



Te Ope Whakaora

Public Sphere

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News & Updates from The Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit | July 2012

Great thoughts speak only to the thoughtful mind, but great actions speak to all mankind.
Theodore Roosevelt

EDITORIAL

When the Alcohol Reform Bill finally passes into law it will be interesting to see what actually gets reformed—if anything at all. And it will also show whether Parliament is keeping in step with public opinion around this thorny issue. New Zealand has a long and troubled history around binge drinking, and the politics of alcohol law reform has made careers—and ruined many others—so it’s understandable MPs are reticent making a stand on this issue.

The Bill is currently at select committee stage but sits 45th on Parliament’s order of business, so it could be August or September before it is passed. The Prime Minister has recently stated that he thinks any changes to pricing will have little impact on drinking habits.

Early indications from MPs show that there are a number on both sides of the House who are leaning towards a vote to keep the purchasing age at 18. But on the other hand, the general public seem quite comfortable with legislation making it harder for people to access alcohol, particularly youth.

A recent poll in the New Zealand Herald shows at least 80 per cent want some form of increase to the purchasing age. Research is coming to light showing the pricing of alcohol does in fact alter people’s habits.

But of all the damning statistics and terrible stories about the problems of liquor, one of the most alarming things to recently emerge came from Principal Youth Court Judge Andrew Becroft. He is quoted saying the real purchasing age is now ‘about 14 or so’.

Judge Becroft is clearly a man with his finger on the pulse and the consequences of this scenario are obviously dire.

The Unit is currently in the process of writing to every MP asking them to consider increasing the age of purchase at

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off-licenses as a minimum measure. Why don’t you do the same? Letters to parliament are free to send. It will only take a few minutes to write, and letters are often given more attention than an email.

Click [here](#) for information about how to contact your MP.

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UNIT NEWS

STOP THE TRAFFIK NZ launch

STOP THE TRAFFIK is a well-known global anti-slavery group. The New Zealand branch, STOP THE TRAFFIK Aotearoa, is based out of the Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit and was gracefully launched at Parliament on 22 June. The Unit’s Chris Frazer is the New Zealand Coordinator. The launch was well attended by various politicians, community leaders, foreign dignitaries, Salvation Army staff and officers.

For more information see our [news release](#)
Visit our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/STTNZ
Email Chris Frazer: chris_frazer@nzf.salvationarmy.org

SPPU being checked and reviewed

The Unit is pleased to announce that it is undertaking an external review and evaluation process over the next 12 to 18 months. The review is being overseen by Professor Andrew Bradstock from Otago University and a panel of external experts from around the country. The review will look at the entire work programme of the Unit and will also include consultation with the Unit’s external stakeholders and partners. For more information or to give feedback please contact andrew.bradstock@otago.ac.nz.

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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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UNIT NEWS Cont.

Continuing to speak out about the Green Paper...

UNICEF New Zealand has compiled over 80 submissions made to the Government's Green Paper for Vulnerable Children by various NGOs and community groups. UNICEF New Zealand has compiled a briefing paper for the Government summarising these submissions and putting forward recommendations for the upcoming Children's Action Plan.

The Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit is now a party to this collaboration and we added our own Green Paper submission and endorsement to this process. A final briefing paper will be released later in July 2012.

We continue to call for transparency, public debate and true consultation with NGOs and community groups as these Children's Action Plans are developed.

PUBLICATIONS

The Unit's National Director, Major Campbell Roberts, delivered a thought-provoking and challenging address to the delegates of the Problem Gambling National Forum in May. Find a copy [here](#).

Over the last two months the Unit has made several more submissions to various select committees on crucial areas of social policy. These include the:

- Gambling Harm Reduction Bill
- Administration of Community Sentences and Orders Bill
- Immigration Amendment Bill
- Increase in Tobacco Excise Bill
- Bail Amendment Bill

Feel free to view our submissions [here](#) as we continue to try and respond to the raft of reforms and statutory amendments our politicians are making.

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