



Te Ope Whakaora

Public Sphere

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News & Updates from The Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit | December 2013

You're not to be so blind with patriotism that you can't face reality. Wrong is wrong, no matter who does it or says it. Malcolm X

EDITORIAL

On December 18 2013 the latest Alcohol Law reforms will come into full effect around our nation—just in time for the period of the year when liquor is at its most popular. Bars, clubs and restaurants must now close between 4am and 8am, and bottle shops between 11pm and 7am. Parents must give express consent for minors to drink, or risk a criminal offence punishable by a \$2000 fine. Police can now issue spot fines for people who drink in a liquor ban area. And supermarkets will be required to restrict their display of alcohol to a particular area of the store and face limits on how sales are pitched. Whether these changes result in a reduction in harm from our country's favourite drink is another matter.

It was made clear to us at a recent event that the continued abuse of alcohol has serious consequences for our society. Along with SPPU's new intern Samantha Ward, I attended the Women and Alcohol in Aotearoa/ NZ event at the beginning of this month in Auckland. The policy briefing paper presented to us by researchers with Alcohol Healthwatch and the Women's Health Action group showed, from an increasing weight of evidence, that further policy restrictions are needed. It's widely known that alcohol augments the risk of cancer, the chance of injury from accidents, and the likelihood for an incident of sexual violence —yet these latest reforms seem to do little to seriously decrease the marketing and accessibility of liquor.

The event's keynote speaker and award-winning author, Ann Dowsett Johnston, made the rather harrowing point that the most common date rape drug is alcohol. With the terrible Roast Busters scandal and ensuing protest marches still fresh in our minds, it's important to remember that there are ongoing issues in our society which are accentuated by an insidious binge drinking culture.

Public Sphere is an e-newsletter from The Salvation Army's Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit.

Whilst it was encouraging to hear the Prime Minister come out in support of the protests against the Roast Buster perpetrators, what would be even better is if our Government stood up against the liquor barons and corporate booze lobby to further curb the impacts of cheap and Ready-To-Drink liquor which is so widely consumed by our nation's teenagers. Restriction on the sale of RTDs is one galling reform left out of these upcoming legislative changes. The paper released at this event showed that RTDs made up 70 per cent of the alcohol consumed by women under 24 years of age. It's unfortunate our nation's leaders were not able to impose stronger regulations around this particularly dangerous product but perhaps the responsibility needs to fall to ourselves rather than our leaders to ensure our young people learn safer drinking behaviours.

As this upcoming festive season approaches please consider how habits modelled and formed over summer BBQs can set in motion lifestyle choices for the more impressionable amongst us. I'd encourage you all to consider limiting your consumption this summer, not as part of some moralistic crusade, but rather so that the culture of drunken excess that hinders our nation could be consigned to the past.

Justin Latif,
Office Administrator

References

1. Connor, J., Kydd, R., Rehm, J., & Shield, K. (2013). Alcohol-attributable burden of disease and injury in New Zealand: 2004 and 2007. Wellington: Health Promotion Agency.
2. Connor, J., Kydd, R., Rehm, J., & Shield, K. (2013). Alcohol-attributable burden of disease and injury in New Zealand: 2004 and 2007. Wellington: Health Promotion Agency.
3. Cashell-Smith, M.L., Connor, J.L., & Kypri, K. (2007). Harmful effects of alcohol on sexual behaviour in a New Zealand university community. *Drug & Alcohol Review*, 26, 645 – 651;

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We welcome your feedback → **Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit** | New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga Territory | **Auckland Office:** PO Box 76249, Manukau City e: social_policy@nzf.salvationarmy.org, p: (09) 261 0883, m: 027 450 6944, f: (09) 262 4103 | **Wellington Office:** p: (04) 802 6269

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PUBLICATIONS

Housing Report Launch

On November 14, the Unit launched its third report on housing in as many years, titled, 'Give Me Shelter: An Assessment of New Zealand's Housing Assistance Policies' and authored by Senior Policy Analyst Alan Johnson. The launch was held next to Parliament at St Pauls Cathedral in Wellington and was attended by a range of MPs, policy analysts, members from NGOs, housing organisations, churches and the public. It was great to hear that the report was used in Parliament's Question Time an hour after its launch.

UNIT NEWS

Out and about

On November 11 Major Campbell Roberts met with representatives of some of The Salvation Army's corporate sponsors, including Nestle and Progressive Enterprises, to inform them of the work being undertaken by the Unit. Major Roberts spoke at The Salvation Army's corporate Christmas Breakfast in Mangere, South Auckland on November 14. He also addressed a Statistics New Zealand breakfast event to an audience that included senior officials and CEOs from the public and NGO sector, and he followed that with a talk at the second Annual Policy Development Conference in Wellington on November 26.

Major Roberts also gave a speech at the University of Otago graduation ceremony on December 11.

Our senior policy analyst Alan Johnson presented a seminar on his recent Housing Report at the University of Auckland. Ronji Tanielu, our social policy advisor, presented the Pasifika Report at the Pacific People's Numeracy and Literacy Conference on November 29.

At the beginning of the month, departing Unit intern Annaliese Johnston and policy advisor Ronji Tanielu presented an oral submission to the Commerce Select Committee on the Credit Contracts and Financial Services Law Reform Bill, which seeks to regulate and restrict the Loan Shark and predatory lender industry.

The Unit has also recently hosted eight District Court judges at our Manukau office to discuss our work.

Farewell and welcome

The Unit bid farewell to Annaliese Johnston on November 29. Annaliese had been with us for eight months as our career development intern. She has performed admirably over this time, enhancing our work in many ways. Following Annaliese's departure we welcome our new summer intern, Samantha Ward, who is a law and biotechnology student from the Victoria University of Wellington.

2014 Intern opportunity

If you know of any tertiary students who would be interested in doing an internship over 2014 please get them to email their CVs to justin_latif@nzf.salvationarmy.org.

Submissions

This year the Unit has submitted on 13 bills or consultation papers to Parliament select committees, the local council and the Ministry of Justice. If you are interested in a summary of our 2013 submissions, please don't hesitate to get in touch and we'll email an overview of The Salvation Army submissions, the position it took, and who presented at the Oral submissions.

You can see all our submissions on our [website](#).

STOP THE TRAFFIK

The Unit's Social Justice advocate Chris Frazer attended the global STOP THE TRAFFIK conference in Rio, Brazil on November 18- 22. Participants came from the US, Taiwan, Australia, Belgium, Holland and the UK. The conference theme was 'Global disruption @street level'.

Meeting in Brazil gave STOP THE TRAFFIK an opportunity to spend a day meeting with representatives from the Brazilian government, as well as working together to plan the global direction and action for the next three years —including hearing how they will use the recently launched UN STOP THE TRAFFIK Gift Box in 2014.

Bringing the global into the local, STOP THE TRAFFIK New Zealand look forward to the construction of its own Gift box. When launched it will travel New Zealand raising awareness of exploitation and trafficking as it impacts our country.

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