

Taitamariki Youth Declaration Child Poverty Monitor Launch

2022





“Take care of our children. Take care of what they hear. Take care of what they see. For how the children grow, so will the shape of Aotearoa.” - Te Whaea o Te Motu, Dame Whina Cooper

We, the taitamariki (youth) from Tāmaki ki te tonga (South Auckland), come together as a unified force, believing in the power of young people’s voices to contribute to and influence change to Aotearoa’s child poverty response. We, as young people, are the only ones who know what it is like to be young today. To reach our goal of ending child poverty **we must take immediate action.**

With this first-of-its-kind Youth Declaration, we – the taitamariki of South Auckland - present our common vision for ending child poverty. It is the outcome of wānanga with nearly 50 youth from Manaaki Rangatahi, Ngā Whare Waatea and Mā Te HuruHuru collectives who contributed through kanohi-ki-te-kanohi sessions, workshops and grassroots-level dialogues.

To achieve these ends, we assert the need for an intersectional, intersectoral, and cross-cutting approach based on the principles of human rights, sustainable development, gender equality, inclusion, equity, equality, and solidarity across all actions to end child poverty and its systems at the national, regional, local, and grassroots levels.

Therefore, we call upon the Children’s Commissioner particularly, as well as the Minister for Child Poverty, central government, local government, Oranga Tamariki, Ministry of Youth Development, Ministry of Social Development, national organisations and other key decision-makers in child poverty systems to commit to and ensure the implementation of the following demands:



1. **We demand** decision-makers engage with youth in a meaningful, effective, diverse, and safe manner in the design, implementation, execution, monitoring, and evaluation of the process to end child poverty.
2. **We urge** decision-makers to invest in the digital infrastructure of affordable, dignified, safe, and stable access to digital connectivity for all (including but not limited to devices and suitable learning environments for those whose homes do not provide such a space) to aid connection and close the digital divide.
3. **We demand** decision-makers to implement a multifaceted solution that has a specific focus on support around access to education (e.g.free public transport), youth mentoring and community work with a focus on accessibility and finding families who need and want support, and increased funding for clothing, food, and resources.
4. **We especially** urge decision-makers to support spaces in which cultural and spiritual wellbeing is prioritised for youth, for example: places such as the Mā Te Huru in Auckland.
5. **We need** decision-makers to do more to enforce the rights of Māori peoples. In the spirit of Te Tiriti, we demand youth have the right to their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

6. **We especially** demand that every child has the right to shelter. A lack of quality housing puts the health and wellbeing of youth at risk. We believe that quality housing is a human right and should be included in the Bill of Rights Act 1990. We call for decision-makers to support spaces where ending youth homelessness is prioritised, for example: places such as the Manaaki Rangatahi in Auckland.

7. **We call** for the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger. We call for decision-makers to support spaces where food security is prioritised for youth, for example: places such as the Whenua Warrior in Auckland.

8. **We urge** decision makers to intervene through educational programmes on how to recognise symptoms and support those with mental health issues. These programmes should be implemented through education seminars in schools and local Communities.

9. **We believe** that the government should seek to mitigate drug related issues by decriminalising marijuana, instead of legalising it and making drug and alcohol education compulsory for students Year 6 - 13.

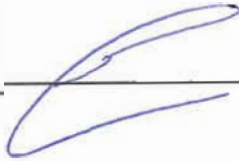
10. **We especially** believe financial education should be classified as a human right because households who take greater control over their finances are more likely to enjoy financial success, even during difficult times. Financial education is a survival skill. You simply cannot thrive in today's modern economy without an understanding of money.

Signed by taitamariki representatives:

Redacted for privacy reasons

Date: _____

Signed by The Children's Commissioner:



Date: 6 December 2022

At location: _____
