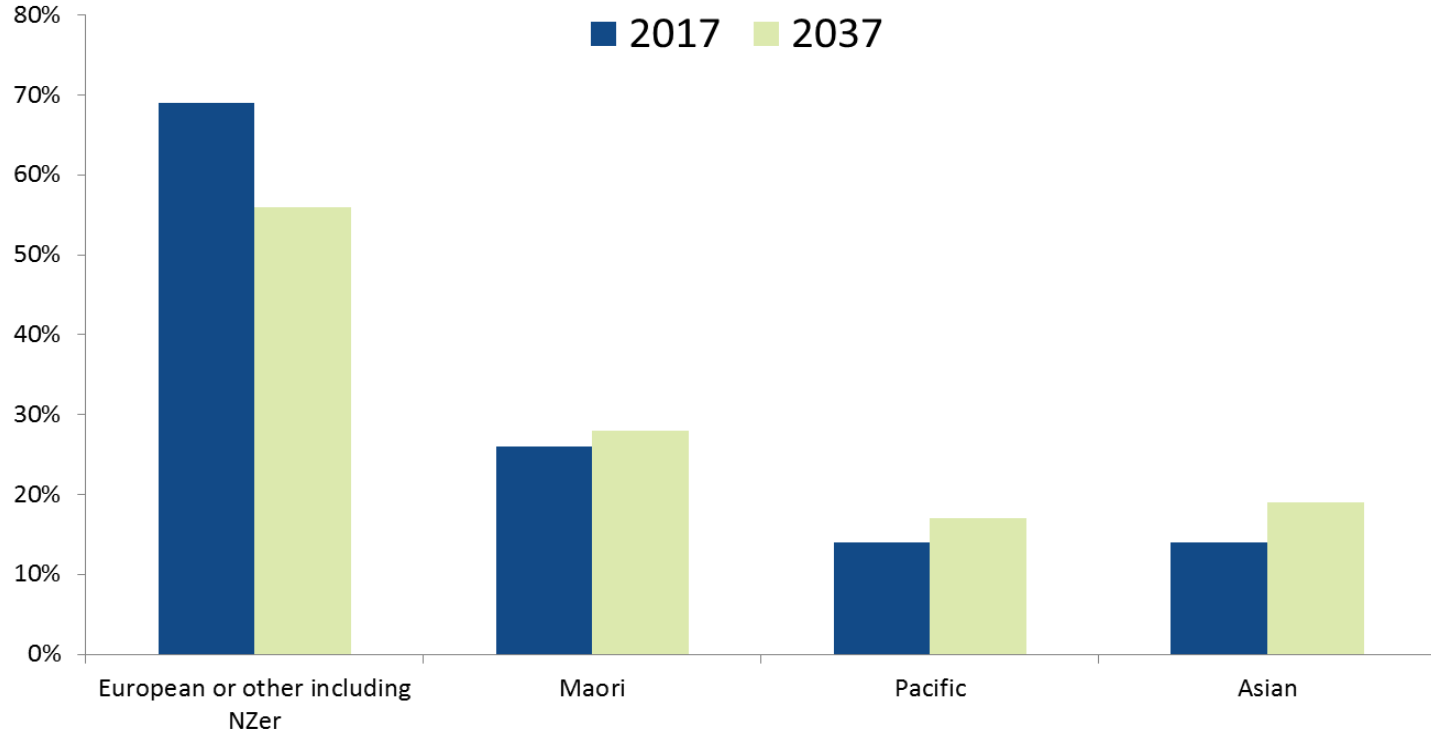
I KEEP THINKING WE'VE  
LEFT SOMETHING  
BEHIND...

DON'T WORRY,  
I PACKED THE  
CHILLY BIN

NZ

# Ethnicities of New Zealand Children 2017 and 2037

## Can choose more than one ethnicity



Source: Stats NZ, August 2017 estimated population projections based on 2013 census.

**LET THE LORD  
JUDGE THE  
CRIMINAL**



MAMAKITIA A TĀYOU TAMARIKI  
**Children's  
Commissioner**



# Tupac Shakur..

## “I wonder if Heaven got a Ghetto”

...It ain't a secret don't conceal the fact  
The penitentiary's packed and it's filled with blacks  
I wake up in the morning and I ask myself  
Is life worth living, should I blast myself  
-I'm tired of being poor and even worse I'm black  
My stomach hurts so I'm lookin' for a purse to snatch  
Cops give a damn about a negro  
Pull a trigger, kill a n\*gga, he's a hero  
Mo' n\*gga, mo' n\*gga, mo' n\*ggas  
I'd rather be dead than a po' n\*gga  
**Let the Lord judge the criminals**  
If I die, I wonder if Heaven got a ghetto...





The small  
picture and  
the big  
picture

“micro”  
and  
“macro”

*“If I cannot do great things,  
I can do small things, in a great way.”  
- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*



MAMSAKITIA A TĀTOU TAMARIKI

**Children's  
Commissioner**

Power at its best is Love  
implementing the demands  
of Justice. Justice at its  
best is Power correcting  
everything that stands against  
Love."

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.  
August 16, 1967

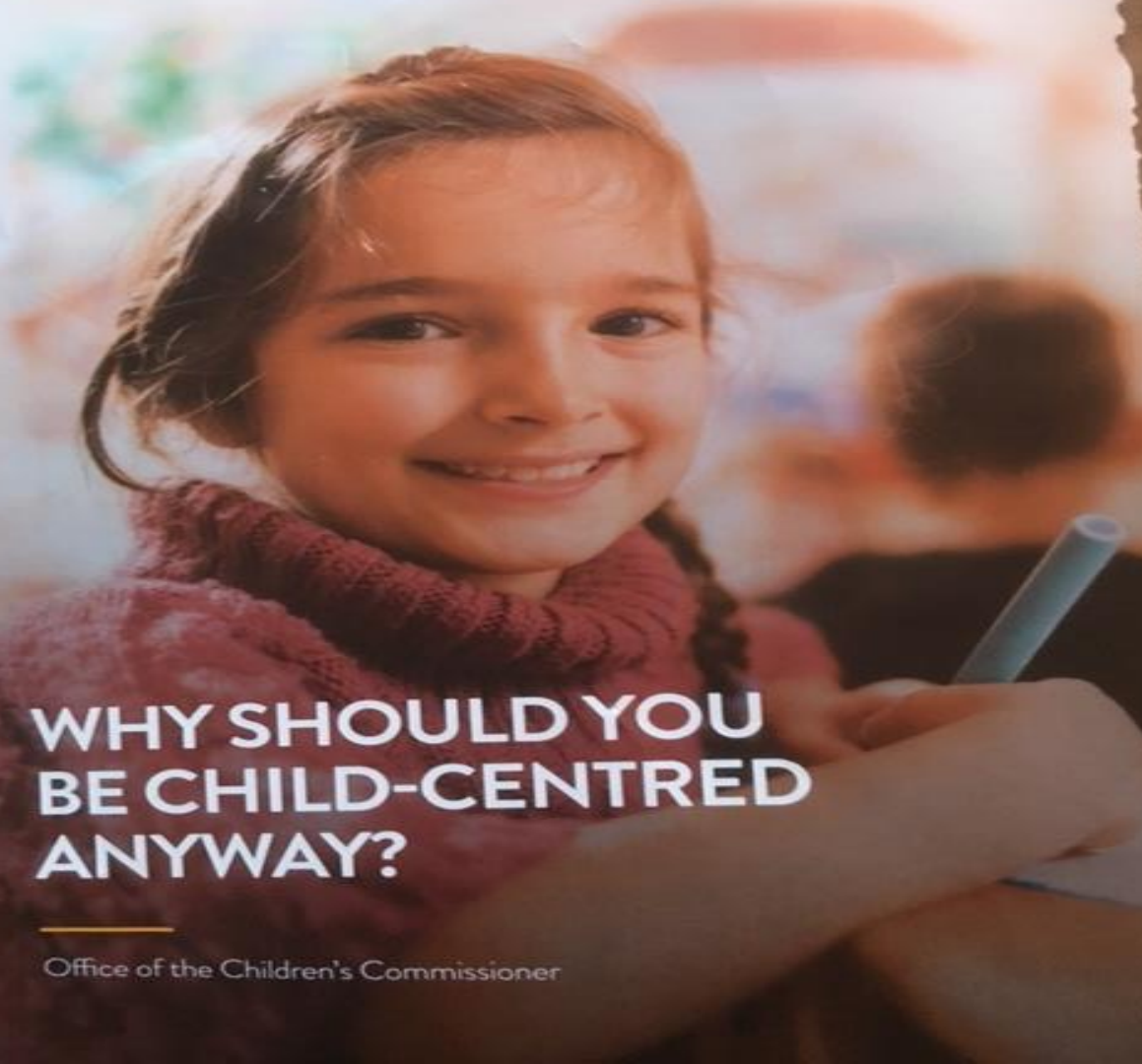


MAMA KITIYA A TĀTOU TAMARIKI  
Children's  
Commissioner

**My key message: being truly child-centred  
and hearing children's voices...**

**#EQUALFUTURE**





**WHY SHOULD YOU  
BE CHILD-CENTRED  
ANYWAY?**

Office of the Children's Commissioner

**Why indeed?**

**....and what could  
you do to become  
more child centred  
in your practice?**

# The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



## Article 12

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.



# Being child-centred - what does it mean for your organisation?

Decision Tool

Children are a core part of society. They depend on, and are major users of, many services, but they often have little say in the policies and services that affect them.

Being child-centred is about recognising the needs, rights and views of children in the work of our organisations. It also means seeing children in the context of their families, whānau and community and working to enhance their mana.

Children are affected directly and indirectly by practically all decisions, but are often limited in how they can influence them. While children have a right to have a say on issues that affect them, they can't vote and are rarely included in consultation processes such as calls for submissions or attending public meetings.

### How to make child-centred decisions

*For organisations serving directly for or with children or working to better understand how their existing efforts affect children*

#### ASK YOURSELVES/OTHERS

##### 1. How will your decision affect children?

Applies to policy, legislation, programmes, services or products

##### 2. What are the different impacts on children from different groups or on children from different groups in society?

What do children say on a subject?  
How and how often do they say it?  
How and how often do they say it?

Information: [www.occ.org.nz](http://www.occ.org.nz)



Children's Commissioner



Children's Commissioner Judge Andrew Becroft represents the 2.1 million children and young people in Aotearoa New Zealand under the age of 18, who make up 24% of the total population.

He advocates for their interests, ensures their rights are upheld, and helps them have a say on issues that affect them.

#### DECIDE

4. Use the answers along with your professional judgement, input from stakeholders, expert knowledge and evidence to make decisions that are in children's best interests and enhance their outcomes.\*

5. Make sure children know what their views were considered, why the decision was made, why the expectations may be different from their expectations, and what to expect next.

Information: [www.occ.org.nz](http://www.occ.org.nz) Contact: [children@occ.org.nz](mailto:children@occ.org.nz)

For on the Family of the Child, Article 12 children have the right to have a say in matters that affect them. [www.occ.org.nz](http://www.occ.org.nz)

# The fundamental importance of being child-centred

# A child-centred approach: five questions

1. *How will the decision affect children?*
2. *Will it affect some children differently?*
3. *What do children say? And how do we hear them?*
4. *How will you make a decision? Factoring in children voices along with the views of others.*
5. *How will you report back to children?*

## 2. Three specific challenges:

### The first challenge: relative child poverty and inequality and disadvantage



# Material Hardship

155,000

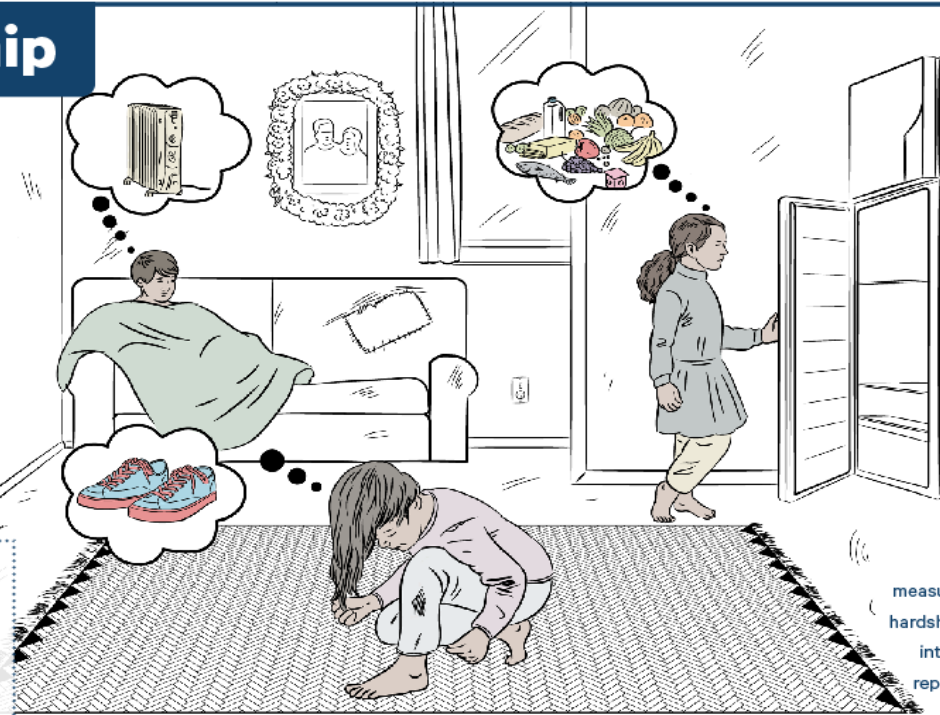
NZ KIDS

LIVE IN HOUSEHOLDS 7

OR MORE THINGS  
THEY NEED

14%

OF KIWI KIDS



85,000

NZ KIDS

LIVE IN HOUSEHOLDS 9

OR MORE THINGS  
THEY NEED

8%

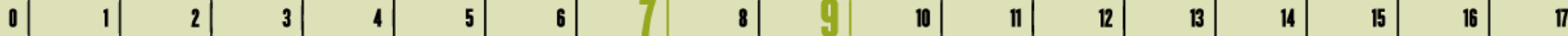
OF KIWI KIDS

This is a new  
measure of material  
hardship introduced  
into government  
reporting in 2015.

LIST OF 17 THINGS THAT HOUSEHOLDS ARE GOING WITHOUT:

LESSER  
HARDSHIP

GREATER  
HARDSHIP



**295,000**

**NZ KIDS** LIVE IN

**HOUSEHOLDS WITH LOW INCOMES\***

**28%**

**OF KIWI KIDS**



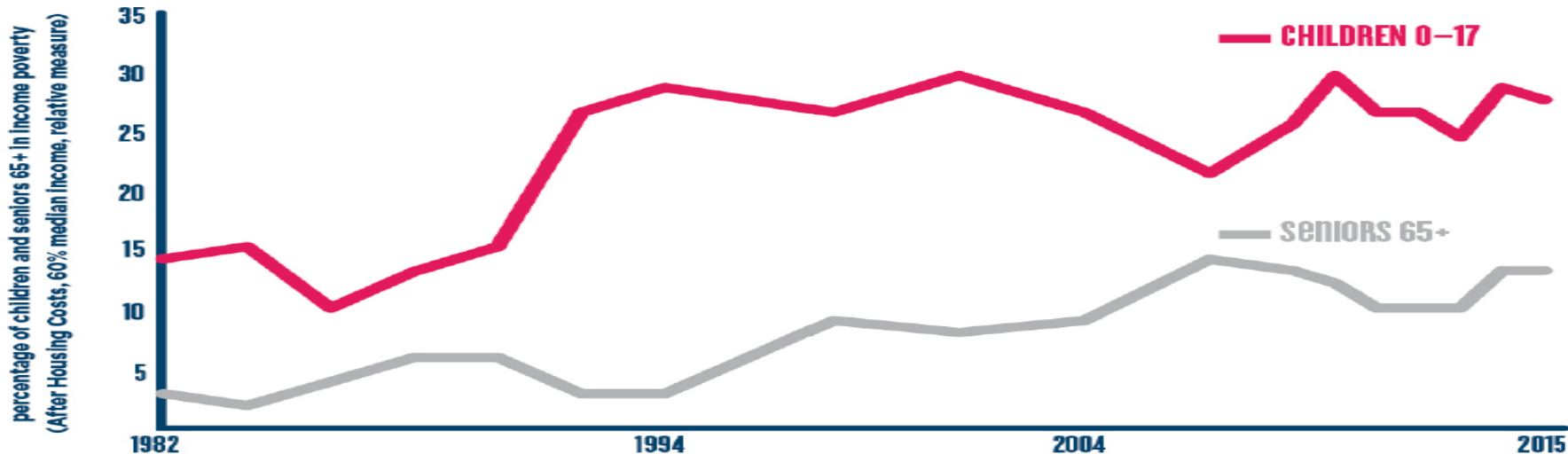
**Income poverty**

2016

## Child Poverty Trends Over Time

INCOME-RELATED CHILD POVERTY RATES ARE MUCH HIGHER NOW THAN IN THE 1980S

**KIWI CHILDREN** EXPERIENCING **INCOME POVERTY** OVER THE **LAST** **THREE** DECADES COMPARED TO SENIORS  
**LIVING IN HOUSEHOLDS**



**CHILDREN'S** LEVEL OF INCOME POVERTY **IN 1982 = 14%** → **CHILDREN'S** LEVEL OF INCOME POVERTY **TODAY = 28%**



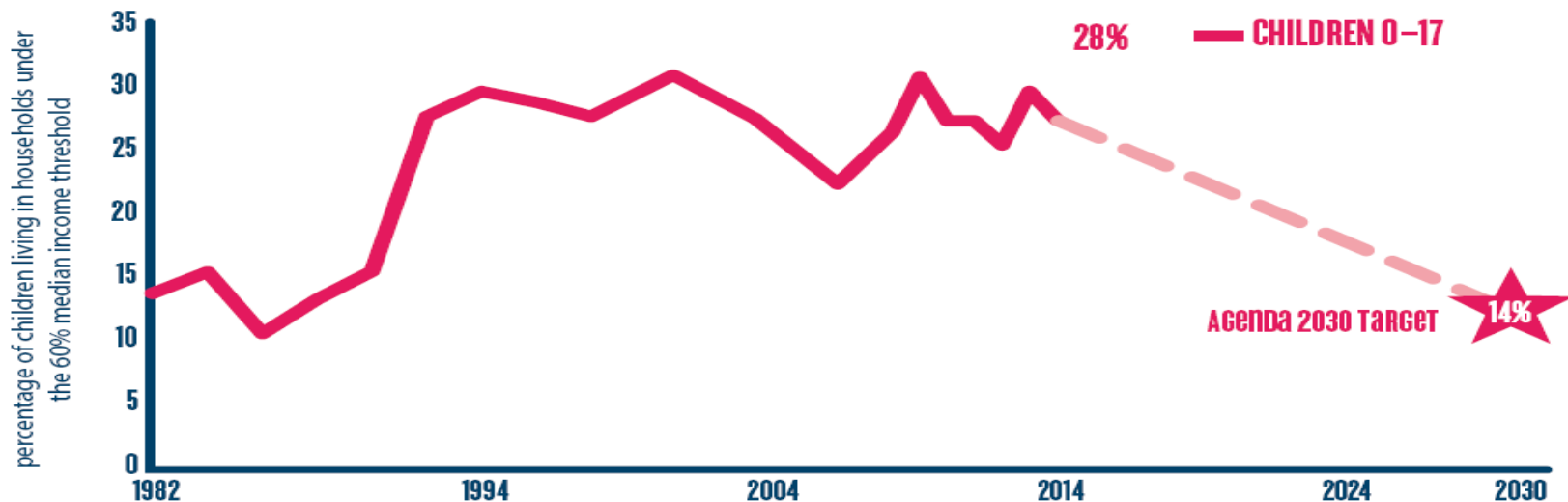
# Reaching our Sustainable Development Goals

NEW ZEALAND SIGNED UP TO THE UN'S 'AGENDA 2030' SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS. ONE OF THE GOALS IS:

"By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions."

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

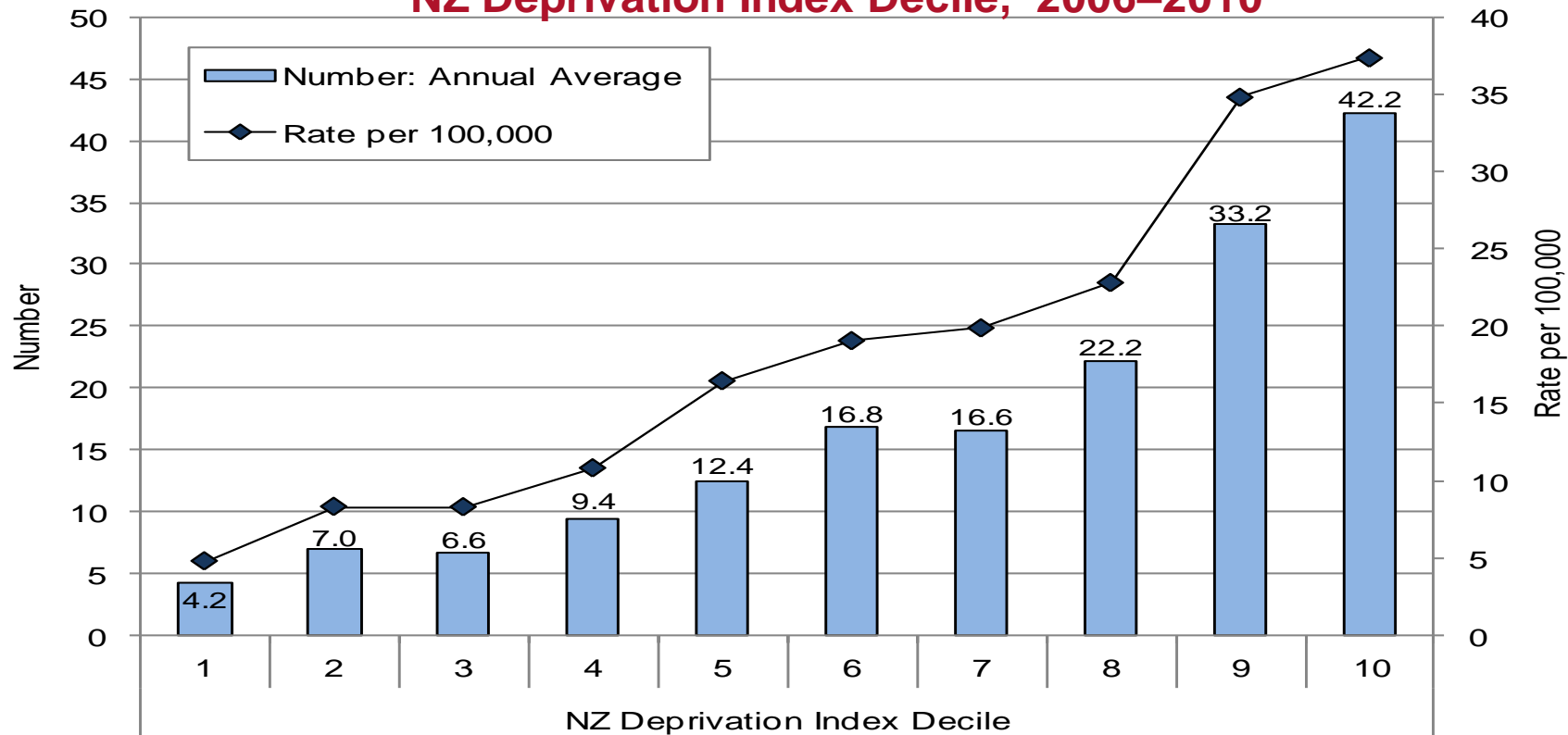
**HALVING POVERTY BY 2030 – CHILDREN IN LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS**



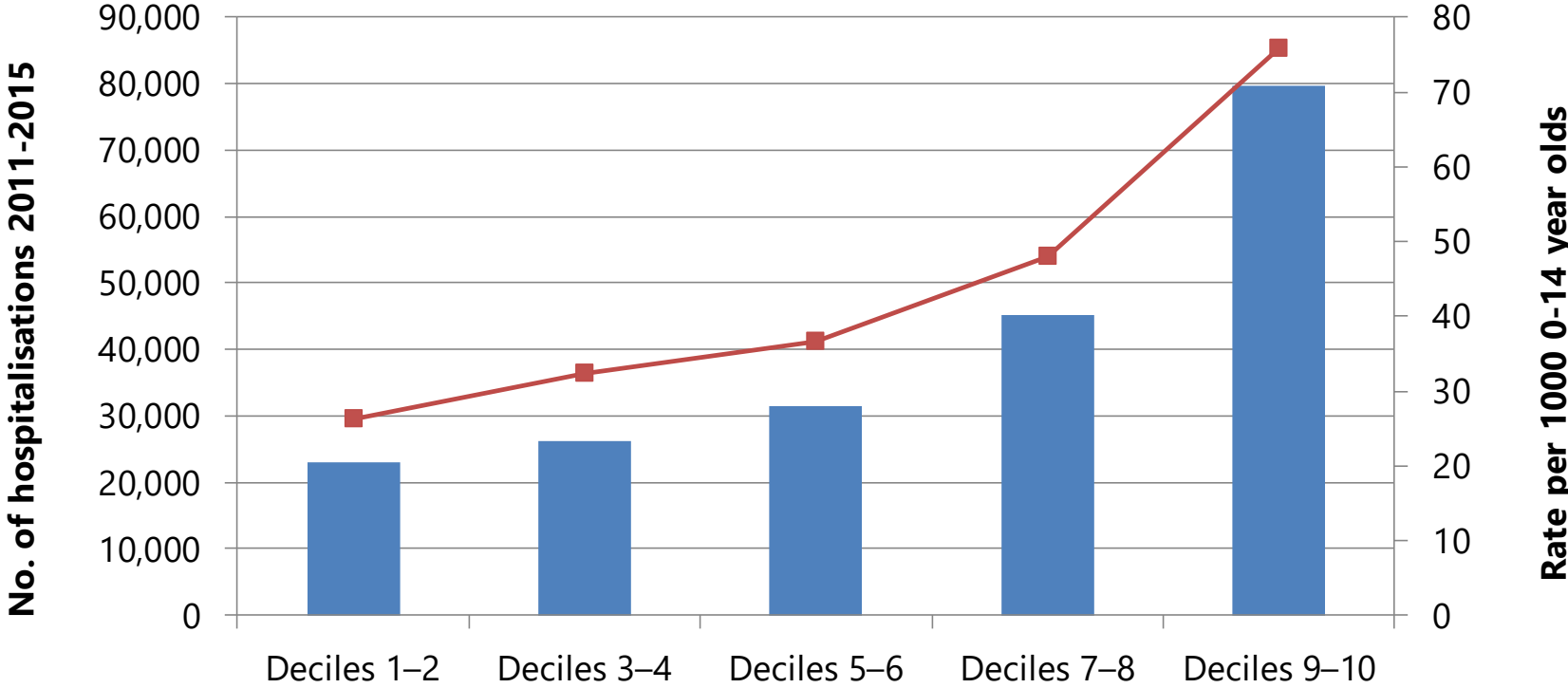


# Hospital admissions for injuries arising from assault, neglect or maltreatment of children 0–14 years

## NZ Deprivation Index Decile, 2006–2010



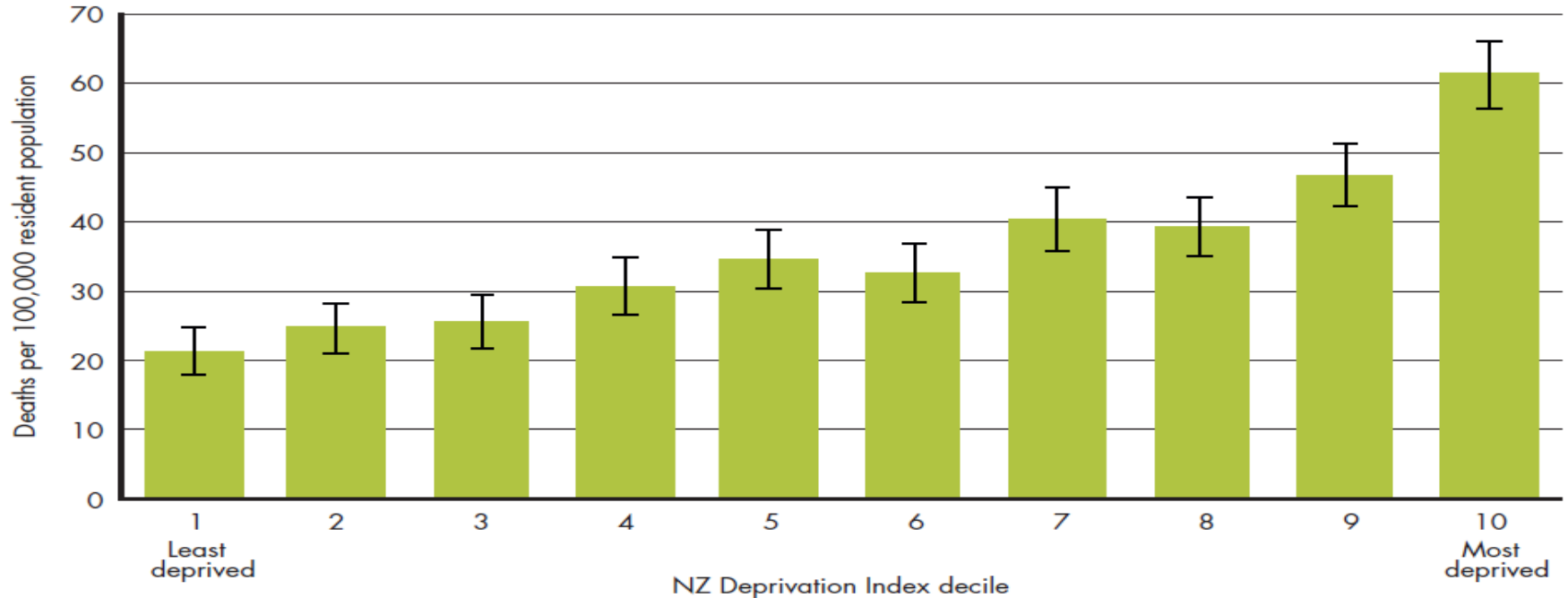
# Hospitalisation of children for illness & accidental injury



(Source: 2016 Child Poverty Monitor)

# Mortality is related to poverty

Mortality rates in children and young people aged 28 days to 24 years by NZ Deprivation Index decile



Graph kindly provided by Health Quality & Safety Commissioner (HQSC)

# An accepted relationship between childhood poverty and greater likelihood of mental health problems and intellectual functioning

Child poverty -

- poor nutrition,
- inadequate housing,
- increased likelihood of adverse events and
- living in poor neighbourhoods

all put children at higher risk of having mental health problems.

# Who is most affected by poverty in NZ?

Age	% of individuals in low-income households* 2016
Children 0-17 years	26%
18-24 years	24%
25-44 years	19%
45-64 years	17%
65+ years	14%
Overall	20%

\* Using the 60% of median “relative” (not anchored) threshold after housing costs

Source: *Household incomes in New Zealand: Trends in indicators of inequality and hardship 1982 to 2016* MSD 2017 p130

# We do much better for seniors than children!

Country	Overall	65+	<18	ratio
Belgium	11	8	15	1.9
Denmark	5	3	5	1.7
France	14	11	17	1.5
Germany	16	10	21	2.1
Ireland	12	5	17	3.4
Netherlands	5	4	6	1.5
<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6.0</b>
Spain	11	9	13	1.4
Sweden	3	2	3	1.5
United Kingdom	11	6	16	2.7

Deprivation  
rates



EU & NZ reported 2017 from approx 2008 data

# The second specific challenge: disproportionate wellbeing for tamariki Māori



# An inescapable and fundamental challenge

Disparity between Māori and NZ European child wellbeing rates



**Child/youth policy and practice affects Māori and non-Māori equally – yeah right!**



# Comparison of selected measures of wellbeing between Māori and New Zealand European children

Targeting the root causes of inequity and improving outcomes for Māori children across the board will transform the New Zealand landscape for children and come closer to achieving the full implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. (Submission to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Geneva, 2016)

## Education:

	Māori	NZ European (unless specified as non-Māori or total NZ population)
18 year olds with NCEA L2 or above (2014)	67.1%	85.1%
Children in State care with NCEA Level2 or above	15%	25%
Early Childhood Education participation	92.3%	98.2%

# Health:

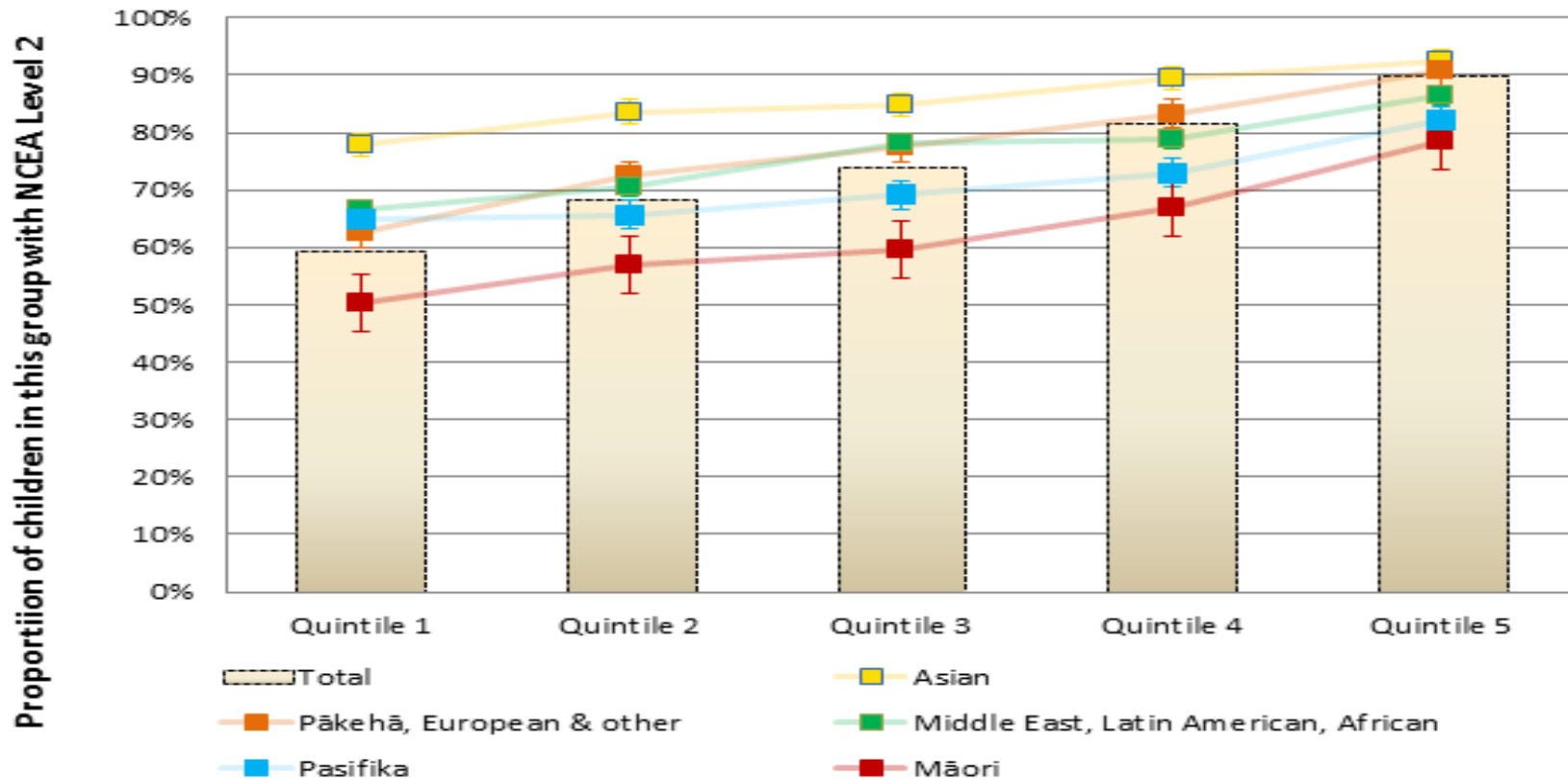
	Māori	NZ European (unless specified as non-Māori or total NZ population)
Current smokers (aged 15 above, 2013-14)	40.6%	15.2%
Life expectancy at birth	Women: 77.1 yrs Men: 73 yrs	Women: 83.9 yrs Men: 80.3 yrs
Youth suicide (15-24 years)	48.0 per 100,000	17.3 per 100,000 (non-Māori)
Meningococcal infection (per 100,000. 2013)	All ages: 3.4 <1 year: 32.3 1-4 years: 15.7	All ages: 1.5 (total NZ pop.) <1 year: 18.4 1-4 years: 5.2
Rheumatic fever (all ages, per 100,000. 2012-2014)	13.3	4.2 (non-Māori)
Sudden Unexpected Death in Infants (SUDI) (per 1,000 deaths. 2010-2012)	1.8	0.4 (non-Māori)

# Living standards:

	Māori	NZ European (unless specified as non-Māori or total NZ population)
<b>Child poverty</b> (0-17years, below 60% median household income, after housing costs, 2014)	<b>33%</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Child material hardship</b> (0-17years , 2014)	<b>24%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Children in crowded housing</b> (2014)	<b>25%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Unemployment</b> (all ages, 2014)	<b>12.1%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>
<b>Not in Education, Employment or training</b> (NEET) rate (15-24 years, 2015)	<b>20.9%</b>	<b>9.4%</b>
<b>Youth justice:</b> (number and percentage of children aged 10-16 charged in court, 2014/15)	<b>1,152 (59%)</b>	<b>489 (24%)</b>

# The “tramline gap” faced by tamariki Māori

## NCEA Level 2 achievement of school leavers, 2016



# The new legislation... an improvement?

- Hapu and iwi involvement in danger of evaporating?
- Essentially the same foundation & content as 1989 Act, but stronger and with a clearer focus on dealing with Māori children, young people and their whānau/hapu/iwi
- Addition of the 3 “pou” – guiding principles expressed as universal for all children
  - Mana tamaiti (tamariki)
  - Whakapapa
  - Whanaungatanga
- New duties on the CE to recognise and provide a practical commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (s7AA)

# Third challenge: identifying and working with neuro-developmental issues earlier

Table 1. The prevalence of neurodevelopmental disorders


Neurodevelopmental disorder	Reported prevalence rates amongst young people in the general population	Reported prevalence rates amongst young people in custody
Learning disabilities <sup>3</sup>	2 - 4% <sup>4</sup>	23 - 32% <sup>5</sup>
Dyslexia	10% <sup>6</sup>	43 - 57% <sup>7</sup>
Communication disorders	5 - 7% <sup>8</sup>	60 - 90% <sup>9</sup>
Attention deficit hyperactive disorder	1.7 - 9% <sup>10</sup>	12% <sup>11</sup>
Autistic spectrum disorder	0.6 - 1.2% <sup>12</sup>	15% <sup>13</sup>
Traumatic brain injury	24 - 31.6% <sup>14</sup>	65.1 - 72.1% <sup>15</sup>
Epilepsy	0.45 - 1% <sup>16</sup>	0.7 - 0.8% <sup>17</sup>
Foetal alcohol syndrome	0.1 - 5% <sup>18</sup>	10.9 - 11.7% <sup>19</sup>

# Never give up!







A young child with dark skin, wearing a vibrant green, purple, and blue patterned shirt, is looking intently at a large, voluminous black afro wig. The wig is the central focus of the image. The background is dark, with a sign that says "ACRJ" visible in the distance.

EACH  
GENERATION  
BETTER



MAMAKITIA A TĀTOU TAMARIKI  
Children's  
Commissioner



# A challenge

What will you do?

# an invitation

How can we help you?

# and a thank you

for all that you do in our communities.



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**Thank You**