



Te Ope Whakaora

Public Sphere

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News & Updates from The Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit | February 2014

It is often easier to become outraged by injustice half a world away than by oppression and discrimination half a block from home.

Carl T. Rowan

EDITORIAL

This editorial reflects on recent events as people around New Zealand came to hear what The Salvation Army considered to be the current 'State of the Nation' with the release of our latest report, 'Striking a Better Balance'.

A journalist at an event in Auckland was heard to say, with a sense of wonderment, 'What a multicultural gathering this is!' And it was: some Māori, some from Pacific Island nations, some from Asian nations, some with European origins, and perhaps some from other continents and cultures.

At the time I did not think to ask what caused his sense of surprise, but I later began to do my own wondering. It would seem he was expecting something less than multicultural, perhaps even monochrome. Did he think, as I do, that The Salvation Army is a Pākehā-dominated organisation, and that he would therefore be seeing a Pākehā audience?

There is an irony that Salvation Army social services clientele are more multicultural; whereas Salvationist church members are mostly Pākehā. As an organisation, there is work to do in closing this cultural/relational gap. This gap is not ours alone: I suspect that departments and agencies of government (central and local) and much of the business world might share that same gap.

Sadly, this year's 'State of the Nation' report highlights continuing gaps between Māori (with Pacific Islanders) and Pākehā, poor and rich; and the ongoing struggle for the despised and distressed—most clearly seen in the realities of domestic violence and child poverty.

William Booth, co-founder of The Salvation Army, responded to the same realities in his last public speech (in 1912, aged 83) with these words:

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

*While women weep, as they do now, I'll fight!
While children go hungry, as they do now, I'll fight!
While men go to prison, in and out, in and out, I'll fight!
While there remains one lost girl upon the streets,
while there remains one dark soul without the light of God,
I'll fight!
I'll fight to the very end!*

More than 100 years later, these words challenge today's Salvationists to maintain that manifesto in their mission.

Will you fight alongside us?

Andrew Hay, Assistant Officer, Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit
Andrew has been a Salvation Army Officer since 1988, most recently in the addictions treatment sector in Christchurch. He and Sue (Assistant Director) joined the Unit this month.

UNIT NEWS

State of the Nation



The Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit's annual State of the Nation report was launched on 12 February. Launch events were held around the country. This year's report highlighted improvements in uptake of early childhood education, as well as decreases in infant mortality and teenage pregnancies. Sadly, child poverty and domestic violence show no sign of improvement despite receiving significant resource (and rhetoric).

[Read or download the full report](#)

If your group or organisation would like an opportunity to discuss the report, the SPPU team may be available to visit you. Contact us on: social_policy@nzf.salvationarmy.org

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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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Just Action: In Our Backyard

Just Action is the name given to the regular social justice conferences organised by the Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit. This year we are planning four one-day events during late August: in Dunedin (21st), Christchurch (23rd), Wellington (26th) and Auckland (28th). Russell Rook and Baroness Maeve Sherlock from the UK will bring an international perspective, and we showcase examples of Kiwi just action from your backyard. Mark your calendar right now for your nearest Just Action: In Our Backyard.

Registrations open in April, with early-bird prices until the 30 June. More details soon on our [event webpage](#), and keep an eye on our [Just Action Facebook page](#).

Prevent People Trafficking Conference



Another event we want to give you early notice about is the 2014 Prevent People Trafficking Conference. This year's theme is 'Exploitation: A Fair Go for Everyone'. The conference is set down for 5-6 June at the Police College in Porirua. We will share more information in the next edition of Public Sphere.

SUBMISSIONS

The Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit recently made written submissions on the following legislation on behalf of The Salvation Army:

Immigration Amendment Bill [click here](#)

New Zealand is founded on immigration and has directly benefitted over the years from the influx of workers to help fill vacancies and help seal the employment gap. Given this reality it is important that the continuing exploitation of migrant workers in New Zealand is promptly and effectively addressed. Chris Frazer spoke to our submission on 20 February.

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Parole Amendment Bill [click here](#)

We applaud the action to reduce the number of unnecessary parole hearings, and the introduction of measurable goals for offenders to work towards. We believe any investment and focus on effective rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives can only be another positive contribution to our criminal justice system.

Objectionable Publications and Indecency Legislation Bill [click here](#)

This Bill is another mechanism the Government is using to protect the welfare of our children. We commend the Government's focus on these issues, particularly with this Bill and the Harmful Digital Communications Bill, and the recent joining of the Global Alliance Against Online Child Sexual Abuse.

Local Government Act (2002) Amendment Bill [click here](#)

The changes proposed by this Bill have the potential to reduce the cost of housing, allow for better community engagement with local authorities and greater accountability and cost effectiveness of local services.

Land Transport Amendment Bill [click here](#)

The harm caused by people driving while under the influence of alcohol, but within the current legal limits is too great to ignore. We support the introduction of an infringement offence for those found within the proposed (and existing) limits while retaining the existing criminal charges for those found to be in excess of the current drink driving limit.

All our submissions are online at www.salvationarmy.org.nz/socialpolicy



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OUT & ABOUT

Maori Womens Welfare League

The Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit hosted a visit from the Māori Womens Welfare League on 17 February, talking with them about setting up their own research/policy unit.

Community Housing Provider Briefing

Ronji Tanielu and Sue Hay attended a briefing on 20 February presented by the Ministry of Social Development.

Auckland Financial Literacy Practitioners & Providers Network

We have been invited to attend a meeting to hear about community-based financial literacy services.

Researchers Network

Chris Frazer will represent us at this significant gathering of people that are involved in research (and action) for social justice in Aotearoa New Zealand, facilitated by the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services.

COMINGS & GOINGS

Since our last update we have welcomed **Majors Sue and Andrew Hay** to our team; Sue as Assistant Director and Andrew as Assistant Officer. You may already have seen Sue's TV debut, interviewed on TV3 as part of the State of the Nation launch.

Sadly, we will soon be farewelling **Justin Latif**, who has given excellent and extra-mile service as our Administrator for the past couple of years. We wish Justin all the best as he heads off to study at Carey Baptist College.

We have just welcomed **Vanessa Kingi** to take over from Justin as Administrator.

We are also sad to have to allow our Summer Intern, **Samantha Ward**, to return to her second year at Victoria University, studying law and biotechnology.



Major Sue Hay (assistant director) and Alan Johnson (report author) at the Wellington launch of State of the Nation.

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