



# CHILDREN'S ELECTIONS 2023

## The Children's Voices Report

They may be too young to vote, but kids' voices still matter! Throughout 2023 we ran children's elections in Aotearoa New Zealand to amplify the voices of children during election year. Here we share who they voted for, why, and, most importantly, what they want from the next government of Aotearoa.



**Save the Children**



66 I want more **kindness** and  
**caring for children** as much as  
they care for other people.

Sophie, 6

99





# FOREWORD

**'I want a Prime Minister who loves children,' Ryo, 11 years**

Children make up around **1.2 million** of Aotearoa New Zealand's population.

We too want a Prime Minister who loves children.

One that will uphold the rights of all children, regardless of their gender, wealth, ethnicity, religion, where they live, their abilities or disabilities.

The government of the day is responsible for making decisions that impact us as a nation. Despite children not having a vote, these decisions directly impact the lives of our children and determine the quality of life they will live today and tomorrow, as well as future generations of tamariki. The Prime Minister, as the elected leader of our country, plays a critical role in the Government's decision-making process. This is why it is so important that we have a Prime Minister that considers children when making decisions about our laws, government spending and policies that affect the way we live.

Guided by the leadership of the Prime Minister, the Government makes decisions that impact the quality of education and health care children will receive, the safety of the roads and transport network children will travel on, the affordability and standards of housing children will live in – especially if renting, the adequacy of incomes children will live on, particularly if reliant on low wages or welfare, the way children will be treated if they come into conflict with the law, and how well their environment is protected now and into their future.

The importance of decisions such as these cannot be overstated.

This is why Save the Children made a commitment to ensuring children across New Zealand could have their voices heard as part of the General Election 2023. Children across the motu cast their vote for their preferred Prime Minister and shared their views on issues that were important to them, the sort of Prime Minister they wanted to lead Aotearoa, and their ideas for how we can make New Zealand a better place for all New Zealanders.

The responses from the children who participated showed just how aware they are of the critical issues we are facing as a nation such as poverty, food insecurity, unaffordable housing and harmful impacts to our environment and climate. Children showed us that they are insightful, wise and care deeply about others. They have ideas to solve these issues, and the imagination, creativity and knowledge to provide solutions. They want to be involved, to be heard, and to have their right to participate upheld.

We share our sincere thanks to the political leaders who agreed to participate in our Children's Elections and shared a child-friendly bio about themselves to make voting accessible to children.

We also sincerely thank the tamariki across Aotearoa that cast their votes and shared their ideas, hopes and dreams for a better New Zealand.

Children's voices matter. We encourage all political leaders to read this report, listen to the voices of children, and consider them when making decisions that will impact the lives of our tamariki now and into their future.



**Heidi Coetzee**

**Chief Executive Officer**

*Save the Children New Zealand*



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# INTRODUCTION

When Aotearoa New Zealand went to the polls on 14 October 2023, Save the Children worked to ensure the voices of children and young people were heard. Their views and opinions matter – and ensuring those voices are heard is a fundamental right under Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They may not yet have a vote, but the decisions made today will impact their lives now and into the future. As we navigate major global challenges now and in years to come, we need to consider children's views and ensure political decision makers are acting in the best interests of children.

In 2023 we ran our children's elections, we listened to and gathered the voices of more than 1000 children. We saw that children care deeply about others, they want people to have access to nutritious food, healthy housing and to see an end to poverty and inequality. They are concerned about the cost of living, crime and safety. They have much to say about education, wanting it to be improved, and also wanting greater balance in their lives with more time for family and play. They care about recreation, particularly sports, playgrounds, libraries, pools and community events. Children asked for a kind Prime Minister who cares about nature and the environment, and one who considers the voices of children when making decisions that impact them.





# CHILDREN'S ELECTION'S 2023

## What we did.



In order to amplify children's voice and ensure their views were heard in the lead up to, during and after New Zealand's General Election 2023, we ran children's elections where children could vote and express their views on issues that they considered important to them.

### Objectives:

- Amplify the voices of children.
- Share children's views with the New Zealand public, political candidates, and the incoming government, so that children's voices are considered in decision making.
- Engage children in the election process to help create a new generation of engaged voters.
- Educate children about their right to participate; that under Article 12, in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, that their voices must be heard and respected on issues that impact them.



Two of our youth rōpū members run the voting stand at the Children's Market in Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland.

**Watch!** Check out our voting stand and hear the voices of some of the voters!





## Child-Friendly Guide

To ensure children could cast informed votes, we reached out to the leaders, deputies, and co-leaders of the five major parties in New Zealand's Parliament in February 2023. We asked all participating politicians to complete a survey with both fun and serious child-friendly questions. From this we created a 'Child-Friendly Guide' to the candidates (Appendix 1). The survey was completed prior to the parties releasing their election policies and promises. Nine out of 10 politicians completed and returned the survey, with all 10 candidates represented in the child-friendly guide. The candidate who was unable to complete the survey was included in the guide and voting forms.

## Voting Forms

To vote, children completed a voting form (Appendix 2) where they were asked who they would like to be the next Prime Minister of New Zealand. They were presented with 10 candidates, the leaders, co-leaders and deputies of the five parties represented in Parliament in February 2023. Voting forms included a photo of each candidate that matched the photo in the child-friendly guide, and candidates were presented in alphabetical order.

*Children were asked two further questions to capture their views:*

1. Why did you vote for this person?
2. What do you want the next Prime Minister of Aotearoa to do to make New Zealand a better place for children?

They were also asked to provide their first name and age, this was optional.

All voting materials ceased to be available for promotion, distribution and events six days prior to the General Election, in keeping with the requirements from the Electoral Commission.

*"I want the next Prime Minister to make sure our parents get **paid enough**, and to make **NZ a safer place** by stopping physical bullying and the other types."*

Louie, 10



## Children's Markets

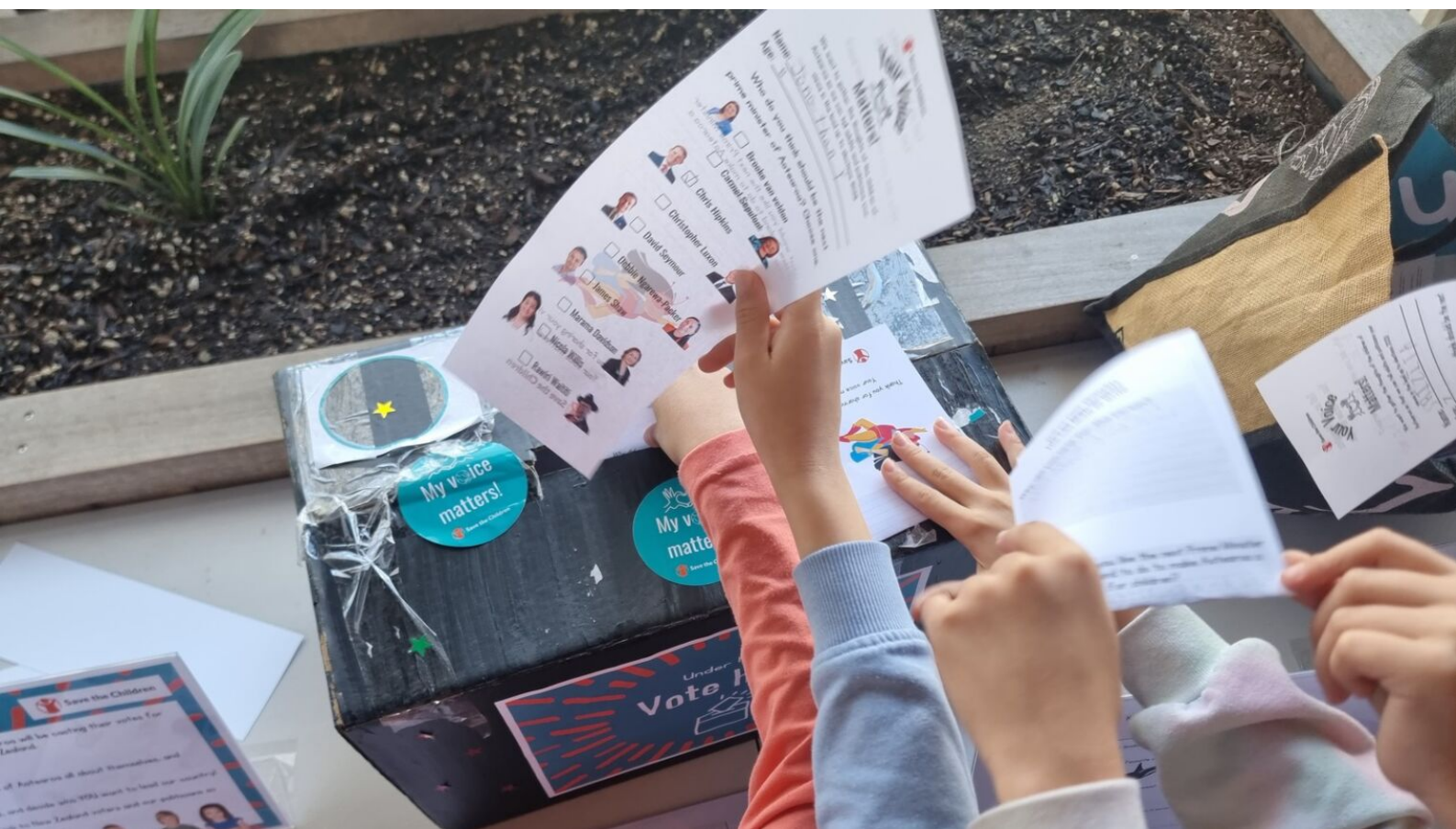
In partnership with the Creative Kids Collective, we ran a children's voting stand at three kids-only markets in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland between June and October. Children were presented with the child-friendly guide to the candidates and a voting form, they cast their votes in a voting booth and posted it in a ballot box. They had adult support for reading and writing if needed.

## School Participation

Schools were invited to register and receive the same resources to run our elections in their schools. They were encouraged to return their voting forms to Save the Children New Zealand. We also visited two schools in Auckland where children were invited to participate and vote in our voting stands.

## Participants

Children were invited but not required to participate. In total we received votes from 1018 children from Northland to Invercargill, with most votes gathered in Auckland due to the children's markets campaign. Participants had a mean age of 10.3, and ranged from 5 to 17, with one three-year-old. Note that not all children provided their age, as this step was optional.



# RESULTS

## Preferred Prime Minister

Chris Hipkins was the children's preferred Prime Minister with 23% of the votes. Christopher Luxon was second with 18% of the votes. Marama Davidson and Brooke van Velden came 3rd equal with 12% of the votes each.

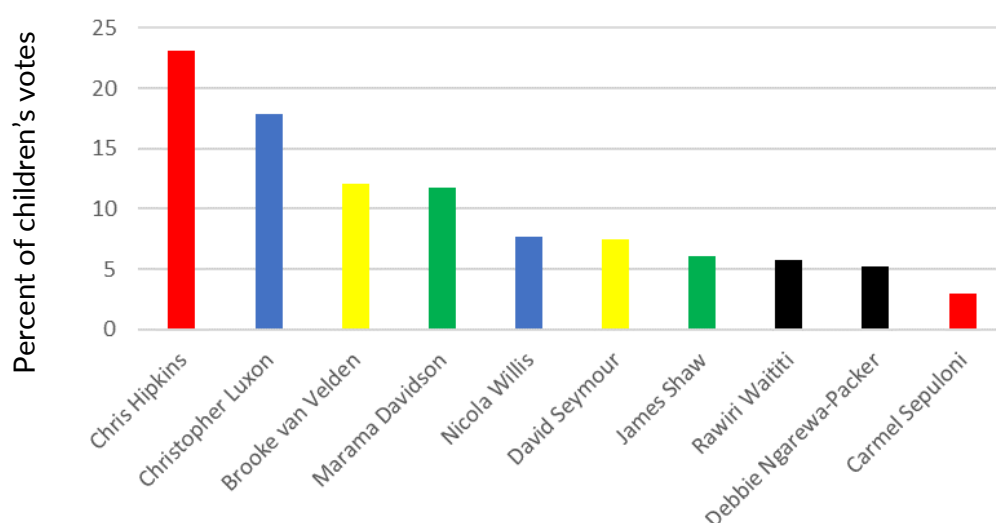


Figure 1: Preferred Prime Minister voted for by children.

## Preferred Party

Combined results of the candidates from the same party resulted in first place for Labour to lead the country with 29% of votes and National in second place with 23% of votes.

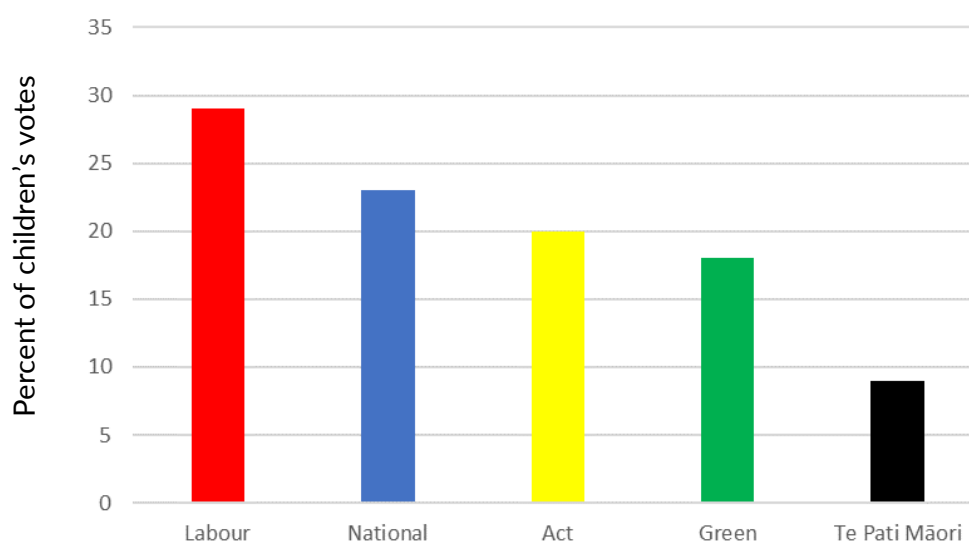


Figure 2: Preferred party voted for by children



# WHY DID CHILDREN VOTE FOR THEIR CANDIDATE?

Children were asked “Why did you vote for this candidate?” Just like adults, children voted for their candidates for a range of reasons; connections and similarities, the policies the candidate put forward, or who was a familiar face.

A large majority of children based their vote for the Prime Minister on shared or related identities, such as their favourite colour, food, or animal. Having a leader that represented their own identities resonated strongly with many children – even if it was something as little as both liking the colour pink.

Some children identified with their preferred candidate through shared cultural identities. For example, many children who voted for Rawiri Waititi valued his Māori identity and culture, wanting to see a leader that is, “Māori like me”.

Younger children often appeared to vote for candidates based on shared likes such as favourite food, colour and animal, while older children carefully considered candidate responses about leadership qualities and what the leaders would do to make Aotearoa better for children. For example, some children voted for Christopher Luxon because of their support for the ‘no phones at school’ policy. Many children voted for James Shaw due to his promises about supporting children with a universal basic income. Additionally, some of the votes for Chris Hipkins were focused on his commitment to healthy lunches and lower fruit and vegetable costs.

Another key theme identified was sharing strong values. Many children identified kindness as influencing their vote, almost regardless of which politician they preferred. The children associated the idea of kindness with attributes of generosity, a lack of judgement (around race and ethnicity), trustworthiness, respect and empathy.



*“Because my favourite colour is pink too and I like cupcakes!”*



*“I voted for him because he is Māori like me.”*



*“I voted for this person because she shows kindness and I feel like she is caring and she has a special kind of animal I have never heard anyone want to be.”*

Children clearly value these important traits when choosing someone to lead them and kindness and respect are important priorities for them.

Education and learning were major priorities that children also focused on for choosing a leader for the country. This theme was identified in responses across a variety of politicians; however, it was particularly prevalent for children who voted for Brooke van Velden, who focused on education in her response. Some children mentioned the importance of accessible and inclusive education for all children in Aotearoa.

Many children expressed concerns or hope for the future of the environment in Aotearoa. Children placed great importance on politicians' plans for tackling environmental issues and climate change. Children know that we are in a climate crisis and they may not know how to act or make impactful change on environmental issues, but they want a leader who does.

Children know that we are in a **climate crisis** and they may not know how to act or make impactful change on environmental issues, but they want a **leader** who does.





# SOME OF THE REASONS CHILDREN VOTED FOR CANDIDATES:



## Chris Hipkins

*Preferred Prime Minister #1*

*"I voted for this person because I want to have a better planet."  
"Because he is really kind and friendly."  
"He actually seems like he's being real, Chris is authentic, social and fun! He is smart in different decisions he has to make for the country, and I believe he will change not only the country but the globe."*



## Christopher Luxon

*Preferred Prime Minister #2*

*"He is very inspirational for young people."  
"Because he supports every business."  
"I voted for this person because it sounds like he really wants to make NZ a better a place."  
"Because he cares about children's learning and wants them to be happy!"*



## Brooke Van Velden

*Preferred Prime Minister #3*

*"She supports education."  
"She cares for kids (us). Thinks about how the world can become better. I liked her choices."  
"She supports all races and wants the absolute best for NZ, she is a very kind individual."  
"So the earth will not be polluted."*



## Marama Davidson

*Preferred Prime Minister #3*

*"Because she is caring for children like us."  
"Because she wants more children to be included. Also she wants to make sure our whānau has a home."  
"She really understands what children need for the future, and that she will make that change."  
"Because she says she will look after the planet."*



## Nicola Willis

**Preferred Prime Minister #4**

*"Love their thinking."*

*"I voted for this person, because she knows that tech should be needed for the world and for solving the climate change."*

*"Because she said to provide with great education."*

*"I voted for this person because I believe it is important that children have as much support as possible."*



## David Seymour

**Preferred Prime Minister #5**

*"He loves humanity and cares about people."*

*"Because he don't think of his self but he does think of others and he doesn't judge."*

*"Because he cares about making houses cheaper for our families and for the builders at the same time!"*

*"Funny person and kind."*



## James Shaw

**Preferred Prime Minister #6**

*"I voted for James Shaw because he cares about children support and he wants the ocean to be healthier."*

*"Because they will do a better job representing youth and caring for the environment."*

*"For a home and food for homeless people."*

*"I want to give children healthy food and fresh water."*



## Rawiri Waititi

**Preferred Prime Minister #7**

*"He looks like he represents Māori culture."*

*"He is willing to fight for our Māori culture."*

*"He looks the most skilled, kind and trustworthy person."*

*"Because I know a bit about him and he's perfect for that position in my opinion."*

*"Because I saw his interview on TV and his party has good policies."*





## Debbie Ngarewa-Packer

Preferred Prime Minister #8

*"She said that she would listen to children's dreams and help them be what they want to be."*

*"Because she would be the first Māori Prime Minister."*

*"Because she has a big vision for children."*



## Carmel Sepuloni

Preferred Prime Minister #9

*"Because she wants everyone to be treated with kindness and wants to give people enough kai."*

*"Because they seem like a nice person and she is loyal and trustworthy."*

*"She has good experience. She has been there for 15 years."*

*"I voted for Carmel because I like how she helps with challenges children may face."*

\*Children's quotes have been included without being edited.

*"Our decision makers should **listen to us more**, our imaginations can be **very creative** so adults should use more of our ideas."*



# WHAT DO CHILDREN WANT TO SEE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE GOVERNMENT?

Children were asked “What do you want the next Prime Minister of Aotearoa to do to make New Zealand a better place for children?”

The responses indicated that children care deeply about others. They want people to have access to food, housing and to see an end to poverty and inequality, and are concerned about the cost of living. They have much to say about education, wanting it to be improved, and also wanting more balance in their lives with more time for family and play. They care about recreation, particularly sports, playgrounds, libraries, pools and community events. Children asked for a kind Prime Minister, one who considers the voices of children on issues that impact on them.



Figure 3: Word cloud of responses from children when asked “What do you want the next Prime Minister of Aotearoa to do to make New Zealand a better place for children?” The size of the word indicates the frequency that this word was used in the responses.

Over 1,140 issues were raised by children about what they want the Prime Minister to do to make Aotearoa better for children. Some children raised more than one point in their answers, all responses were counted. The responses were thematically coded to 18 categories, with some overlap.



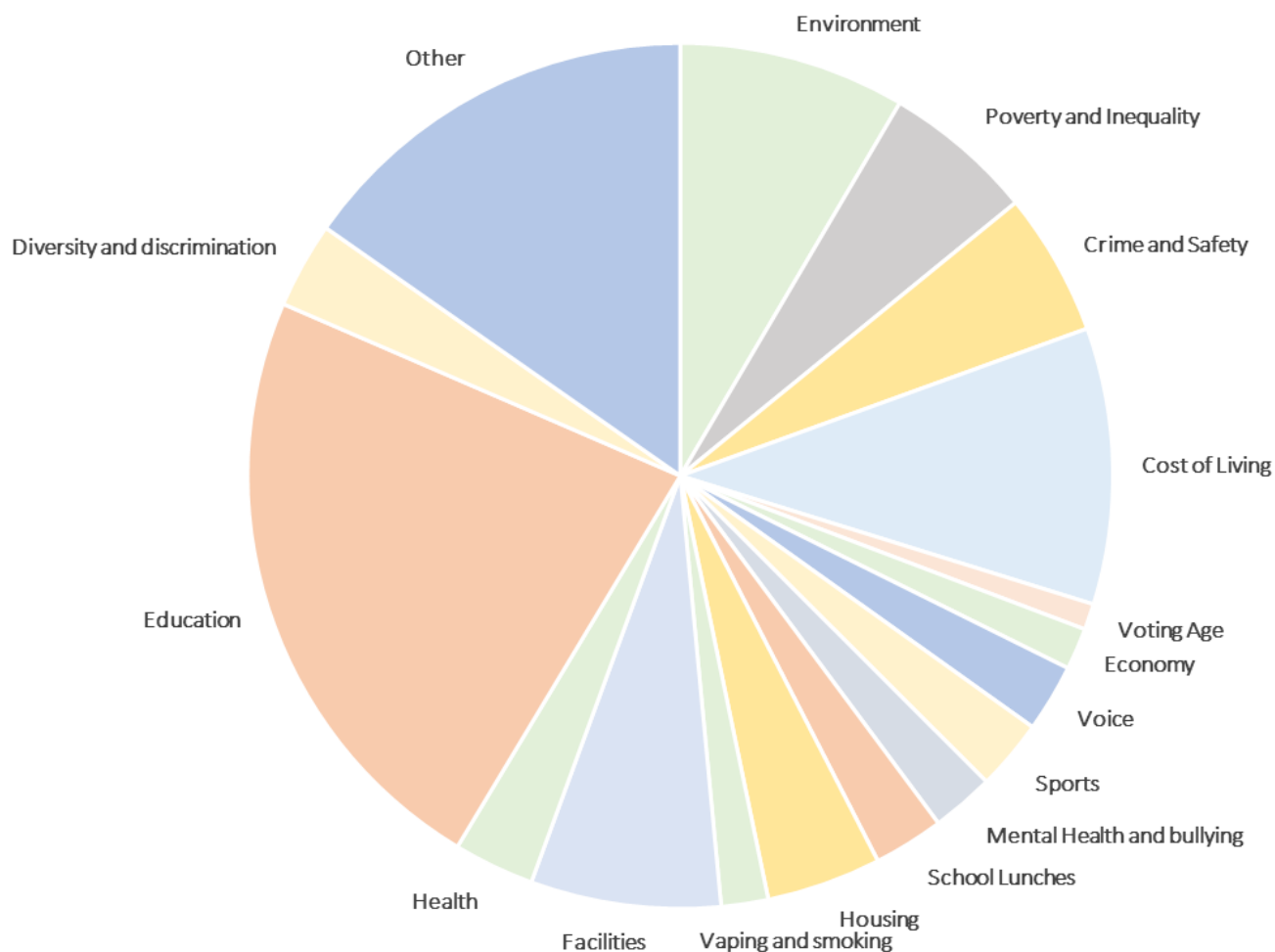


Figure 4: Category breakdown of issues raised by children that they want the next Prime Minister of New Zealand to address.





# CONCERNS RAISED BY CHILDREN

## EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS

 22%

One-fifth (22%) of children raised education as an area they wanted the next Prime Minister of Aotearoa to address. This reflects the importance of school life to children, and the impact it has on their daily lives and their future.

The key asks from children about education were:

### A general improvement in education.

*"I wish kiwi kids could get a better education. I do appreciate the effort schools put in but I hope to learn more in less systematic ways and to open my curiosity at a variety of topics I enjoy."* **Angelina, 12**

*"Reduce voting age, make NZ carbon free and instructing teachers on how to teach reading, writing, and math properly."* **Jack, 14**

*"More historic learning, and adding more cultures."* **Myea, 12.**

*"Teach financial literacy and improve kids' education."* **Mehul, 11.**

### Better pay and working conditions for their teachers. Better school resourcing. More sports equipment.

*"Pay teachers more so we don't have to miss school."* **Lyla, 10.**

*"To provide more resources for the teachers so children can have a better education."* **Harriet, 10.**

*"Give money to schools so they can support more children."* **Sara, 10**

*"To donate more money to schools to provide them with more equipment so it gives more possible options."* **Nicole, 11.**

*"Build more school basketball equipment. So we can be smart!"* **Rocco, 11.**

*"More sports equipment in schools."* **Zoro.**

### Less time in school.

*Children expressed a desire to spend more time with family and have more time for rest, recreation and play.*

*"Have 1 hour less school so we aren't so tired in school."* **Anon, 7**

*"Make Friday a third weekend day make it a 5 hour day so children can have more time to imagine and help kids."* **Kahl, 12**

*"Make school 4 days only because to give us more family time."* **Jean, 9**

*"I think there should be more time to spend with friends and family."* **Kayden, 9**

*"Make lunch breaks longer."* **Zoe, 10.**

## Support for diversity of learners. Address bullying in schools.

*"Make school options easier for people like me with dyslexia." Anon, 13*

*"Te Reo Māori in all kura." Tapuwae, 8*

*"More education, by taking learning slow, step by step is better for us." Mauleen, 13*

*"I would like them to support LGBT kids and bullying. Also, I would like them to invest in year 5-6 education." Benita, 11*

*"Help kids with learning disabilities. I have tourettes, ADHD, and OCD. No one cares that I get bullied." Anon, 11.*

*"I would like to help children with disabilities and have more schools so children can attend." Anon, 11.*

## Phones in school.

*A number of children expressed a view on banning or allowing phones in schools.*

*"Ban mobile phone use in schools. Make sure that kids don't come to school hungry and they have lunches." Kayla, 12.*

*"Not ban phones from school." Dylan, 14*

*"Don't ban mobile phones. " Yolana, 10.*



## SCHOOL LUNCHES

Children expressed a desire to ensure the school lunch programme continues, and that the lunches improve to be more delicious and nutritious. They were concerned for children who may not have access to food, and see this as a way of addressing food insecurity.

*"To give school lunches to schools because not many parents many be able to provide their kids with lunches." Jacob 13*

*"I would like the next prime minister to be helpful of NZ and put/bring better food for schools and get free lunch for every school." Kylie, 12.*

*"Better free lunches because not much kids eat them so a lot goes to waste." Anna, 13*

*"Children should have free lunches at school and every child has to play a sport." Sayoriah, 9.*

## ENVIRONMENT



 8%

Eight percent of the issues raised by children related to the environment. Children want the next Prime Minister to care about the natural environment and the future of the planet. Waste, plastic and pollution were raised in many responses. Children also care deeply about animals and want to ensure they are protected. Children are asking the Prime Minister to help with “stopping pollution”, “putting rubbish in the right bin”, and “planting more trees.”

*“To try their best to make sure the planet they return to us is habitable and equitable for all people.” David, 14*

*“I want the next prime minister to be more caring about nature and to make sure all children in Aotearoa have a good education.” Gabrielle, 9.*

*“To tell people to pick up rubbish at the beach to protect the sea and animals so they don't choke.” Scarlett, 6*

*“Protect the animals. Look after our families.” Marthena, 6*

*“Less rubbish at the parks so children can enjoy time with their day.” Cyrus, 9.*

*“To take care of animals and stop littering. Also make animal abuse illegal. No more pollution through the air, and banned cigarettes.” Emele, 10.*

*“Stop pollution and grow more trees for the environment.” Hayden, 9*

*“Protect the native bush and animals that live there.” Toby, 14.*

## FACILITIES AND SPORTS.



 6%

Children care about local facilities such as parks, playgrounds, pools, libraries and sports grounds, making up 6% of responses. They want more of these, and for them to be clean and safe. This reflects the importance of local government and how their decisions can impact children.

*“More playgrounds and skateparks.” Xavier, 11*

*“Support libraries, because it has history from the past and we could learn about the history in the books.” Lilly, 9*

*“More playgrounds and cycle paths, affordable housing for us all.” Tive, 15*

*“The let swimming pools free for children in summer. They give homeless people \$20 a week.” Henry, 9.*

*“I think we need more inside/outside spaces for teens to hangout, like the Rangatahi zone that happened last week.” Besi, 12.*

*“Allow for free entry to pools and other active activities.” Tewhiko, 13.*



## COST OF LIVING, POVERTY AND INEQUALITY. 9%

Children were very aware of the rising “cost of living.” Many children asked the Prime Minister to address the cost of food and housing, to pay their parents and families more, and to ensure people are not living in poverty. These issues made up 9% of responses. Children as young as eight years old expressed concern for this issue. Fuel prices, food prices, house prices, rent prices, and school supply prices were just a few of the issues associated with the cost of living that children wanted to see change in.

*“Bring down the cost of houses and food so that kids have a warm home and don't get hungry.” Lilly, 10*

*“To make sure our parents get paid enough and to make NZ a safer place by stopping physical bullying and the other types, and to make sure everyone has enough money.” Louie, 10*

*“Better houses, more funding for 0 to 2 year olds, paying Mum's to stay home with their children.” Georgia, 8.*

*“Help children who are in poverty more.” Milo, 12*

*“Make houses for children and for homeless people.” John, 10*

*“Make things cheaper like food and homes.” Charlie, 10.*

*“I would like them to make sure that all children and adults have a home, food, water. And to cut down the use of fossil fuels and polluting the world.” Malia, 10.*

*“Someone who would reduce crime and make life better and make life better for people in poverty.” Anon, 12*

## CRIME AND SAFETY. 5%

Children were concerned about crime and safety, and 5% of responses raised these issues. Ram-raids and safety were a focus for a number of children. Children want to feel safe. Many responses highlighted their plea for a lack of guns and more safety mechanisms in this country. Some children responded by just wanting general safety throughout the country, such as always having an adult with them, being able to catch a bus on their own, and having safer suburbs to walk in.

*“Helping youth that have been involved in a crime.” Hiero, 12*

*“Kids should not go to jail.” Jamie, 4.*

*“I want them to make sure people feel safe.” Anon, 12.*

*“I would like the safety for children stronger and put more laws enforced for ramraids, vaping, and shop lifting, etc. And easier learning in school, it takes stress off of children and helps mentally and physically.” Anna, 13.*

*“So people would not be afraid at school because tonnes of kidnappers are at schools now.” Celestie, 11.*

## VOICE AND RIGHTS

A large number of children expressed that they want to be involved more in decision making. They want to be consulted about issues that impact them and for adults to listen to them.

*"To listen to children like us, and for schools to have fair income. And not let adults always make decisions, please!" Felix, 9*

*"Listen to what kids say." Anon, 11*

*"Because we all need to work together on challenges that children are confronted with." Shaz, 10.*

*"Listen to them care for them save children." Lydia, 9*

*"To give children more rights and safety rules." Anaya, 11*

*"They should listen to us more, our imaginations can be very creative so adults should use more of our ideas." Jemma, 10*

*"I would like to decrease the voting age and clean up the streets." Isabella, 10.*

## VAPING AND SMOKING

Many responses showed that children were concerned about the rise of vaping. Children wanted this to stop as this is a health risk that children are now exposed to. There were also comments comparing this topic to Australia, who have strictly limited access to vapes.

*"Ban vaping well like Australia did." Reechi, 11*

*"Ban vaping like Australia." Conrad, 12*

*"Less vaping/smoking and make more library." Teerak, 9.*

## OTHER

Children had a range of requests for the Prime Minister, ranging from the very specific, such as more care for rabbits and more video games, to broader requests such as asking the next leader of Aotearoa to be kind and humble, and to do what is right for all people who live in Aotearoa.

*"More kindness and caring for children as much as they care for other people." Sophie, 6*

*"I would like the prime minister to be helpful and respect people and their choices." Tekaea, 11*

*"Support diabetes and the kids that have it that need it." Anon.*

*"Make more sports equipment and more free fruit at the supermarket." Harlen, 10.*

*"Better opportunities for kids to become pro athletes. Especially football. Also give kids the chance to work and earn money." Alfary, 12*

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Aotearoa New Zealand ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1993, and under article 12 children have the right to be heard and have their views considered on issues that impact them. As such we are calling on the next government of Aotearoa to listen to the children's views expressed in this report, and do more to ensure children are heard and consulted on policies that impact them.

**Based on what children told us in our Children's Elections, children are asking the Government for the following:**

- Bring more balance into children's lives – between play, school, recreation and family time.
- Address resourcing in schools to ensure every learner is supported in the ways they need it, and are valued and respected.
- Consult children on any policies relating to cell-phone use or bans in school.
- Continue the Healthy School Lunches Programme Ka Ora, Ka Ako and consult with children on how to improve the programme.
- Take real action to address poverty, inequality and the cost of living. Children are experiencing this in their daily lives and it is having impacts on their education, health, well-being and their futures. Children care deeply about others, and they want everyone to thrive and live well.
- Take action on environmental issues and ensure children are heard when making decisions and policy changes relating to the environment. Respect and value their views, as they are the generation that will be dealing with the consequences of these issues in the future.
- Take urgent action to address vaping among children and rangatahi. Consult and listen to children and their asks around preventing or banning vaping.
- Support local councils to ensure community facilities such as parks, pools, libraries and sports grounds are maintained, safe, clean and accessible.
- Lower the voting age to 16 so that children can have their voices heard. This can begin with Local Government elections, as we have seen that local issues are very important to children.
- Ensure children are consulted and engaged with by adults, particularly decision makers, on issues that impact them.



# CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Children's voices matter. They are endearing, insightful, and imaginative. Speaking with children is necessary in order to adequately understand and meet their needs. Children have a level of empathy, innocence and insight that we as adults have largely lost. Not only this, as signatories to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, we have an obligation to ask, listen, hear, and respect the voices of children. The children of today will live with the decisions of today's government for longer than any adults who have a voice in parliament, we implore the adults and decision makers of Aotearoa to do better in listening to children and addressing the issues that are impacting their lives now and their futures.





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Creative Kids Collective.
- Child volunteers at elections booths.
- Electoral Commission for donating booths.
- Politicians for contributing information for their personal bios.
- Children for voting.
- Schools, teachers and adults for support their children to get involved.

**What is a pirate's favourite letter?**  
Arrrrrrrrrr!

**Favourite food:** Italian

**Favourite colour:** Forest Green

**James Shaw**

**If you were an animal, what would you be?**  
A humpback whale, because they are extraordinary, graceful giants of the ocean. They do remarkable things, such as communicate with each other over enormous distances with an incredibly complex language. They are enormously important to the ecological health of the oceans.

**What do you believe are the three most important qualities in a person?**  
Integrity, perspective and wisdom.

**Describe your ideal weekend.**  
A nature walk on Saturday and playing Dungeons and Dragons on Sunday.

**What do you think the world needs more of?**  
The world needs more listening to each other. So many of the most difficult problems are stuck because the governments of the world fail to try to truly understand each others' perspectives and fall back on what they regard as their national interest.

**What do you think political leaders should do to support children?**  
The single best thing political leaders in Aotearoa could do to support children would be to provide a guarantee of minimum income level to every person in the country. This would ensure all families would be lifted out of poverty and ensure that all families have the ability to provide a healthy upbringing for their children.

**What fish only swims at night?**  
A starfish!

**Favourite food:** Pizza

**Favourite colour:** Yellow




**David Seymour**

**If you were an animal, what would you be?**  
Definitely a dolphin, because they are the kindest, most intelligent, and one of the fastest.

**What do you believe are the three most important qualities in a person?**  
A person should be proud of who they are and always do their best. They should help others when they can. They should have a sense of humour and enjoy life.

**Describe your ideal weekend.**  
Go to the beach to swim and sunbathe, read a book and have fish and chips.



**What do you think the world needs more of?**  
The world needs more acceptance of who each and every person is, without judging anyone on their identity.

**What do you think political leaders should do to support children?**  
We should make it easier for builders to build houses. When it's too hard to build houses and there aren't enough, some children end up without a safe and dry place to live.

**What does a cow call an earthquake? A milkshake!**

**Favourite food:** Pasta... and strawberries!

**Favourite colour:** Red

**Chris Hipkins**

**If you were an animal, what would you be?**  
I'd like to be a dog - they're loyal, and I think it would be great to spend my days running around outside and snoozing in the sun.

**What do you believe are the three most important qualities in a person?**  
Perseverance, empathy and the ability to laugh at yourself.

**Describe your ideal weekend.**  
My ideal weekend is spending time with my family, I'd take my kids on some kind of outdoor adventure, maybe to the beach.

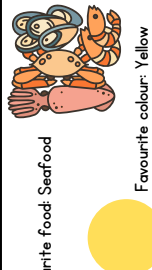

**What do you think the world needs more of?**  
We should all treat each other how we'd like to be treated.

**What do you think political leaders should do to support children?**  
I want New Zealand to be a place where every kid has the opportunity to reach their full potential. This is a priority for me, which is why we're helping families where we can, like with free and healthy lunches in your schools, helping parents to pay for childcare, and making kids bus trips free or half price. I believe that every child should be able to go to a good school - to learn and to have fun. We also need to make sure New Zealand is the cleanest and greenest place on earth for kids to grow up in!

**What kind of cheese do you use to hide a pony? Mas-ca-pony!**

**Favourite food:** Seafood

**Favourite colour:** Yellow

**Nicola Willis**

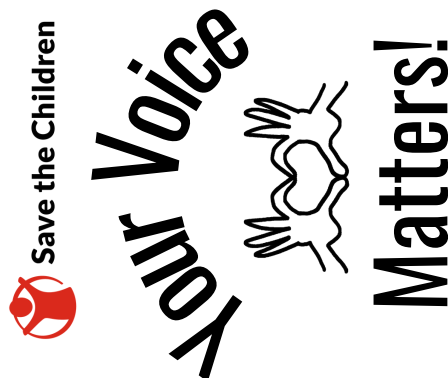
**If you were an animal, what would you be?**  
A Labrador dog!

**What do you believe are the three most important qualities in a person?**  
Compassion, loyalty and work ethic.

**Describe your ideal weekend.**  
Saturday morning pancakes with my children, followed by a bush walk, yummy lunch, trip to the beach and then dinner out with my lovely husband. Then on Sunday head to Disneyland and then home to a movie and pizza.

**What do you think the world needs more of?**  
Technologies to solve climate change and more cures to cancer and other diseases.

**What do you think political leaders should do to support children?**  
Strengthen the economy so that families have a lower cost of living and better incomes to support their children. Better public services such as schools and hospitals, so they can provide all children with a great education and excellent hospital care.



## Election Guide for Tamariki 2023

We asked the leaders, co leaders and deputies of the parties in parliament in Aotearoa all about themselves, and what they want to do for children!

Have a read, and get to know the candidates in our child-friendly guide.



Why are fish so smart?  
Because they live in schools.



Favourite food: Cupcakes



Favourite colour: Pink



Brooke van Veldon

**If you were an animal, what would you be?**

A cat because they are my favourite animals. They are independent but are social and fun, and are happy with a bit of sleep, sun, shelter and food. It's a simple life!

**What do you believe are the three most important qualities in a person?**

Honesty, hard-work ethic, and loyalty. It's important that people can rely on you to do what you say you will do, know what you say is true, and that you will be there for them.

**Describe your ideal weekend.**

Have a sleep in, have brunch with friends, play tennis and watch a good movie with family.

**What do you think the world needs more of?**

The world needs more respect for every person. Every child should know that it doesn't matter what race, gender, or religion they are, we should all be respected and given the same opportunity to succeed.

**What do you think political leaders should do to support children?**

Every child needs a good education at school so they can succeed later in life. We need to focus on getting the settings right for what kids are learning and how they're learning so kids can grow up to have as many opportunities as possible. So many kids don't attend school and it's not good for them now or in the future.

What kind of socks do grizzly bears wear? None! They wear bear feet!



Favourite food:



Favourite colour: Red



Carmel Sepuloni

**If you were an animal, what would you be?**

I'd love to be a dolphin - because I love the water, and they're curious and sociable.

**What do you believe are the three most important qualities in a person?**

Integrity, work ethic and their ability to laugh

**Describe your ideal weekend.**

Hang with the family!

**What do you think the world needs more of?**

Tolerance and respect for each other.

**What do you think political leaders should do to support children?**

We all need to genuinely work together on the challenges that children are confronted with.

What did the ruu want?  
He wanted more pork!



Favourite food: Sour cream



and chives potato chips

Favourite colour:



Green like our native bush!

Marama Davidson

**If you were an animal, what would you be?**

A Ruu - Morepork. They are small and cute and fluffy. They love the night time like me, and they are a native taonga (treasure) bird!

**What do you believe are the three most important qualities in a person?**

To be able to make people laugh! To be able to make people feel loved! To be loving and caring to our planet, our river and moana, our native bush and our animals.

**Describe your ideal weekend.**

Watch movies with my family, bake cakes and eat them, swim in the sea, walk in the bush, jump on the trampoline with my mokopuna - and lots of sleep!

**What do you think the world needs more of?**

Children like you who are caring and loving to each other and to our planet. And more time for everyone to play and have fun!

**What do you think political leaders should do to support children?**

Politicians should listen to children more. We should make sure your whānau have a good home, enough kai, and are treated with kindness and respect.

Knock knock. Who's there?  
Tank. Tank who?  
You're welcome!



Favourite food: Smoked eel



Favourite colour: Gold



Debbie Ngarewa-Packer

**If you were an animal, what would you be?**

An orca, because they live in the ocean!

**What do you believe are the three most important qualities in a person?**

Kindness, respect and empathy.

**Describe your ideal weekend.**

Surf and camp in a spot with no cell phone coverage.

**What do you think the world needs more of?**

Kindness, respect and empathy!

**What do you think political leaders should do to support children?**

Focus on ending child poverty, growing education that grows and supports all learners and listening to children more than grumpy adults!



This amazing politician wasn't able to complete our survey this time, but you can still vote for him!

Rawiri Waititi

On the 14th of October Aotearoa will hold elections to choose our next government.



The adults will be choosing the prime minister! They are responsible for making very important decisions about Aotearoa.



If you are under 18 you can't vote in the main elections. But your voice matters! Vote in our children's elections and be heard!

**If you were an animal, what would you be?**

Dolphin! So I can surf the waves.

**What do you believe are the three most important qualities in a person?**

Humility, determination, humour

**Describe your ideal weekend.**

Go to the beach and have a BBQ.

**What do you think the world needs more of?**

Patience.

**What do you think political leaders should do to support children?**

Make sure they keep improving and making New Zealand even better so that our kids have the best chance to realise whatever their dream may be if they work hard.



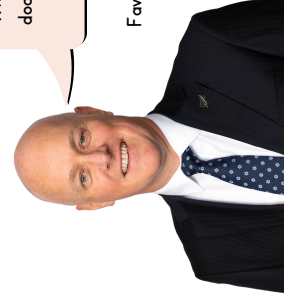
Favourite food: Mince pie

Favourite colour: Blue



Christopher Luxon

Why should you knock on a refrigerator door before opening it? In case there is a salad dressing!







# Your Voice Matters!

We want to gather the thoughts of the children of Aotearoa so that we can tell adults and politicians your views in the lead up to elections 2023!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Who do you think should be the next prime minister of Aotearoa? Choose one.



☐ Brooke van veldon

☐ Carmel Sepuloni



☐ Chris Hipkins

☐ Christopher Luxon



☐ David Seymour

☐ Debbie Ngarewa-Packer



☐ James Shaw

☐ Marama Davidson



☐ Nicola Willis

☐ Rawiri Waititi



Tell us your thoughts.  
You can draw or write.

Why did you vote for this person?

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What would you like the next Prime Minister of New Zealand to do to make Aotearoa a better place for children?

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Thank you for sharing your views.  
Your voice matters!



Save the Children



# Save the Children

This project was delivered and the resulting report was prepared by Save the Children New Zealand.

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