



Te Ope Whakaora

# Public Sphere

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

**‘Differences are not intended to separate or to alienate. We are different precisely in order to realize our need of one another.’ Desmond Tutu**

## EDITORIAL Ronji Tanielu, Policy Analyst

My wife works in Grey Lynn, Auckland. Sometimes I drop her off to work when her moody and ancient car is playing up. As I drive through Grey Lynn and Ponsonby, I often think about the vibrant and thriving Pacific communities that were once firmly established in these inner city Auckland suburbs, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s.

Most of these Pacific families are no longer in these suburbs, squeezed out by exorbitant rents, biased landlords, and irresistible gentrification forces. They’ve been replaced by high-income earning, mainly European professionals. Pacific families began moving to areas like Otara, Mangere, Porirua and Tokoroa in the 1970s and 1980s, enticed by cheaper housing and low-paying manufacturing jobs. Pacific communities gradually began to be heavily concentrated in these areas.

Fast forward to 2013 and Pacific people are now firmly ingrained in the fabric of New Zealand society. New Zealanders love Pasifika contribution to our national sports teams, cultural and arts arenas and religious systems. The Pacific contributions to politics, academia, business, media and science are continually growing but are not always as evident. But in terms of the social and economic development of Pacific people in New Zealand, progress has been painfully slow.

The story of Pacific people in New Zealand was once an immigrant story. Pacific immigrants flooded to New Zealand in the 1960s and 1970s to fuel the economic growth here. In the 1980s, another large wave of Pacific people arrived. But as the 1990s loomed, various health, social and economic problems that emerged in the previous two decades now crystallised and became entrenched amongst Pacific communities. During 1990-1995, the rate of rheumatic fever for Pacific children

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was 77.7 per 100,000 children, compared to 1 per 100,000 children for European children. In 1994, 23% of Pacific people were unemployed compared to 9.5% of the total labour force. As Pacific people increasingly became established in New Zealand society, serious health, social and economic issues worsened and threatened to derail any sort of Pacific development and progress in New Zealand.

In this new millennium, serious questions remain about the state of Pacific people in New Zealand. The Pacific population in this country is now primarily a New Zealand-born population, raising major questions for policy makers and developers. The developmental issues that were exacerbated in the 1990s have almost reached crises levels in this new millennium. It is estimated that over 40%, or up to 108,000, of Pacific children live in some form of child poverty today. As of March 2014, Pacific children made up over 31% of decile 1 and 2 schools around New Zealand, which are over 55,000 children. These are the areas in our nation with the highest levels of social deprivation. The Pacific unemployment rate in December 2012 was a record 16%, compared to 6.9% for the total population.

In May 2013, the Unit will release a report on the State of Pacific progress in New Zealand. We hope this report will act as a helpful information tool for policy developers and politicians, and also for the Pacific communities themselves. This report will have discussions of Pacific people based on different social and economic indicators in housing, work and incomes, crime and justice, social hazards, and children and youth. It will also have some case studies on accurately counting and defining Pacific people, the state of Pacific people in Australia, and Pacific people and gambling.

This report is not a panacea to the social issues facing Pacific people in New Zealand. But we hope this report will be a challenge to all New Zealanders that while there are

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some fantastic things to celebrate about Pacific communities and their contribution to New Zealand society, there are major issues facing these communities that cannot be ignored and need to be resolved as soon as possible.

We also hope this report will challenge all New Zealanders to recognise that all is not well with our beautiful land. History shows us that all ethnic groups in New Zealand face various challenges to their social, economic and community development. This in turn affects the overall and holistic development of our nation. Therefore, we all have a responsibility for each other, to ensure all New Zealanders get a fair go and have a chance to develop.

## UNIT NEWS

### Publications

Our policy analysts are both currently working on reports which the Unit is planning to publish in the next three months. The Pacific Report mentioned in the editorial authored by Ronji Tanielu will be launched on the 20th May in South Auckland:

Otahuhu Salvation Army Corps, 99 Church Street, Otahuhu  
10:00am – 11:30am (with light morning tea)

Email [ronji\\_tanielu@nzf.salvationarmy.org](mailto:ronji_tanielu@nzf.salvationarmy.org) for more info

The second report, by Alan Johnson, will produce a number of proposals around housing policy and the accommodation supplement.

### Submissions

Last week the Unit completed a submission on the Psychoactive Substances Bill. An oral submission was also presented to the select committee by several of our staff and a representative from the Salvation Army's drug addiction services.

The next few months will continue to be a busy period for the Unit, as we will also be making submissions on the:

- Education (Breakfast and Lunch Programmes in School) Amendment Bill
- Social Security (Fraud Measures and Debt Recovery) Amendment Bill
- Credit Contracts and Financial Services Law Reform Bill

Latest submissions and publications from the Unit can be viewed on our [website](#).

### Meetings and Appearances

In the last few weeks, SPPU Director Major Campbell Roberts has met with the new Minister for Housing Nick Smith, Minister for Immigration Michael Woodhouse, National MP for Coromandel Scott Simpson, Labour MP for Palmerston North Iain Lees-Galloway, and Green Party list MP Eugenie Sage. He also addressed the Red Shield Corporate Launch breakfast in Auckland and was part of a panel at the Age Concern conference discussing Future Housing Needs of the Elderly.

Senior Policy analyst Alan Johnson recently gave an address at the University of Auckland's School of Theology on the Economics of the Margins, and he also participated in a panel discussion for the criminal justice reform group JustSpeak on the Cost of Prison.

Policy analyst Ronji Tanielu has made presentations to the Manurewa Local Board, the Manurewa Youth Council and west Auckland's Best Training Youth Classes. He also spoke at Habitat for Humanity's Mangere East meeting where suitable applicants are being sought for new affordable housing. And Ronji also attended a forum run by the Green Party on False Economies.

### Just Action 2013



Hopefully you've already seen the first Just Action video but if not, see it on [YouTube](#). When you view this you'll also notice the links on Shane Claiborne, who's one of our keynote speakers.

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Our other keynote speaker is Dr John Perkins. Dr Perkins brings many years of ministry experience and work in the American civil rights movement to his messages. Born in the 1930s, he grew up on a plantation in Mississippi amidst the bitter racial conflict and deprivation of the era and left the state when his brother was fatally shot by a police officer. After converting to Christianity in California, Perkins and his wife felt compelled to return with their children to Mississippi to serve and live amongst the urban poor.

Throughout their lives Perkins and his wife Vera founded several Christian community development ministries, which have included a church, health centre, leadership development program, thrift store, low-income housing development and youth training centre.

He is the author of several books including *Let Justice Roll Down*; *A Quiet Revolution: The Christian Response to Human Need, a Strategy for Today*; *Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing It Together and Doing It Right*; and *Beyond Charity: The Call to Christian Community Development*.

Dr John Perkins is passionate about advancing the principles of Christian community development and racial reconciliation throughout the world. We look forward to what he has to say to us in the Pacific.

If you are interested in advertising this event to your church, community group or youth group please contact [justin\\_latif@nzf.salvationarmy.org.nz](mailto:justin_latif@nzf.salvationarmy.org.nz). Generous earlybird and student discounts are available—register now at [www.salvationarmy.org.nz/justaction](http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/justaction). For more information on the conference and on our headline speakers, visit [Just Action on Facebook](#).

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