



# Social Development and Investment

Strong families, thriving communities and a growing economy are the essential ingredients for a successful society.

People are better off in paid employment than on welfare, so getting Kiwis back to work will be the central goal of a National Government. We all face challenges in life, and National supports a strong safety net to assist New Zealanders in times of need. While some of us need a little help to get back on our feet, others need more assistance. National's pioneering Social Investment approach – using data and evidence to understand needs, and targeting support to those who are most at risk – is the most effective, long-term response we can take as a country to improving lives. We will restart this vital programme of work to tackle the root causes of disadvantage, ensuring that social spending is focused on targeted interventions that keep our young people on the path to success, and get adult New Zealanders back into the workforce.

## Policy highlights

### National will:

- Empower parents with a funding entitlement of \$3000 to allocate as they choose between whatever services they believe best meet their needs and the needs of their child during the crucial first 1000 days.
- Get New Zealanders into work with incentives for businesses to hire more staff (JobStart), cash support for Kiwis who want to start a new business (BusinessStart) and incentives to retrain and reskill people who have lost their jobs (SkillStart).
- Ensure our welfare system is a strong safety net that's focused on supporting and encouraging people to get back into work.
- Invest \$31 billion on intergenerational transport infrastructure, \$4.8 billion on world-class education infrastructure, and \$1 billion on internet and communications

infrastructure, a package that will create work for thousands of Kiwis.

- Reinstate our ground-breaking Social Investment Approach to social spending, to invest in areas that will have the biggest positive impact on social outcomes over the long term.
- Improve the reach of Whānau Ora to communities where it is not yet provided or more difficult to access, so that communities throughout New Zealand can benefit from the tailored support it provides.

## Investing in the first 1000 days

The first 1000 days of a child's life is the most critical period in their development and has an outsized impact on that child's life outcomes. This is the period when a child is at its most vulnerable, but it is also the stage of life where the brain is growing rapidly and is at its most malleable. Failure to invest in the wellbeing of women and children during this crucial period leads to worse economic outcomes in the future through lower productivity and higher health costs. We will empower parents to make decisions about their children and their own wellbeing.

### National will:

- Empower parents with an entitlement worth up to \$3000 for all expecting mothers that can be used to purchase services to support their child's first 1000 days of development. Mothers and babies who have higher needs will be entitled to up to \$3000 additional funding (\$6000 in total), along with the support of a "navigator" to help them choose the services they need.
- Implement enhanced screening, with pre-birth & post-birth GP visits, and a revamped B4 School check at age three to identify developmental concerns, screen for trauma, brain injury and foetal alcohol syndrome, and trigger early intervention services.



- Increase postnatal stays to three days for all new mothers to be able to stay in a postnatal facility of their choosing.
- Implement a system of child passports – an enhanced version of the current Well Child/Tamariki Ora book with electronic record-keeping, this will record needs identified through screening and track progress to key physical, emotional, developmental and education milestones. It will be used to ensure that, where required, early action is taken to address issues or additional needs.
- Parents will be given a choice about when they take their paid parental leave – either one parent at a time, as they now can, or both parents at the same time if that's what they prefer. We believe both parents should have the opportunity to bond with their baby during the first months of life, and we support parents to make the best decisions for their baby and family.

There is a growing body of evidence about the significant impact a child's experiences in their early years have on their later development. We believe in an holistic approach to child development that both recognises the vital role parents play in supporting their child's healthy development and that allows parents to have confidence that their children's developmental needs are being met at home and in early childhood education settings.

#### National will:

- Establish a National Centre for Child Development, headquartered at a university, that will bring together the best of child health, neuroscience and education research. Its job is to improve best-practice for child development throughout the early childhood system.
- Invest in interventions to support parents to read to children.
- Invest in programmes which help support the development of self-regulation in children and in programmes that support emotional and behavioural development.
- Improve families' access to early intervention services by ensuring early intervention assessments occur within 30 days of request.

## Getting Kiwis back to work

For the vast majority of New Zealanders, having a job is preferable to relying on welfare. With more than 220,000 New Zealanders already on unemployment benefits, and another 185,000 expecting to lose their jobs as the economic crisis unfolds, it's clear that we need to fire up our economy and invest heavily in job creation. National brought unemployment down from a peak of almost 7 per cent in the years following the Global Financial Crisis to under 4.5 per cent in our final year in office. Over our last two years in Government, job creation averaged almost 10,000 per month. We know what it takes to grow the economy and get New Zealanders back to work, and that will be the priority for a National Government.

#### National will:

- Launch JobStart, our policy to offset the costs of hiring and incentivise job creation through a \$10,000 cash payment to businesses that hire additional staff.
- Provide further cash support for Kiwis who want to start new businesses through our BusinessStart policy, including access to up to \$20,000 from their KiwiSaver account.
- Implement SkillStart, our policy to provide incentives for tertiary training providers to develop and deliver rapid retraining and job placement programmes that get Kiwis who have lost their jobs into employment.
- Expand the local Jobs and Skills Hubs model to enable local employers, organisations and councils to collaborate and improve opportunities for local people to obtain, train or retrain, for local jobs.
- Roll out our NZ Tech 2030 Plan to double the size of the technology sector by the end of the decade, and create 100,000 high-paying, future-proofed jobs.



This recession will inevitably hit our youngest people the hardest. There has already been a significant increase in the number of young people applying for a benefit, and with unemployment forecast to surge in 2021, this will only get worse. Almost half of Jobseeker Support Work-Ready grants are being given to those in their 20s, and the number of Kiwis under 25 on Jobseeker Support has doubled over the last two years. Sadly, if a New Zealander finds themselves on a benefit before the age of 20, they will spend on average another 13 years on welfare. We believe it's vital that we invest now to minimise the damage to a generation of young New Zealanders, and avoid the long term social and fiscal costs this would impose on us all.

#### National will:

- Create specialist Under 25 Job Coaches at WINZ offices, who will work with young adults who find themselves on JobSeeker Support to develop a personalised, intensive 'Path to Work' plan that supports their journey back into employment.
- Offer ongoing support from the Under 25 Job Coaches for young people who transition off JobSeeker into employment to help resolve pastoral care issues. This model has been very successful in the initiatives supporting former offenders into work.
- Provide targeted support to young people who would otherwise struggle to get their drivers licence.
- Extend He Poutama Rangatahi – Youth Employment Pathways, into more regions to move young people who are not in employment, education or training into work.

## Improving social outcomes

National will reinstate our ground-breaking Social Investment approach to delivering Government services and support. Drawing on the best available data and a true evidence-based approach to spending, we will ensure the 'invest now to save later' ethos is firmly embedded throughout the public sector. While in some cases this may result in higher

levels of spending in the short term, we know that tackling problems early in life will pay off through lower costs to the taxpayer and more New Zealanders thriving over the long term.

#### National will:

- Extend the use of Social Impact Bonds so that new ways of contracting for social outcomes can be implemented, with greater long term benefits.
- Reintroduce the Living Standards Framework and Better Public Services targets to drive improvement in priority areas.
- Target support for vulnerable children by using evidence of what works to impact their life course.
- Expand the number of Place Based Initiatives, community-led action plans where local social services are tailored to the specific needs of people in that community.
- Provide intensive home visiting programmes to all new mothers under the age of 20.
- Establish a wraparound service for parents under 20 to increase the number who achieve NCEA, and the number who go on to complete post-secondary study.

The best route out of poverty is through paid employment. Our social welfare system should be geared towards supporting and encouraging people to move from welfare and back into work. We recognise that everyone faces challenges in their life, and we believe people can overcome those challenges. Sometimes, that means giving people help to get them back on their feet. National's approach to welfare is compassionate, with a focus on ensuring obligations are firm, but fair. We believe government is there to help when times are tough, but we also expect people to help themselves as well.

#### National will:

- Commit to the principles of the Social Security Act, which ensure a focus on preparing for and finding work.



- Set targets to ensure cross-agency work focusses on reducing the number of people receiving benefits, and reducing the number of children in benefit-dependent homes.
- Ensure obligations are met for preparing and applying for work, and use sanctions when necessary, including extending money management to those up to the age of 25 who don't fulfil their obligations.
- Ensure gang members and associates cannot exploit taxpayer support.
- Extend money management to all beneficiaries under the age of 20, and to those up to the age of 25 who don't fulfil their obligations.

## Empowering New Zealanders with disabilities

National is committed to ensuring that the voices of those with disabilities are fully heard, and that all New Zealanders are able to access equal opportunities to thrive and achieve their goals and aspirations. The disability system is large and complex, and far too many New Zealanders are falling through the cracks and not getting the support they need.

### National will:

- Continue to give people with disabilities greater choice and control over the support they receive and the lives they lead through expanding the Enabling Good Lives model.
- Double the number of adult cochlear implants performed per year.
- Focus on increasing access to employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

## Whānau Ora

National's world leading innovative Social Investment approach resulted in many initiatives that provide evidence based interventions to improve the lives of our most vulnerable. Whānau Ora is an important part of National's Social Investment plan. Whānau

Ora supports families to define their journey, work towards independence and pursue their aspirations. While the exact support it provides is tailored, managing health issues, pursuing further education and life skills as well as economic security are core focuses for Whānau Ora. By placing whānau at the centre of decision making, they are supported to build a more prosperous future. Issues continue to be raised by service providers outside of the provider network and families who cannot access Whānau Ora. Proactive steps needs to be taken more to make Whānau Ora accessible in all communities throughout New Zealand.

### National will:

- Improve the reach of Whānau Ora to communities where it is not yet provided or more difficult to access.
- Review the commissioning agency funding model that limits incentive funding for achieving outcomes.
- Ensure Pasifika and other families are able to access Whānau Ora on an equitable basis.

## Supporting the community and voluntary sector

Investments that strengthen our community connections and social fabric will pay off for all of us over the long term. Our NGOs and our voluntary sector make huge contributions to our country, and we recognise that social development and economic development go hand-in-hand. National will continue to invest in a vibrant community and voluntary sector because it contributes to connected communities, a strong economy and improved social outcomes.

### National will:

Work with the voluntary sector to grow the number of volunteering opportunities so that those not in work can volunteer as a pathway back to employment.

Continue to develop programmes in schools and universities that encourage and support young people to become involved with volunteerism.



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Address funding challenges in the sector by exploring alternatives such as social enterprise, reducing regulations and finding shared cost savings between NGOs.

Community led development is not about top-down or bottom-up, it's about side-by-side. National is committed to genuinely working with communities, acknowledging that they know what works best for them. Mana motuhake, self-determination, goes to the heart of National values, which is about less government and more community. National believes in localised funding and localised solutions. We believe the community sector often provides a better service than government, and we will fund for the outcomes that local communities need.

#### National will:

- Continue our commitment to developing a well-functioning social enterprise sector, informed by our philosophy of supporting local solutions for local challenges.
- Ensure our regulatory settings – including charity laws and charitable deduction levels – are geared toward enabling Kiwis to efficiently and effectively invest in the community sector.
- Unlock new sources of capital and support for innovative social enterprises, such as through Social Investment Bonds or other outcome-focussed approaches.