



Te Ope Whakaora

# Public Sphere

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

Before we get too depressed about the state of our politics, let's remember our history. The great debates of the past, all stirred great passions. They all made somebody angry, and at least once led to a terrible war. What is amazing, is that despite all the conflict, our experiment in democracy has worked better than any form of government on earth. Barack Obama

## EDITORIAL

Attending church was always a tough thing for me when I was a kid. I loved going to play and hang with my friends. But I struggled epically during the prayers because, in my mind at least, they seemed to take hours.

I used to assume my traditional 'prayer positions'—either bending forward with my head on the pew in front or slumped in my chair, head resting on the seat back and eyes open counting the lights inside church.

And I remember always wondering, does God really hear all these prayers? Decades later I know now by faith and through the Bible that God does exist and He does hear my prayers.

However, today I often wonder if people are truly hearing the things that we in The Salvation Army are saying about the harsh realities that many New Zealanders face today.

From January to July 2012, our Unit has made over 12 submissions to amendments to legislation the Government is proposing. These submissions cover critical indicators of social inequality in our nation—children's well-being, problem gambling, prisons, and community sentences and so on. Our Unit also meets regularly with politicians to state our opinions. We continue to make media releases, send out regular e-newsletters, attend countless meetings and publish research reports and analyses of policy.

Yet I can't help but wonder whether these messages are actually getting across to people. No one likes hearing or reading depressing stories. Issues like child abuse,

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homelessness and overcrowding, prisons, alcohol abuse, problem gambling and so on are complex and destructive. But these are issues that thousands of New Zealanders that The Salvation Army works with face in their every day lives.

We implore you to please don't ignore these messages. Whether you are a Joe Bloggs citizen living a normal life, or whether you are a politician sitting in a privileged position of authority and decision making, please don't ignore these messages. And when you do hear, read or see these messages, we challenge you to respond thoughtfully, honourably, and justly.

**Ronji Tanielu** Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit

## UNIT NEWS

### Adding it all up

The Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit is currently undertaking work looking at housing, and policy analyst Alan Johnson has completed a report which considers the underlying causes of Auckland's looming housing shortage. This work was released on 23rd August titled *Adding it all up: The political economy of Auckland's housing*.



This report is an unusual departure from the Unit's past publications, in that it considers the politics and flawed thinking that contribute to Auckland's housing problems, and to the widespread inequality which increasingly characterises New Zealand society. We hope that this piece of work will not only encourage a rethink of how housing policy is framed but will become a useful reference resource to the history of housing policy especially in Auckland.

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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](mailto: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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## SPPU facilitates a community meeting

We hosted a community network meeting in August at our Manukau office, and the New Zealand Council of Infrastructure Development presented the potential alternative funding options for Auckland's transport infrastructure.

One option presented was to install tolls at every off-ramp on the motorways, and this led to good discussion on how this would impact South Auckland communities.

For more information please contact [justin\\_latif@nzf.salvationarmy.org](mailto:justin_latif@nzf.salvationarmy.org)

## Anti-Trafficking Training

The Unit's STOP THE TRAFFIK Coordinator Chris Frazer is currently in talks with various government departments, other NGOs and Army staff to develop a series of training workshops for NGO workers, coupled with an advertising campaign to inform people about how to identify exploitation in the workplace and victims of human trafficking. We are excited about taking practical steps to help fight human trafficking in New Zealand. The New Zealand chapter of STOP THE TRAFFIK is based out of The Salvation Army's Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit.

## PUBLICATIONS

### Submissions

Napoleon Bonaparte once said, 'ten people who speak out can make more noise than 10,000 who are silent.' We continue to try and speak out publicly about the critical issues facing our families and communities. Last month, we made submissions to:

- Local Government Act Amendment Bill
- Corrections Amendment Bill—SOP
- We have also made public oral submissions to the Immigration, Bail and Corrections Amendment Bills. Check our submissions [here](#)

## 'We're going Bananas for Chocolate' campaign

STOP THE TRAFFIK coordinator Chris Frazer has created an information pack to help inform and raise awareness about human trafficking and workplace exploitation, and this will be distributed through interested schools, businesses and NGOs.



Click [here](#) to read Chris' Think Piece on buying Fairtrade products. To get a pack email [Chris\\_Frazer@nzf.salvationarmy.org](mailto:Chris_Frazer@nzf.salvationarmy.org)

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