

Elections Matter: A CWS Resource for the 2020 Elections

General elections are an opportunity for all of us to have a say about what the next government might do. We can raise issues with candidates from every party and draw attention to issues that concern us deeply. Living with the Covid pandemic, we have seen how quickly life can change. More than ever, we need to re-build our world so all people and the planet are safe.

A simple coronavirus has linked us together in ways we never imagined. Our health and prosperity are bound up with everyone else who shares this planet earth. As Christians and people with goodwill, we need to push for policies that prioritise the most vulnerable people and find solutions to the glaring inequalities and systems that make people poor and rob them of their voice.

We encourage you to have your say in the General Election on October 17, 2020. In the lead up to the elections, you may be able to attend a Meet the Candidate gathering in person or online, respond to a phone call or talk to someone canvassing door to door. You can ask questions about the party platform of the candidate or their personal perspective.

CWS does not endorse a political party or candidate. However, the electoral process is a unique opportunity to put questions about global poverty, climate change and our international response to the pandemic in front of candidates. The candidates need to know that New Zealand has a global perspective. The solutions to the problems we face are political. We need to raise our voices in support of a world where everyone has what they need to live well, as God intended life to be.

You can choose to vote for the person and party that you believe will take action against poverty, address inequality and the climate crisis, and ensure the well-being of everyone.

Ask One: Big Hearts Connected World

CWS, Oxfam and World Vision are leading the Big Hearts Connected World campaign calling for a Collective Resilience Plan. The plan has three central planks:

- a 20% boost to the overseas aid budget, focused on healthcare, social support and resilience,
- a doubling of finance for climate action overseas from new and additional sources,
- a target for getting aid spending to 0.7% of gross national income by 2030.



If you have not already, please sign the petition <https://www.bighearts.org.nz/>



“We have alarming food insecurity in South Sudan, increased numbers of Internally Displaced People - mainly women and children, and now we are experiencing the voluntarily return of refugees due to the hardships they face at the Refugee camps. All this calls for humanitarian aid to be able to fight food insecurity, have a peaceful return and reintegration, and recovery programmes. For these reasons I call upon NZ to increase aid for its international support.”

Wadalla Peter, Maridi Service Agency, CWS partner

In 2020, New Zealand's aid budget was NZ\$869 million. In 2018, 0.28% of the country's Gross National Income was spent on ODA, well below the 0.7% commitment made by successive governments at the United Nations. New Zealand ranked 14th among 29 OECD or rich country members. Approximately 60% of ODA is designated for the Pacific, with 40% of that going to Kiribati, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands in 2018.

The poorest countries and vulnerable refugee communities have few resources and limited healthcare. To stop the spread of the virus and hunger, they need more resources.

Question: I am concerned about growing levels of poverty and the consequences of climate change. Will you support an increase in New Zealand's aid budget for the poorest countries and those most affected by climate change?

Ask Two: Dealing to Covid-19

The United Nations estimates that 265 million people could face starvation by the end of the year because of Covid-19.

Question: I am concerned about the continuing spread of Covid-19 and the hunger that goes with it. If you were elected to parliament, what would you do to help those most affected?

Ask Three: The Climate Crisis

Question: Climate change is causing great harm. Many countries in our region are having to cope with rising sea levels and are vulnerable to more intense disasters. Would you support increased finance for countries affected by climate change? What further actions can New Zealand take for climate justice?

Ask Four: For Refugees

Question: Last year there were 79.5 million people forcibly displaced from their own countries as refugees or in their own countries. If you were elected to parliament, what would be your position on ending conflicts, the main driver of displacement?

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