

## Media Release

**Embargoed until 11pm, 14 February 2007**

### How New Zealand cares for its children

“The release of the latest UNICEF Innocenti report on the well-being of the children in rich countries is timely,” said Murray Edridge, Chief Executive of Barnardos New Zealand.

“It tells us how poorly our nation’s children fare in international comparisons. We should reflect on that fundamental point as Parliament prepares to debate the repeal of S.59 bill and as the country prepares to celebrate Children’s Day in March.”

“How should we respond to the conclusions of this report? Shall we engage in unseemly political point-scoring? Shall we blame the government and avoid personal and community responsibility? Or shall we take a good hard look at ourselves?”

“The children of this nation demand we do the latter. And if we have any sense of responsibility for the future of our society, that’s exactly what we will do.

Some of the questions the report raises include —

- Which measures are responsive to government policy? Which measures are more a reflection of public attitude?
- Why is there no New Zealand data reported for a number of the specific measures used in the report?
- To what extent does the report reflect poorly on New Zealand family life?

“Perhaps the most important question of all, however is whether New Zealand society has the capacity and maturity to engage in constructive public discussion of the findings of the report,” concluded Murray Edridge.

**Ends**

### **The Report**

*An overview of child well-being in rich countries: a comprehensive assessment of the lives and well-being of children and adolescents in the economically advanced nations.* Florence, Unicef Innocenti research Centre (Report Card 7)

The report will be posted after publication on <http://www.unicef-icdc.org/>

### **For more information contact:**

Murray Edridge: 04 385 7560  
027 485 1896  
[Murray.edridge@barnardos.org.nz](mailto:Murray.edridge@barnardos.org.nz)