

Ministerial Committee on Poverty – Māori Party

We seek solutions that recognise the complexities of the problem and the need for a concerted, integrated, wide-ranging approach that does more than alleviate poverty but also transform poor people's lives into positive, enterprising experiences with full participation in education and the economy. There must be a commitment to not only developing a poverty removal strategy, but also a wealth creation strategy. It is not just about addressing material poverty – it is also addressing the poverty of hope.

If we can achieve early intervention in engaging with families and whānau and connecting strong whānau with those that are struggling, we can make a difference. The focus must be on supporting the achievement of Whānau Ora outcomes including inter-sectoral service delivery; while at the same time reducing the impact of inequalities on health and social service outcomes across all social determinants.

Five Areas of Emphasis

[Withheld under s.9(2)(f)(iv)]



How we will do this

- **Better facilitated processes** All of our whanau who are impoverished have a number of government agencies who “support” them; - CYFS, WINZ, HNZ, MOH, TPK, MPIA, ACC, Clinical Teams, Home Based Support Team, Assessors, extended whanau. The biggest issue is the lack of coordination. We seek an effective and integrated collaboration process.
- **Cultural Relevance** The other issue that affects our impoverished whanau is the way in which parties engage with them. A basic understanding and willingness to work with whanau is required and a non-judgmental attitude.
- **Healthy Homes:** Suitable housing for whanau that caters to their financial capacity and their whānau, and/or their disability is another critical area. *(eg 20,000 low income homes for Warm Up NZ - home insulation; insulation of every state house built before 1978; doubled funding for rheumatic fever).*
- **Communication.** Encouraging whanau to participate in the conversations to remove barriers to accessing services, support, entitlements. It might involve

regular neighbourhood forums – eg discussions around establishing homework centres; addressing addiction, responses to gambling, creating community gardens etc. It might involve a people resource –the navigator concept; community workers. It will facilitate early intervention. And importantly, there must be consultation throughout the ministerial process.

- **Innovation.** To create pathways that can apply a flexible but focused approach to achieving gains (eg Reading Together; Trade Training; academies for leadership, academic, science, sports and recreation; music and culture)

What we will do

Longstanding health inequalities no longer engender dismay, disbelief or horror. They have become expected. This acceptance and normalisation of inequalities provides an excuse for government inaction". [Reid and Robson, Hauora 2007]

It would be useful for the Committee to confirm the national and international literature about the effects of poverty- in terms of health (low-birth weight, cognitive, psychological and intellectual, reduced access to health care, increased morbidity and mortality, drugs, alcohol and risk-taking) as well as educational/academic. The Prime Minister's chief scientific advisor might help the report in this regard.

What we know about inequalities in health outcomes is that they are largely derived from social inequality. Choosing how to intervene on the impact of inequalities is critical to success. The "Strategic Review of Health Inequalities" (UK) found the following critical issues needed to be addressed to reduce the impact of inequalities:

- Give every child the best start in life;
- Enable all children young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
- Create fair employment and good work for all;
- Ensure healthy standard of living for all;
- Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities;
- Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.

The cost of poverty and income inequality: A robust analysis on the effects to the national economy is possible by comparing New Zealand income distribution with other countries and jurisdictions with more income inequality and with less income inequality. The Canadian experience of the co-relation between social exclusion and poverty is also interesting. Seeing the societal benefit of a fairer society can recruit many people to the cause. The reports from the committee can set the scene (definitions of poverty, effects of poverty, benefits of addressing poverty, evidence of programmes that work), and then promulgate a programme of action for consideration amongst whānau, families and communities.

Outcomes focused: The response to poverty should address outcomes rather than outputs and the results based accountability frameworks would be useful to connect intentions to results. In simple terms the focus is not on reducing poverty per se, rather on reducing the tragic impact of poverty.