

SECURING NEW ZEALAND'S FUTURE



**BUDGET
2026**

Hon Louise Upston Minister for Social Development and Employment

28 May 2026

Incentivising work and independence

Budget 2026's welfare package incentivises getting Kiwis into work and gaining greater independence, while supporting those in most need, Social Development and Employment Minister Louise Upston says.

"The Government is continuing work to ensure the welfare system is fair, firm and simple. The social safety net is there when it's needed, but it must be sustainable, and target those in highest need.

"The current economic environment is challenging, but the Government's approach has been successful in getting people off benefit and into work by investing taxpayers' money wisely.

"The Budget 2026 Social Development and Employment package includes:

- \$45 million for community food support, including kids' breakfasts, to assist those in highest need.
- \$93.3 million to help 25,000 sole parents access more assistance to find work, providing opportunities for income and career growth. This is expected to generate net savings of \$97.2 million over the next four years.
- \$22.4 million to prevent households needing emergency housing, and facilitating sustainable exits that reduce reoccurring emergency housing need. This is expected to generate net savings of \$14.3 million over the next four years.

"In a fiscally and economically challenged environment, Budget 2026 delivers more positive and aspirational outcomes for New Zealand families," Louise Upston says.

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Notes to editors: Budget 2026 welfare package – supporting information