



**Social Policy &
Parliamentary Unit**

Working for the eradication of poverty in New Zealand

Invisible in the SuperCity

HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS IN AUCKLAND

Reina Tuai Harris | Social Policy Analyst

The Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit | **November 2015**

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INTRODUCTION

Hutia te rito o te harakeke, kei hea rā te kōmako e kō?

Kī mai ki ahau, he aha te mea nui o te Ao?

Māku e kī atu, he tangata, he tangata, he tangata.

If you were to pluck out the centre of the flax bush, where would the bellbird sing?

If I was asked, 'What was the most important thing in the world?'

I would be compelled to reply, 'It is people, it is people, it is people!'

Adequate housing in a community is a critical determinant of health and social outcomes. Housing can determine educational achievements and opportunities, housing determines health outcomes, and housing determines overall community wellbeing. This report illustrates the reality that many people in Auckland do not have adequate housing and are homeless. When we think of 'homelessness' we may envision people who are street homeless—those who rough sleep. But such people make up only a small proportion of homeless people in Auckland. Many people in Auckland—including families with children—are sleeping outside, sleeping in cars, sleeping in overcrowded situations, and sleeping in uninhabitable houses.

The Salvation Army's Christian ethos is an impetus for its social service delivery to those most in need. One issue of great concern to The Salvation Army is the need for people to be able to access adequate shelter. For many people who seek assistance at Salvation Army Community Ministries centres in Auckland, access to adequate shelter is a significant and pressing issue. In 2014, staff raised concern about the volume of people presenting to Salvation Army Community Ministries centres in Auckland who required support with their housing needs. This report was initiated in response to that concern as The Salvation Army sought to gather robust data on this pressing social issue. This survey captured the housing needs of 1202 people and forms the basis of this report.

Invisible in the SuperCity begins with a discussion on adequate shelter in the context of human rights. Following this discussion, definitions, forms and the effects of homelessness are explored. The following chapter focuses on housing in Auckland and illustrates that one of the primary causal factors for homelessness in Auckland is a lack of supply of affordable rental properties in the areas that need it most. The report concludes with suggested policy directions.

The housing crisis in Auckland needs to be urgently addressed, and to do this government support and action is vital. Individuals and families in Auckland are experiencing significant hardship because Auckland is unable to adequately house its current population. This represents a failure by successive governments to address the issues. To rectify this, effective policy and planning to meet the needs of current and future Auckland populations is required so that hardship is minimised, equitable outcomes achieved and homelessness prevented.

CHAPTER 1: ADEQUATE SHELTER

HUMAN RIGHTS

In terms of international human rights, the provision of shelter is widely recognised as one of the most fundamental needs for human beings. Consequently, adequate shelter has been identified as a basic human right, protected through Article 11(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. New Zealand ratified this international covenant in 1978 which recognises ‘... the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions’¹. The United Nations, in commenting on the right to adequate shelter, considers housing as central to an adequate standard of living. Key factors that address adequate shelter include legal security of tenure, availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure, affordability, habitability, accessibility, location, and cultural adequacy². The right to adequate shelter is also mentioned in other human rights documents that afford some protections around adequate housing for vulnerable groups such as children, women and people with disabilities³.

Although it is a requisite for the New Zealand government to take steps to address the right to adequate shelter, there is no real recognition by government in statute or in policy of this right. It is important to note that codification, in itself, does not necessarily equate to an end to homelessness, as illustrated by the fact that homelessness still persists in countries that have codified the right to shelter. But codification of the right to shelter remains an essential foundation for addressing the issue of homelessness. Supporting policies, with clear accountability, are then able to build on that foundation. In addition, any policy measures and remedies need to be effectively resourced. As commented by the United Nations: ‘While enhanced international accountability of local and other subnational governments is important, international mechanisms can only be supplementary to effective domestic procedures and remedies’⁴.

HOMELESSNESS

Internationally, countries have defined homelessness in different ways, with no clear international consensus on how to define homelessness. One of the reasons for this lack of consensus is that homelessness is multifaceted; in part, because of the different ways the concept of ‘home’ is interpreted by different cultures and countries. In addition, homelessness is complex because there are different layers of homelessness and different ways to conceptualise those layers. In essence, defining homelessness is a philosophical debate and process. Defining homelessness for countries is also a heavily weighted issue because of the policy implications—once countries or states define homelessness there are implications for a country’s policy response to the issue.

An example of this is in the United States (US) where the definition for homelessness is thought of as a ‘confined’ definition because it is limited to only people that rough sleep or those in temporary shelters. Consequently, US policy direction is limited to addressing the issue of homelessness primarily for these subsets of homeless peoples⁵. The difficulty with this narrow definition is that it fails to recognise other forms of housing inadequacy as experienced by many other people.

In contrast, the policy direction in Australia to address homelessness takes a broader approach. The official definition in Australia for some years was based on a ‘cultural definition’ developed by

researchers Chamberlain and MacKenzie⁶. This definition was centred on what would be considered an acceptable dwelling using a cultural standard of acceptability. Homelessness is categorised by what the predominant culture in Australia defines as an acceptable standard of housing; for example, a small flat with a bathroom. Using this standard, homelessness falls along a continuum, the closer you are to the acceptable standard the less homeless you are⁷. This definition of homelessness was reviewed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and replaced in 2012. The current official definition for homelessness in Australia states: ‘when a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement: is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations’⁸. The replacement of the cultural definition is a positive shift as the more recent definition acknowledges some of the complexities of homelessness—a lack of housing is not in itself homelessness, and addressing homelessness extends further than the provision of a small flat.

Researcher Debbie Noble-Carr discusses the importance of indigenous Australian definitions of homelessness that incorporate concepts such as spiritual connections and disconnections⁹. In New Zealand, very little research and literature seeks to define an indigenous Māori cultural understanding of home and homelessness. Considering the overrepresentation of Māori in the homeless population, this is a significant gap and one that needs further emphasis in research and policy.

The two most prominent definitions in the New Zealand literature are the Statistics New Zealand definition of 2009 and the 2013 definition by Amore, Viggers, Baker, and Howden-Chapman. The Statistics New Zealand definition of homelessness defines homelessness as ‘living situations where people with no other options to acquire safe and secure housing are: without shelter, in temporary accommodation, sharing accommodation with a household, or living in uninhabitable housing’. The definition from Amore et al is effectively a redefining of homelessness, replacing the word homeless with ‘severe housing deprivation’¹⁰. As well, Amore et al created a new methodology to build a stronger picture of the issue of severe housing deprivation in New Zealand. In critiquing the Statistics New Zealand definition, Amore et al have provided a framework that can be seen as more conceptually sound and one that has a human rights basis¹¹.

Despite the strengths of the approach taken by Amore et al—particularly its human rights basis and conceptual depth—this report draws on the Statistics New Zealand definition, which remains New Zealand’s most widely used understanding of homelessness¹². Additionally, one of the major benefits of this definition is that it incorporates both those who are houseless and those who are housing excluded. The Statistics New Zealand definition is not confined only to those who are literally without shelter; it also includes forms of housing exclusion, such as shared accommodation. By utilising a broad definition, the housing needs of many New Zealanders can be considered.

The Statistics New Zealand definition draws on the European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion framework (ETHOS), which identifies seven theoretical domains of homelessness, making a distinction between homelessness and housing exclusion. Homelessness includes two categories: rooflessness and houselessness. Housing exclusion includes five categories: insecure and inadequate housing; inadequate housing and social isolation within a legally occupied dwelling; inadequate housing (secure tenure); insecure housing (adequate housing); and social isolation within a secure and adequate context (See [Table 1.1](#))¹³.

The ETHOS framework considers that there are three elements necessary for adequate shelter: an individual's social, legal and personal domains. The social domain refers to being able to pursue normal social relations, to have a personal (household) living space, to maintain privacy and to have safe accommodation. The legal domain covers having exclusive possession, security of occupation or tenure and the physical domain relates to the structural aspect of housing and means having housing that is habitable¹⁴. Homelessness occurs when all three domains coincide, or where the social and the legal domains intersect. Critics of this framework suggest a modification of the model, so that homelessness occurs when any two of the domains connect^{15,16}.

The Statistics New Zealand definition of homelessness defines homelessness as 'living situations where people with no other options to acquire safe and secure housing are: without shelter, in temporary accommodation, sharing accommodation with a household, or living in uninhabitable housing'¹⁷. The conceptual categories for homelessness in New Zealand are, therefore: without shelter, temporary accommodation, sharing accommodation and uninhabitable housing. Being without shelter is defined as people sleeping rough or in improvised dwellings. This category is the most visible and extreme form of homelessness. Frontline agencies have also classed people that are living in cars as rough sleepers¹⁸. Temporary accommodation is defined by Statistics New Zealand as people staying in refuges or night shelters, and also includes people in camping grounds and on marae¹⁹. Sharing accommodation—also described as concealed, hidden, invisible or involuntary homelessness—relates to those individuals and families that share a home with another household. Sharing accommodation with another household is not, in itself, problematic. However, it can become a problem when it is involuntary due to a lack of more suitable options or choices. Concealed homelessness is a major issue for New Zealanders, and it is very important for any New Zealand definition of homelessness to acknowledge this form of homelessness. Uninhabitable housing is also a prominent issue for many people in New Zealand. Some New Zealand houses, particularly in the rental sector, are significantly lacking in adequacy and standards, and some people have no other choice but to live in substandard accommodation²⁰.

For this report we have utilised the categories defined by Statistics New Zealand as a basis for a table that incorporates the various forms of homelessness described by those who participated in our survey. This is illustrated in [Table 1.1](#).

Table 1.1: Housing needs identified by survey participants using the typology of homelessness from Statistics New Zealand

	CONCEPTUAL CATEGORY	PHYSICAL DOMAIN	LEGAL DOMAIN	SOCIAL DOMAIN	FORM of HOMELESSNESS	
HOMELESSNESS	1	Rooflessness	No dwelling or roof	No legal title to a space for exclusive possession	No private and safe personal space for social relations	Sleeping outside in a park or under a bridge Sleeping in a tent Sleeping in a car
	2	Houselessness	Has a place to live that is fit for habitation	No legal title to a space for exclusive possession	No private and safe personal space for social relations	Back packers or boarding house
HOUSING EXCLUSION	3	Insecure or inadequate housing	Has place to live that is not secure and is unfit for habitation	No security of tenure	Has space for social relations	Camping ground or caravan park Living with family and friends Living in a house or flat under eviction notice
	4	Inadequate housing & social isolation within a legally occupied dwelling	Inadequate dwelling (unfit for habitation)	Has legal title and/or security of tenure	No private and safe personal space for social relations	Living in a garage
	5	Inadequate housing (secure tenure)	Inadequate dwelling (unfit for habitation)	Has legal title and/or security of tenure	Has space for social relations	Living in a garage
	6	Insecure housing (adequate housing)	Has a place to live	No security of tenure	Has space for social relations	Emergency house or refuge House under eviction notice
	7	Social isolation with a secure & adequate context	Has a place to live	Has legal title and/or security of tenure	No private and safe personal space for social relations	

In considering different homelessness concepts and categories and their application in New Zealand, it is important to discuss our perception and use of the word homelessness. If we look at [Table 1.1](#), rough sleepers are just one of the homeless categories, and in New Zealand rough sleepers constitute a minority of the overall homeless population. Yet, when most people think of homelessness, they relate the word to those that rough sleep. The word 'homeless' therefore carries some of the stigma sometimes associated with rough sleepers, and for that reason researchers have adopted other words to describe homeless people²¹. But it is important that the discourse around homelessness remains with the word 'homeless' despite the connotations that are sometimes associated with the word as this can help us fully appreciate the breadth of the issue so that we are better placed to address the causes of homelessness.

CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS

Two different approaches can be identified as causal explanations for homelessness. A systemic approach looks at overall society and the systemic or structural barriers related to social and housing exclusion. An individual approach looks at the individual experiences or circumstances of people who are homeless to form an understanding of the drivers of homelessness. It is considered that both approaches are relevant and do not necessarily have to exclude each other. In fact, the approaches need to be viewed as interrelated, because as we consider individual circumstances we need to constantly be aware of how individuals navigate in society and what barriers they face that exclude them from adequate shelter²².

A range of factors have been identified as drivers or triggers to sleeping rough: alcohol and drug dependency; exiting a gang; being released from prison; or losing a job can all be triggers into homelessness²³. People who rough sleep often have a traumatic history where family dysfunction, abuse and neglect feature in their experiences^{24,25}. Relationship difficulties are commonly cited as a cause for rough sleeping and leaving a domestic violence situation may also be a reason that people turn toward sleeping rough. Although there has been limited research into domestic violence as a driver for concealed homelessness in New Zealand, in Australia the link between sharing accommodation and domestic violence is considered significant²⁶. Given the high rates of domestic violence in New Zealand, a causal link between domestic violence and concealed homelessness is a valid assumption, and one that could explain increases in the numbers of families and children who are homeless. Research in Australia also outlines that families and children are becoming the biggest demographic of those who are homeless, making up approximately a third of Australia's homeless population²⁷. In New Zealand, commentators have also noted a growing number of families, particularly single-parent families, who experience homelessness²⁸. One of the biggest concerns highlighted in a recent New Zealand report, *Severe Housing Deprivation: The problem and its measurement*, is the overwhelming number of children in New Zealand who can now be described as being severely housing deprived²⁹.

Aside from domestic violence, other factors such as a change in life events can lead to a family becoming homeless. Research illustrates the precarious situation many families face; it does not take much to propel a family into homelessness. Even families who have enjoyed relative stability can be propelled into homelessness by an unfortunate event such as the death of family member or the loss of employment³⁰. This move into homelessness is often directly related to having limited or low-income. Essentially, people with limited means are under-resourced to cope with an unfortunate life event and there is often no

other choice but to become homeless. New Zealand researchers Amore et al assert that the amount of money a person has to spend on housing is a major determinant of their access to adequate housing³¹.

New Zealand is a developed country with enough resources to ensure everybody is able to access basic necessities. Yet, the reality is many people are not able to meet their basic needs, including for adequate shelter. There is a notable prevalence of social issues such as homelessness in developed countries, with the impact of globalisation, capitalism, neo liberal political agendas and the reduction of State welfare all identified as political and societal causes for increased disadvantage.

Consideration of individual drivers of homelessness such as low-incomes, domestic violence and job losses raise questions about what structural barriers in New Zealand prevent people from having adequate shelter. Some relevant structural issues involve access, or lack of access, to housing and labour markets. In relation to housing markets, difficulty in accessing the private rental market is often cited by individuals and families as reasons for being homeless. In a recent *Hard Times* report by The Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit about rough sleepers in West Auckland, unaffordable and unobtainable housing (essentially, exclusion from the housing market) was a prominent factor as to why those interviewed were homeless³². Markets can and do have an effect on who has access to housing and who does not, and when markets are left to dictate access to housing those most likely to miss out are the most vulnerable and marginalised in the community.

One of the reasons that marginalised and vulnerable groups of people can miss out on housing can be attributed to discrimination, with single parents, those with families, people with disabilities, those on low incomes or from an ethnic minority likely to be discriminated against at times. Discrimination can be a barrier to accessing housing in the private rental market and lead to people living in situations such as tents, cars or crowding in with friends and family. Therefore, discrimination can result in homelessness. The Human Rights Commission receives hundreds of complaints each year from people who consider they have experienced discrimination in relation to access to housing³³. It is likely that the number of reported complaints is indicative of a much larger issue.

THE EFFECTS OF HOMELESSNESS

It is important to consider the effect of homelessness at a societal level, as well as the toll homelessness has at an individual level for people and their families. Harm from homelessness is not only to individuals and families, but also to the wider society.

The harm to adults and children who experience different types of homelessness is substantial. For rough sleepers, a lack of adequate shelter has a detrimental effect on physical and mental health. But there are also wider social implications: people who rough sleep can become excluded from society, which limits their inclusion in things in the community that support health, education or cultural wellbeing and development. Such exclusion from society may lead to acculturation to the lifestyle of rough sleeping, as people who rough sleep identify more with others also excluded from mainstream society. Becoming acculturated can lead to a lifestyle of chronic homelessness, which can be very difficult to move out of³⁴.

For families involuntarily in overcrowded situations, a variety of tensions and difficulties can exist. Walsh, as cited in a literature review by Noble-Carr, reviewing the experiences of family homelessness on

children in Australia notes that for families the experience of sharing accommodation ‘... would often be tense and end in conflict and another move’³⁵. Housing insecurity and instability has a significant effect on those who are sharing accommodation. In essence, when a family is sharing with another household, their tenure is not secure as it is usually entirely dependent on the goodwill of those with whom they are staying. In addition to tenure instability, overcrowding also has negative effects on children’s wellbeing, development, education and health outcomes³⁶. It is important to note that it does not necessarily matter if children experience only limited periods of homelessness, as there is evidence that both short-term severe housing deprivation and a sustained experience of poor housing have long-term impacts on health³⁷.

Given the harms and hardships many New Zealanders face in relation to their housing needs, it is important to consider what kind of a society and culture we want to create in New Zealand. We have a common perception of Kiwis as being kind and helpful. We like to consider ourselves as a people who look out for our mates, support our neighbours and lend a hand when needed. Yet, with homelessness becoming increasingly prevalent and affecting those most vulnerable—such as the children in our society—these self-perceptions may need to be questioned. Failing to address homelessness and failing to look after vulnerable people impacts negatively on our society and our culture. While we want to be seen as a culture that helps our fellow New Zealanders, our failure to act may mean that we are becoming a culture that is apathetic toward those experiencing housing need. The question is: how comfortable are we with this and the type of society it creates?

Other considerations about the effect on society relate to the future of our society. If we fail to address homelessness and reduce its negative impact on children and young people, we take away the opportunity for young people to contribute to society in a positive way. Without this positive contribution we will see increased demand on our health and justice systems in the future. When we address homelessness, we also reduce the social and fiscal costs to society—now and in the years ahead.

However, to address homelessness, we must first look in detail at some of the causal factors of homelessness in New Zealand. In this report, we will do so with a focus on the causal factors in an Auckland context.

CHAPTER 2: HOMELESS IN AUCKLAND

One of the key causal factors of homelessness in Auckland relates to exclusion from the rental market. This exclusion is occurring because Auckland simply does not have an adequate number of private and State rental houses.

Exclusion from the private rental market can occur at both a systemic and an individual level. At an individual level people can be excluded from the market socially and/or economically³⁸. In regards to social exclusion, high demand for rental properties in Auckland means landlords and agencies have more choice. Discrimination toward some people, whether explicit or inherent, becomes highly likely. Social exclusion can extend to the ethnic group a person belongs to, their employment status, whether or not they have children, and/or how many people are in their household. Economic exclusion can mean being excluded from renting a property due to an adverse credit rating or simply not having the money required to obtain a rental property or sustain the cost of rent for a rental property. Low-income households are vulnerable to both economic and social exclusion. Hulse and Burke note that exclusion of low-income households in market liberal countries is because of the inherent nature of the private rental market itself³⁹.

Given the problems of accessing the rental market and the lack of available and affordable rental properties in Auckland, it is little wonder that Auckland makes up just under 50% of the waitlist for State housing in New Zealand, which equates to 2172 households in Auckland needing a home⁴⁰. State housing—or what is now being referred to as ‘social housing’—will always be needed for those who cannot access housing without government support. The importance of an adequate supply of social housing has been a key component of New Zealand’s social provision over the past 70 years. Government, however, has not provided the necessary governance to the national stock of social housing resource, which has resulted in a depleted number of poorly maintained social houses, often in the wrong area. Government has also failed to build new supply in sufficient numbers in areas of high social need and economic deprivation. The lack of social housing numbers in Auckland now seriously hinders the city’s social and economic progress. It is also necessary that the waitlist for those requiring social housing in Auckland needs to be urgently addressed, as many of those people on this waitlist will be experiencing the negative impacts of the various forms of homelessness.

This chapter, however, is not about social housing or access to it; it is about the only other alternative to social housing faced by low-income individuals and families—the private rental market. In this chapter, we look at affordability to give us a better understanding of why people from low-income households may be economically excluded from the private rental market and become homeless. We also explore exclusion at a structural level with particular regard to housing supply deficits. Auckland is currently unable to house its population and has a current shortfall of 20,000 dwellings⁴¹. By looking more closely at the supply deficit in Auckland, we can gain a clearer understanding that the deficit of affordable rental properties is specific to particular areas in Auckland.

LACK OF SUPPLY AND LACK OF AVAILABILITY

Research on the Auckland housing market suggests that there are two main difficulties faced by low-income individuals and families in obtaining affordable housing. Those difficulties relate to the lack of supply of affordable rental properties and the lack of availability of affordable rental properties⁴².

Any housing market that is short of supply is a little like the game of Musical Chairs. When the music stops, someone will miss out. In the case of housing it is, by definition, the homeless who miss out. Their poverty is often a consequence of a shortage of supply of housing, but more directly it is a result of not having entitlements to gain access to housing. It may therefore be the case that people lack these entitlements even when there is not a demonstrable shortfall in supply. They may, for example, simply not have sufficient money to pay a minimum rent. Alternatively, having a criminal record, a poor credit rating, or being the victim of racial discrimination may result in a person being unable to find anyone willing to rent to them. The result is that essentially no housing is available to them.

The availability of affordable rental properties is further constrained by other factors. One of those factors relates to the type of property investment occurring in Auckland, and the other relates to declining home ownership. Declining home ownership rates are relevant because of the pressure this places on the private rental market from an increased number of renters. Essentially, those people who may have otherwise entered into home ownership must source a home in the private rental market, and for various reasons a number of more resourced households are choosing to rent affordable dwellings. It has been illustrated in other countries that high income earners take a significant portion of the affordable rental stock from the market⁴³. Another reason for a limited stock of affordable houses in Auckland is a lack of large scale investors in the private rental market. The type of investment that would create affordable homes in Auckland for people to rent needs to be large scale. It also needs to provide a range of different housing options. The majority of investors in the Auckland property market are small scale investors whose interest is not rental returns but capital gains to help to fund their retirement⁴⁴.

Auckland has a housing supply deficit. To measure this deficit, the number of new builds required to adequately house the current and projected population is analysed. While it is always somewhat arbitrary to decide at what level new house building is adequate or not, a guideline The Salvation Army has used in the past is the current average household size. For Auckland overall, the average household size at the time of the 2013 Census was 3.0 people per dwelling, although in some South Auckland board areas such as Mangere–Otahuhu and Otara-Papatoetoe this average is over four people per dwelling. The table below shows that for Auckland overall during the years 2010 to 2014, given the population growth of 87,300 people at an average dwelling size of three people per dwelling, around 29,100 houses should have been built. Instead just 19,800 were built. This leaves a deficit of nearly 10,000 dwellings.

In addition to determining an overall picture for Auckland in relation to new build deficits, it is important to understand which areas in Auckland are experiencing the most need. To do this, we looked specifically at what was happening to the supply of dwellings per local board area—particularly the deficit of new builds of dwellings within each of the local board areas in Auckland, and the deficit of building of affordable new dwellings, also within each board area.

The following table reports an estimated population growth (from Statistics NZ) for Auckland local board areas for the five-year period from July 2010 to June 2015 and the number of consents issued for new dwellings for the same areas and same period. This data has been used to estimate the additional population for each new dwelling being built.

Table 2.1: Population and new house building in Auckland – 2010 to 2015⁴⁵

Board Area	Population change 2010-15	New dwellings 2010-15	Additional people per dwelling
Rodney Local Board Area	5,200	2,167	2.4
Hibiscus and Bays Local Board Area	9,400	3,582	2.6
Upper Harbour Local Board Area	9,000	2,898	3.1
Kaipatiki Local Board Area	4,400	691	6.4
Devonport-Takapuna Local Board Area	3,200	550	5.8
Henderson-Massey Local Board Area	7,900	1,561	5.1
Waitakere Ranges Local Board Area	3,600	501	7.2
Waitemata Local Board Area	19,100	2,299	8.3
Whau Local Board Area	5,500	1,089	5.1
Albert-Eden Local Board Area	6,000	905	6.6
Puketapapa Local Board Area	4,800	767	6.3
Orakei Local Board Area	5,600	1,908	2.9
Maungakiekie-Tamaki Local Board Area	4,400	868	5.1
Howick Local Board Area	13,700	2,564	5.3
Mangere-Otahuhu Local Board Area	5,300	396	13.4
Otara-Papatoetoe Local Board Area	6,000	675	8.9
Manurewa Local Board Area	5,600	716	7.8
Papakura Local Board Area	5,600	1,966	2.8
Franklin Local Board Area	6,000	1,747	3.4
Total Auckland	130,900	28,111	4.7
Total New Zealand	246,000	96,206	2.6

What is evident from this data is that house building is not keeping up with the local population growth in most Auckland board areas. The table shows the extent of the deficit of house building to population growth. From the data offered in the table, this deficit is quite localised, with Mangere-Otahuhu, Waitemata (Auckland CBD) and Otara- Papatoetoe all recording rates of additional people per new house of above eight. Depending on which baseline you use for estimating deficits, the deficit in Mangere-Otahuhu could be around 1000 dwellings for the five years under scrutiny. Similarly, the Otara-Papatoetoe Board area has witnessed a shortfall of over 800 dwellings over the past five years. Generally, these shortages are the result of insufficient building of new dwellings to meet population growth, and specifically the lack of building of new dwellings (houses or flats) that might be deemed affordable.

The table gives us an understanding that the housing supply deficit in Auckland is localised in specific high need areas. South Auckland suburbs, in particular, are resident to the majority of low-income households in Auckland. This table shows that areas with the highest need also have the least supply and a significant new build deficit. Exclusion from being able to obtain a house is therefore intensified for people in these areas. Already disadvantaged people are further disadvantaged because of this concentration of the supply deficit.

LACK OF SUPPLY AND RISING RENTS

Communities that were traditionally affordable for people of limited means are now increasingly becoming unaffordable. This can be attributed partly to the shortage of houses evidenced by the deficit of new builds in the area. South Auckland has traditionally been one of the most cost effective areas to live⁶⁶ and the place where many low-income households, mainly from Pacific and Māori communities, have become well established. However, due to a limited supply of houses in these communities, rental increases are likely, which increases the likelihood of homelessness and/or displacement of people from those communities.

High rents in communities where low-income people are concentrated means those households already likely to be under financial stress are excluded further from renting a home, which can leave individuals and families in different forms of homelessness or paying excessive rent. A prevalent housing issue in South Auckland is overcrowding⁶⁷. This is further illustrated in [Table 2.1](#), which shows that the average number of people per additional dwelling built in the Mangere-Otahuhu area is over 13 people per household, a significant difference to the Auckland average household size of three people per household. The issue of overcrowding in Auckland needs to be taken very seriously, especially in the areas identified as having the highest supply deficits.

High rents may also mean that to enter into the private rental market people may enter into a high rent property they cannot afford because more affordable options are not available to them. This can result in individuals and families being vulnerable to homelessness because their ability to sustain the high rent is uncertain. In addition, if people of modest incomes are barely managing to maintain the cost of a high rent at the outset, affordability is further reduced when rents rise.

Analysis offered in [Table 2.2](#) evidences the increasing unaffordability of rents within selected modest cost rental housing markets across Auckland. This table reports changes in lower quartile rents in eight suburbs and for two-bedroom flats and houses and three-bedroom houses. Lower quartile weekly rents for the years to September 2010 and September 2015 are reported, along with estimates of the real or inflation-adjusted increase over this five-year period.

This table shows that rents are rising in Auckland and generally much faster than inflation over the past five years. This is especially so in the Auckland Isthmus suburbs covered in the sample, where lower quartile rents have most often risen by more than 20% in inflation-adjusted terms.

In addition, rents are rising faster than wages and benefit incomes. Over the five years to September 2015, wages and salaries grew by around 7% in inflation-adjusted terms, while benefit incomes that are indexed against the Consumer Price Index saw no real increase⁶⁸.

It is clear that housing affordability in Auckland is a pressing issue for individuals and families in the city. For those on low-incomes, the level of affordability is unsustainable and can make them more vulnerable to homelessness.

Table 2.2: Lower quartile rents in selected Auckland suburbs – 2010 to 2015⁴⁹

	Lower quartile weekly rent YE Sep 2010	Lower quartile weekly rent YE Sep 2015	Real rent growth 2010-2015
Two-bedroom flats			
Glendhu/Glenfield	288	373	19%
Ranui	NA	230	NA
Mt Roskill	300	340	4%
Avondale	256	322	15%
Panmure	271	370	25%
Otahuhu	235	290	13%
Manurewa	253	305	11%
Papakura	222	306	27%
Two-bedroom houses			
Glendhu/Glenfield	300	374	15%
Ranui	266	350	21%
Mt Roskill	278	388	28%
Avondale	259	353	25%
Panmure	289	391	24%
Otahuhu	244	287	8%
Manurewa	259	304	8%
Papakura	260	327	15%
Three-bedroom houses			
Glendhu/Glenfield	366	464	16%
Ranui	308	391	16%
Mt Roskill	358	461	18%
Avondale	343	433	16%
Panmure	348	465	22%
Otahuhu	322	381	8%
Manurewa	296	395	22%
Papakura	298	378	17%

Community Ministries centres operated by The Salvation Army in Auckland see a steady stream of people who need to access food parcels to sustain their households. When most income is spent on rental costs,

other necessary expenditure on things such as food, clothing and adequate heating may suffer. It is very likely that low-income households are most affected, as with fewer resources they are more likely to compromise on basic necessities such as food, power and heating to pay for other necessities such as rent. The difficulty with this situation is the vulnerability of these individuals and families. When tenants prioritise other necessities ahead of rent, this can propel them into homelessness.

It is very important that we are aware of rising rents and of what can be done to curtail that trajectory, such as increasing the supply of affordable rental houses, especially in areas that need it most. This must be addressed to decrease the hardships faced by many individuals and families in Auckland and to provide a more equitable city. New Zealand is a relatively well-off country, but in line with other well-off countries that have a market liberal environment, exclusion from the private rental market for people with low-incomes is inevitable. Terry Burke, in his analysis of affordable housing in Australia and New Zealand, makes the following relevant comments: 'The positive lessons to be learnt from Australia and New Zealand are from the past, ie, the 1960s and 1970s when an affordable and available sector was sustained alongside ownership and public housing and meshed well with both. It is now a negative lesson. Poorly targeted policy settings and outcomes opposed to a sustainable housing system; the private rental sector is the Australasian housing problem'⁵⁰.

CHAPTER 3: OUR RESEARCH

WHAT PROMPTED OUR RESEARCH

The Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit began this research in 2014 in response to concerns raised by staff at our Community Ministries sites in Auckland who reported increasing demand on their services due to increasing enquiries from people requesting assistance to address housing needs. The teams expressed concern about the significant difficulties they faced trying to support people to access suitable accommodation, as there were limited housing options for low-income people in Auckland.

Meetings were held between frontline staff, management and The Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit to explore the issues with accommodation in Auckland, and to explore how The Salvation Army could respond. Staff and management sought practical solutions to help those who presented. However, the reality for staff was there were very few practical options available to people in relation to their housing needs.

Access to and application for social housing placements at that time involved a process that was often lengthy, and was an option that some individuals and families were not eligible for. Securing a home in the private rental market in Auckland also involved a lengthy process and in a highly competitive environment many low-income individuals and families did not receive preference from landlords. In relation to available emergency houses, there were very few options in Auckland and the organisations providing these services were usually at capacity.

It was considered by the Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit that further information was needed to identify the extent and breadth of housing needs for people presenting to Salvation Army services in Auckland. The Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit concluded that the best approach would be to gather information on the issue using a systematic approach by way of a survey.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Our research involved the collection of data, via a survey, from people making accommodation enquiries at Auckland Salvation Army Community Ministries sites and from Epsom Lodge, a Supportive Accommodation service provided by The Salvation Army. The survey was also extended to include De Paul House, a Catholic emergency housing provider based in the North Shore.

The following is a description of the services provided to the community by the agencies involved in collection of the data.

SALVATION ARMY COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

Community Ministries at The Salvation Army in New Zealand are a collection of 68 sites, which offer a range of social services nationwide. Initial services often include assistance with food, clothing and furniture. Those people who need ongoing assistance are linked into more specialised support that includes services such as social work, budget advice, advocacy, counselling, parenting classes and life skills programmes.

Clients are referred to Salvation Army Community Ministries by other Salvation Army centres, government departments, partner social service agencies, community organisations and churches. Many people also self-refer. In Auckland, there are fifteen sites that offer different levels and types of social service to their communities.

Community Ministries sees people on a regular basis who are seeking assistance with accommodation. Community Ministries currently have one form of emergency housing for families in Auckland, a transitional housing programme, but this programme has limited spaces. The primary way Community Ministries staff support people with their housing needs involves assessment, advocacy and planning. Plans can include referrals to emergency accommodation and social housing, while assistance can include helping people search for private rentals. Advocacy includes advocating with the Ministry of Social Development and private landlords.

SALVATION ARMY ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

The Salvation Army offers some services specialising in accommodation for single people in some areas of New Zealand. Entry into accommodation depends on different eligibility criteria and circumstances. The accommodation for individuals that The Salvation Army provides in Auckland includes Independent Living Units for the elderly and Supportive Accommodation.

Independent Living Units are available to people over the age of 55 who have limited assets and whose income is predominately from Government Superannuation or a Work and Income benefit. In Auckland, there are 73 Independent Living Units. Supportive Accommodation is available at Epsom Lodge in Auckland. Epsom Lodge offers transformational services for homeless individuals. Epsom Lodge is a 93-bed facility. It includes a separate secure women's wing with 12 beds, and allocated beds for youth aged from 17 to 24. Those who seek accommodation at Epsom Lodge need to be motivated to make significant changes in their lives. The model of care offered to people is a holistic client-centred approach to wellbeing, with a focus on freedom from addictions. People can self-refer to Epsom Lodge and are often referred by the Parole Board, District Health Boards and other government departments or community organisations. Epsom Lodge provides a specialised service, and most of the clientele who access this accommodation have complex needs and a lack of whānau or other support networks.

DE PAUL HOUSE

De Paul House is a key work of the Catholic Diocese of Auckland. The organisation has been responding to the needs of homeless families in the Northcote area since 1986. It offers accommodation and support to prepare families to live independently in affordable housing, to sustain their tenancies and to effectively use the support services available in the community. De Paul House is one of the few emergency housing providers in Auckland that specialises in helping families. They have 12 family units available, but are always at capacity and have a waitlist.

Jan Rutledge, Manager of De Paul House commented that their organisation sees an overwhelming need in the community that is not just confined to low socio-economic areas of Auckland; there is also significant need in areas like the North Shore. Jan notes the difficulty that their organisation has deciding which family they are able to support from their waitlist as they are often at capacity.

To increase advocacy about housing issues in Auckland, De Paul House management were happy to contribute to The Salvation Army's data collection by running our survey at their organisation throughout February. The people that present at De Paul House for support are families, usually with very limited means and support. They either self-refer or are referred to the organisation by government agencies or other community organisations.

METHODOLOGY

The Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit's approach to this study was to develop a short survey for use by staff in Salvation Army Community Ministries Centres and Epsom Lodge that was later extended to De Paul House. The survey was designed to be brief enough to encourage participation by those presenting with housing needs, and also to encourage participation by staff. It was important that staff could use the survey with ease as part of their work, in conjunction with other social support services they provided.

The survey consisted of eleven questions (See Appendix 1). Two questions identified the number of adults and children in each household. A question was asked about the gender and ethnicity of the person responding to the survey. In regards to the experience of homelessness, people were asked where they slept the night before they undertook the survey and where they expected to sleep the night that they completed the survey. Two questions sought information about people's interaction with the Ministry of Social Development to gain an understanding of what interaction people with housing needs had with the government body responsible for the provision of social housing. People were not asked their relationship status or the gender and ethnicity of others in their household. The primary intent was to identify the existence of a housing need rather than to explore people's circumstances or background in depth.

Training was completed with staff to assist them in interviewing survey participants. Staff were briefed on what constituted homelessness using the Statistics New Zealand definition of homelessness and were encouraged to use this definition as a guide (See Appendix 2). There was no attempt to define or categorise peoples' housing needs in the data gathering process, so no categories of homelessness appeared in the actual survey. This allowed people to define their own housing need in their own words.

PRIVACY AND ETHICS

The training included a briefing on ethical interview approaches, and a script was provided as an example for staff to use⁵¹. Privacy for participants was emphasised in training and privacy guidelines were also attached to the survey instructions⁵². Staff were instructed specifically not to collect information or record details of an individual's circumstances where such information might make it possible to identify a person or family, and staff were coached to explain to people how the collected information would be used.

SURVEY PERIOD

The survey was initially conducted over a period of one month, in November 2014. The survey was then repeated over a further two separate months to gain more data and give an increased understanding of the issue. The months in which the data was collected were not consecutive; the second round of data was collected during February 2015 and the final round of data collection was in May 2015. The entire period of time over which the data was collected was seven months.

The first round of surveys in November 2014 returned 132 surveys. The second round of surveys in February 2015 returned 144 surveys. The final round of surveys in May 2015 returned 118 surveys. The total surveys gathered was 394 surveys.

LIMITATIONS

One of the limitations for this survey was that participation by the centres that were involved in collecting data was at the discretion of the people and staff at the centres. Although management motivated staff to collect the data, workplace pressures and/or other factors may have prevented full participation by staff. The involvement of each centre was therefore variable and some centres conducted the survey for just one or two months. This inconsistent involvement meant the numbers of surveys completed varied from month to month. Given the relatively short period of the survey (three months over a seven-month period), The Salvation Army was not able to identify trends. Another consideration is that sampling technique relied mainly on individuals or households knowing that The Salvation Army or De Paul House may potentially be able to assist with their housing problems. This may have limited the reliability of the data slightly, and people might have been prone to overstate their situation to access the support they needed. What counters these limitations is the amount of participants in the survey. The response rate is relatively high given the short timeframes of the survey.

CHAPTER 4: OUR FINDINGS

The homelessness survey was carried out over three separate months: November 2014, February 2015 and May 2015 from Salvation Army Community Ministries centres at Manukau, New Lynn, North Shore, Royal Oak and Waitakere. In addition, data was collected from The Salvation Army's Epsom Lodge and from De Paul House which is based on the North Shore.

NUMBERS OF ENQUIRIES RECEIVED

In total, the survey captured 394 inquiries over the three months it was undertaken. These inquiries represented 1202 people, of whom 47% or 568 were children. The breakdown of this group by centre and by month is provided in [Table 4.1](#).

Table 4.1: Overview of survey responses by service centre

	Number of inquiries	Number of adults	Number of children
De Paul House	55	103	114
Epsom Lodge	87	113	25
Manukau	115	200	196
New Lynn	4	6	5
North Shore	10	20	14
Royal Oak	78	124	167
Waitakere	45	68	47
Total	394	634	568
November 2014	132	198	147
February 2015	144	258	265
May 2015	118	178	156

The gender and ethnicity of the person making the inquiry for housing assistance was recorded as part of the survey. However, the gender and ethnicity of others in the respondent's household were not collected to maintain the brevity of the survey and prevent a barrier to participation. The gender of survey respondents by the type of household they were part of is provided in [Table 4.2](#).

Table 4.2: Gender by household type of survey respondents

	Single person	Other adults & no children	With children	Totals
Female	42	20	195	257
Male	81	14	35	130
Gender not recorded	3	2	2	7
Totals	126	36	232	394

[Table 4.2](#) illustrates clearly that women are more likely than men to be accompanied by children, while men were far more likely than women to be single. This gender bias is due, in part, to the inclusion of The Salvation Army's Epsom Lodge in the survey. This facility provides housing mainly for single men and

has State-funded contracts to do so. Given this specialty and its long-standing reputation for providing accommodation for single people—most of whom are men, it is to be expected that the majority of inquiries and/or referrals from Epsom Lodge were from single men. In total, 54 of the 81 respondents who participated in the survey through Epsom Lodge were single men.

No information on people's relationship status was collected, so for respondents with children no information is available as to whether they were part of a single-parent household or a two-parent one.

Table 4.2 indicates that the majority (59%) of people participating in the survey had children. If the results from Epsom Lodge were taken out of the survey, the proportion of respondents with children rose to almost three quarters (72%) of all those seeking housing assistance from the centres taking part in the survey.

TYPES OF HOMELESSNESS

As noted previously, this survey recorded the type of homelessness people were experiencing in two ways. Those conducting the survey were requested to ask respondents where they had slept on the previous night, and where they expected or planned to sleep that night; that is, the night immediately following the survey.

Table 4.3 reports both sets of responses by the number of respondents, while Table 4.4 reports the numbers of people covered in responses to the 'slept last night' question in the survey.

The most immediate impression offered by the data in Table 4.3 is that the large proportion of respondents was already housed, either in a house or flat or with friends and relatives. For example, one quarter of respondents indicated that they were already living in a house or flat, while a further 44% of respondents reported they were living with friends and relatives.

The survey did not seek to inquire into the cause of a person's request for housing assistance, so it is not possible to establish what detrimental factors may have been behind respondents' housing positions when they reported living in a house or flat or with relatives and friends. Presumably, the present situation was not sustainable for the respondents or they would not have sought assistance from the agencies collecting the data. This presumption is borne out by a comparison between the data offered for the 'slept last night' question and the 'expect to sleep tonight' question. For example, while 152 respondents reported having stayed with friends and relatives for the previous night, just 123 expected to be doing so the following night. Similarly, 75 respondents indicated they had slept in a house or flat the night before they took part in the survey but only 57 expected to do so the following night. Even without knowing more detail about each of these respondent's situations, it would seem that their housing situation was very unstable at the time of them taking part in the survey. This underlying instability is also demonstrated by the fact that 43 of the 394 respondents, or 11%, had little or no idea where they were sleeping that night.

There are some inconsistencies in responses offered in this survey and reported in these summary tables. For example, 14 adults reported they expected to spend that night in prison, while three respondents (who represented three adults and six children) reported they planned to stay in hospital that night. These responses may not be realistic, in large part because decisions around admission to prison or hospital are conditional (on committing a crime or being seriously ill), which seems unlikely to be able to be planned for, even if these conditions were already imminent.

The reasons for this anomaly are not known. It is possible that some of the people interviewed were on a bail release at Epsom Lodge or other places, which would account for a response that identified prison as the impending accommodation. There would be an incentive for such people to seek accommodation as a continuation of bail, or a non-prison sentence could be reliant on the person proving evidence to the court they had stable accommodation. Some people may also have been making accommodation enquires from centres while they were in hospital. In light of the uncertainty relating to these responses to the second question—‘Where do expect to sleep tonight?’—we have chosen not to analyse further this question in this report.

As discussed previously, there is no concise definition of homelessness, but rather a continuum from being without shelter to living in housing situations that are inadequate, perhaps due to overcrowding or the poor physical condition of the house. While this gradation is not entirely consistent with the categories or types of homelessness offered in Tables 4.3 and 4.4, nonetheless, some types of homelessness offered in these tables are demonstrably worse than others. For example, people living in cars or ‘outside’ are most likely considerably worse off than people living in camping grounds or emergency housing. Similarly, those people living in this latter accommodation are most likely worse off than those living with friends and relatives or in a house which they may soon have to leave. Thus, along such a spectrum, some housing situations or forms of homelessness might be said to be more severe than others.

Table 4.3: Housing situation of respondents at the time of the survey

	Slept last night	Expect to sleep tonight
Backpackers or boarding house	17	13
Camping ground	14	11
Car or other vehicle	32	33
Emergency house or refuge	16	20
Family or friends	152	123
Garage	8	8
Hospital	4	3
House or flat	73	57
Motel	15	12
Outside	30	29
Released from prison	14	14
Don’t know or unsure		43
Total known	375	366
Not stated or recorded	19	28
Total respondents	394	394

At the more serious end of such a homelessness spectrum are examples of people living outside in tents, makeshift shelters and under bridges. We could make the judgement that people sleeping in cars are

slightly better off, and slightly better off again are people living in garages. [Table 4.4](#) offers some insights into the extent of this more serious homelessness amongst those participating in the survey.

[Table 4.4](#) reports that just under 13%, or 151 people, covered by the survey reported having slept in a garage, a car or outside on the night before the survey. Of these 151 people, a total of 65 were children.

Table 4.4: Overall responses to the ‘Where did you sleep last night?’

	Number of respondents	Number of adults	Number of children	Total people
Backpackers or boarding house	17	20	25	45
Camping ground	14	17	15	32
Car or other vehicle	32	41	30	71
Emergency house or refuge	16	20	18	38
Family or friends	152	278	247	525
Garage	8	11	22	33
Hospital	4	4	6	10
House or flat	73	141	155	296
Motel	15	16	22	38
Outside	30	34	13	47
Released from prison	14	14	0	14
Total known	375	596	553	1,149
Not stated or recorded	19	21	15	36
Total respondents	394	617	568	1,185

ETHNICITY AND TYPES OF HOMELESSNESS

The ethnicity of respondents was recorded, so it is possible to gain an overall impression of the ethnic breakdown of the people seeking housing assistance through the agencies undertaking the survey. This ethnicity question was not extended to those people in the households of respondents, who presumably also required housing assistance. This means the analysis based on ethnicity that follows applies only to the people answering questions in the survey. No assumption is made of the ethnicity of other people in the household of the person participating in the survey.

Some individuals participating in the survey identified as having two ethnicities. Of the 394 people who responded to the survey, an ethnicity was recorded for 354 of them. Of these 354 people, 340 identified just one ethnicity, while 14 identified two. Consistent with the treatment of ethnicities in the Census, each individually reported ethnicity is counted in these survey results. This means, of course, that more ethnicities are recorded than the actual number of people reporting ethnicities. This larger total is reported in [Table 4.5](#).

Fourteen respondents recorded their ethnicity (or had their ethnicity recorded) as ‘New Zealander’. Given the ambiguity of this definition these people have been included in the ‘other’ ethnicity category.

Table 4.5 reports the numbers of respondents of each ethnicity by the type of homelessness they experienced. Given the sample sizes and relatively small numbers of people experiencing the less frequently experienced types of homelessness (such as sleeping outside or in garages), there are few statistically significant differences in the ‘homelessness experience’ of people from different ethnicities.

There are some significant differences in the results reported for Māori, Pacific and Pākehā/NZ European⁵³. Māori seem more likely than Pākehā/NZ European to be living in a situation with family and friends. Pākehā/NZ European are more likely than average to be sleeping outdoors. Pacific people are less likely than average to be living outdoors.

However, the significance of these results for Pākehā/NZ European is related to the dominance of Epsom Lodge as the reporting site for a large proportion of Pākehā/NZ European. Epsom Lodge exclusively caters for single people, many of whom are released prisoners or people with substance abuse issues.

Table 4.5: Type of homelessness by ethnicity

	Māori	NZ European/ Pākehā	Pacific	Asian	Other	Not recorded	Total
Backpackers or boarding house	7	2	3	0	2	1	15
Camping ground	5	5	0	0	0	5	15
Car	13	9	5	4	0	2	33
Emergency house or refuge	3	3	7	1	1	2	17
Family or friends	66	35	28	4	2	28	163
Garage	3	1	3	1	0	0	8
Hospital	1	2	1	0	0	1	5
House or flat	21	21	18	1	3	10	74
Motel	6	3	5	0	1	1	16
Outside	14	14	2	1	0	3	34
Released from prison	6	3	3	1	0	1	14
Total known	145	98	75	13	9	54	394
Not stated or recorded	4	4	2	0	0	5	15
Total respondents	149	102	77	13	9	49	409

PERIOD OF HOMELESSNESS

As part of the survey, respondents were asked how long they had been living in their current housing situation. A response to this question relied on them to define their situation and to place timeframes around this. Data on these reported timeframes by the type of homelessness is presented in [Table 4.6](#).

The first notable feature of the results offered in [Table 4.6](#) is the proportion (32%) where this question was either not answered or not recorded. This is disappointing as it has an effect on the reliability of the data.

Table 4.6: Type of homelessness by period of homelessness

	1 to 2 days	3 to 6 days	1 to 3 weeks	1 month	2 to 5 months	6 to 11 months	1 year	2 years	More than 2 years	Not recorded	Total
Backpackers or boarding house	1	0	3	1	0	4	0	0	0	6	15
Camping ground or caravan park	0	1	2	0	6	1	0	0	1	3	14
Car	6	7	13	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	32
Emergency house or refuge	0	2	4	1	3	1	1	0	0	5	17
Family or friends	25	8	26	15	18	13	9	2	5	32	153
Garage	0	0	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	8
Hospital	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	4
House or flat	3	1	4	7	12	3	6	4	6	26	72
Motel	6	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	16
Outside	6	4	10	2	4	1	0	0	2	5	34
Released from prison	0	1	4	0	3	0	1	2	0	3	14
Not recorded	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	10	15
Totals	48	27	78	29	53	24	17	8	14	96	394
Totals % of recorded	16%	9%	26%	10%	18%	8%	6%	3%	5%		

This weakness notwithstanding, the timeframes reported here do tend to match expectations around patterns of homelessness. For example, most of the people reported a timeframe around their then housing situation of relatively short periods. Just over half (51%) of those reporting timeframes reported that their present housing position had lasted less than one month, with a quarter reporting it had lasted less than a week.

Also as expected, the more difficult examples of homelessness, such as living in cars, are more immediate problems, with up to 80% having lived in such conditions for less than one month. Living in temporary accommodation, such as a boarding house or camping ground, appears to be an extended experience, with just over 40% of respondents living in such circumstances for one month or over.

INTERACTION WITH THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

People participating in the survey were asked about their interaction with the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) to gain assistance with their housing needs. Respondents were asked whether or not they had approached MSD, if they had had an initial assessment of their housing undertaken, and if they had been interviewed by MSD following this initial assessment. Respondents were also asked about the timeframes around this assessment and interview process.

A summary of respondents' interaction with MSD is reported in [Table 4.7](#). This table reports the proportion of respondents who have or have not had some interaction with MSD. These results are not entirely consistent in that a few respondents (8) report not having had an assessment of their housing need undertaken but having had an interview. Such inconsistencies are relatively minor against the larger reported outcomes and probably indicate some confusion amongst some respondents on the difference between an initial contact to determine eligibility for assessment and an assessment interview.

A significant outcome reported in [Table 4.7](#) is that around half of the respondents who answered these questions fully and consistently report having had no formal contact with MSD in relation to their housing problems. For example, 160 respondents out of 326 respondents who answered both the assessment and interview questions unambiguously reported not having had an initial eligibility interview or an assessment interview. Reasons for this non-engagement were not sought in the survey, so it is not possible to ascertain a cause for this outcome from the data available.

Table 4.7: Respondents' interactions with Ministry of Social Development

	Initial eligibility interview YES	Initial eligibility interview NO	Initial eligibility interview UNSURE	Initial eligibility interview NOT STATED	Total
Assessment Interview - YES	123	8	0	2	133
Assessment Interview - NO	35	160	1	2	198
Assessment Interview - UNSURE	0	0	1	0	1
Assessment Interview - NOT STATED	12	8	0	42	62
Total	170	176	2	46	394

[Table 4.8](#) presents the data around these interactions with the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) in a different format and concentrates on the outcomes reported unambiguously and consistently (that is, the shaded cells in [Table 4.7](#)). These outcomes are denoted as 'Yes-Yes' for having the initial eligibility interview and assessment interview, 'Yes-No' for having the initial assessment but no interview and 'No-No' for having neither the assessment nor the interview. [Table 4.8](#) reports the numbers of respondents with and without children and total numbers of adults and children who fall under each of these categories.

Table 4.8 indicates that slightly less than half of the respondents with children (41%) who answered the questions around interaction with MSD had no contact with MSD in relation to their housing need. Translated into actual people, this no contact applies to 40% of the children in households covered by the survey and 49% of adults.

Table 4.8: Numbers of people in respondent households interacting with Ministry of Social Development for housing need

	Yes-Yes numbers	Yes-No numbers	No-No numbers
Respondents with children	86	27	80
Respondents without children	37	8	80
Number of children	220	80	194
Number of adults	195	57	246
Total number of people	415	137	440

The questions around timeframes, such as waiting times for interviews or to be housed by MSD, were not answered consistently enough to report reliable results.

CHAPTER 5: NECESSARY POLICY

Hutia te rito o te harakeke, kei hea rā te kōmako e kō?

Kī mai ki ahau, he aha te mea nui o te Ao?

Māku e kī atu, he tangata, he tangata, he tangata.

If you were to pluck out the centre of the flax bush, where would the bellbird sing?

If I was asked, 'What was the most important thing in the world?'

I would be compelled to reply, 'It is people, it is people, it is people!'

The whakatauki used at the beginning of this report was chosen because it is necessary to emphasise the significance of looking after people—and, in particular, the importance of looking after children.

This report is just a glimpse into the reality of homelessness for people in Auckland. The result of the survey illustrated that 1202 people were experiencing homelessness. Of these, 568 were children. And for 65 of those children, their parent and perhaps the children as well had slept outside the night before. In a modern, first-world city like Auckland, this reality is unacceptable. In decisions and plans for the future of Auckland as a leading global city we need to be increasingly conscious of the significant housing need in the community and to more effectively ensure people's housing needs are met. If Auckland does not provide sufficient housing for its population, there is a risk of creating a future that will see increased harm and hardship and a future detrimental to the overall wellbeing of its community, economy and inevitably, to New Zealand as a whole. There are things that need to be immediately addressed at an Auckland level, while other things are required at a national policy level.

A RIGHT TO ADEQUATE SHELTER FOR CHILDREN

At a national level, New Zealand needs to consider what is required to look after the housing needs of children in this country. It is evident that New Zealand is falling short of providing one of the most basic necessities for children: adequate shelter. It is doubtful that any New Zealander would consider homelessness for children acceptable, so the fact that children suffer as a result of homelessness should be a point of national action. It is positive that New Zealand has ratified international conventions that commit to adequate shelter for all citizens, but more needs to be done domestically so that the housing needs of people in cities such as Auckland are met. Protections that ensure adequate housing for all should be codified into statute in New Zealand and specifically there should be legal protections for children in regards to adequate shelter. In addition to the codification of the right to shelter it is also important to have a system that ensures accountability.

As a nation, we place importance on education, ensuring there is a legal requirement for children to go to school. We also place importance on health, ensuring (despite issues of access) that we have universal health care. Yet it does not seem logical that although we understand that housing is crucial to both health and education, the State does not ensure in law that adequate shelter is available for children.

Alongside legal protection and accountability is a need for a national housing plan and strategy that is implemented at a local level. Consideration needs to be given to cross-party agreements on this important issue. Housing is one of the key determinants of social wellbeing and it needs to be given better emphasis by government. Although The Salvation Army advocates for the legal validation of the

right to shelter for all people, the results of our survey speak to the importance of ensuring, first and foremost, that children have access to adequate shelter. This is reflected in our policy recommendations.

- **Policy Recommendation 1:** The enactment of legislation which ensures the right of children in New Zealand to adequate shelter.
- **Policy Recommendation 2:** Development of a cross-party agreement on a national housing strategy and targets.

SUFFICIENT EMERGENCY HOUSING

One of the primary ways to provide immediate assistance to people, such as those who participated in our survey, is through the provision of emergency housing. Just over half (51%) of people in our survey reported their present housing position had lasted less than one month, with a quarter reporting it having lasted less than a week. This indicates short-term accommodation options are necessary to assist those individuals and families that may be propelled into homelessness quickly. To reduce harm for those individuals and families that require urgent and immediate assistance, it is important to intervene immediately with support.

The government has recently announced further funding toward emergency housing provision in Auckland. The Salvation Army welcomes this funding, but sees two remaining difficulties. Firstly, the funding is not at a sufficient level to cater for the need in Auckland. Secondly, the allocation of the funding does not provide any further support for existing providers who often need to raise considerable public funding to maintain their work. The Salvation Army believes existing emergency housing providers should be funded adequately by State provision.

- **Policy Recommendation 3:** Increase funding for emergency housing provision in Auckland to ensure all people requiring temporary accommodation have access to housing. This funding should be targeted toward both existing services and toward new service provision to meet need in Auckland.

Although emergency housing provision in Auckland is vital, it does not serve to solve the root cause of homelessness in Auckland. The primary causal factor for homelessness in Auckland is the housing supply deficit, which results in limited available and affordable rental properties. The result of not addressing housing supply will be that, as the problem progresses, it will be necessary to put more and more resource into the provision of emergency housing. In conjunction with emergency housing provision, is also important that policy ensures supply of affordable rental properties and sufficient social housing to meet the need of the population.

- **Policy Recommendation 4:** That the government takes all further steps required to ensure that there is an affordable, secure housing supply available in Auckland to meet existing and future need.
- **Policy Recommendation 5:** That the government puts in place a programme to increase the supply of social housing by 1000 houses a year in Auckland, over the next 10 years, or until waiting lists reduce to less than 100.

SUFFICIENT SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING

There needs to be an acceptance that the private rental market is clearly not working for low-income individuals and families in Auckland and that government intervention is required to ensure low-income individuals and families have access to houses they can afford to rent.

Many other interventions need to be considered by government that are outside the scope of this report and which may be helpful to increasing supply of affordable rentals. This may include the provision of incentives and/or disincentives to market players to achieve increased supply of affordable homes to rent. However, the primary way government can ensure that homes are affordable to rent in Auckland for the individuals and families who need them most is by ensuring that the government has a level of control over what is provided by the market.

This may mean increasing government support to organisations that provide affordable places to rent for people who need them most. This will serve to address the barriers faced by low-income households of social and economic exclusion from the private rental market.

One of the major concerns raised in this report relates to the location of supply deficits in Auckland. There is a shortage in the supply of affordable places to rent in areas with high need. Again, the government is encouraged to do what is necessary to ensure an increased supply of homes in the high-need areas identified in this report, and to effectively plan for the provision of houses for those specific areas where predominantly low-income households live.

- **Policy Recommendation 6:** Increase contracting to organisations that will build and manage affordable rental properties for low-income households.

SOCIAL HOUSING AND THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Given the difficulty experienced by many low-income households, the provision of social housing in Auckland is considered an urgent necessity. It is important that government has a continued stake in the market by retaining its housing stock in Auckland. Overseas examples clearly illustrate that social housing provision is important in market liberal private rental environments. In a sense, the continued provision of social housing provides some guarantee that people—particularly those with the highest need—can access affordable homes. Because this study did not explore people's situations in detail we do not know if people who presented were eligible for social housing and whether they were registered with the Ministry of Social Development. Irrespective of this, The Salvation Army considers it important to address the waiting list of the Ministry of Social Development which represents 2172 families in Auckland waiting to be allocated a home.

Another important consideration pertains to access to the Ministry of Social Development. Our survey showed that 41% of those responding to the survey reported no engagement with the Ministry of Social Development. The lack of engagement with the Ministry of Social Development needs to be explored further. A question arises as to why people could not or would not engage with the Ministry of Social Development, an organisation that has the role to assist people with their housing needs.

The survey did not look in depth at people's experiences with the Ministry of Social Development; therefore, we are unable to fully understand the apparent lack of engagement with the Ministry. There are a number of possible explanations, which could be to do with organisational culture or lack of awareness by people about how to access housing assistance. Improving public awareness of the processes and practices of the organisation may address this. This may not be a policy consideration per se; it may be something the Ministry of Social Development needs to address at a service delivery level. Nevertheless, it is very important that people know how to access the Ministry of Social Development for support with their housing needs.

- **Policy Recommendation 7:** Improve access to the Ministry of Social Development for people who have acute housing needs.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY

The purpose of this report has been to highlight some of the realities faced by individuals and families in regards to their housing needs in Auckland. To do this we began by exploring definitions of homelessness. We considered the Statistics New Zealand definition of homelessness most appropriate for this purpose. We discussed the concept of adequate shelter as a basic human right and expressed that adequate shelter for people—especially children—should be protected in legislation and realised through policy. We considered literature on the concept of homelessness, which gave us an understanding of some of the causes of homelessness. Structural and individual barriers that exclude people from housing were discussed, with a particular emphasis on access issues for those with low incomes. In our chapter on the Auckland context, we identified (social housing need aside) that there is a significant need for more affordable rental properties, particularly in communities in Auckland where there is high need. We know there is a supply deficit in Auckland, but now we have demonstrated that what is being built is not catering for the people and communities that need it most. It is little wonder that The Salvation Army Community Ministries centre with the highest number of enquiries in our survey was Manukau, because of the clear supply deficit in the South Auckland area.

This report presents the findings of our survey. The survey results further illustrate the significant housing needs of people in Auckland. We found that homelessness affected 394 households, which included 1202 people. Of those people who presented, 65% were women and women were more likely to be accompanied by children. It is the number of children that were affected by homelessness, 47% of the total number of people, which is one of the most concerning findings of this report. Another concern from the findings of our survey was that 41% of the participants had not engaged with the Ministry of Social Development.

In our policy chapter, we advocate for government support to address homelessness in Auckland and in New Zealand and make policy recommendations to that effect. We consider that the hardships individuals and families face due to inadequate shelter cannot and should not be overlooked and it is vital that government moves to address the causes of homelessness as well as the current need. There is also a need to talk about homelessness in our communities, to acknowledge the different forms that homelessness takes and the breadth of the issue in New Zealand. More importantly, there is a need to understand how many children are affected by homelessness and to protect those children legally and through policy.

Homelessness is both unnecessary and preventable. Children in New Zealand should not have to live in unconscionable conditions. Government can create the policy settings necessary to reduce harm and ensure equity of access to adequate shelter

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: HOMELESSNESS SURVEY – DATA COLLECTION FORM

Data collection:

Please record the following information for every inquiry you receive from a person or household looking for housing and who may already be seen as being homeless.

DATE OF INQUIRY

GENDER OF PERSON INQUIRYING

ETHNICITY OF PERSON INQUIRYING

ADULTS IN HOUSEHOLD

CHILDREN (under 16) IN HOUSEHOLD

WHERE DID THEY SLEEP LAST NIGHT?

HOW LONG HAVE THEY BEEN LIVING IN THIS SITUATION?

WHERE DO THEY EXPECT TO SLEEP TONIGHT?

HAVE THEY HAD AN INITIAL ASSESSMENT BY WORK & INCOME?

HAVE THEY HAD AN INTERVIEW WITH WORK & INCOME?

IF NO – HOW LONG HAVE THEY BEEN WAITING SINCE INITIAL ASSESSMENT?

IF YES – HOW LONG HAVE THEY BEEN WAITING SINCE INTERVIEW?

APPENDIX 2: SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

SALVATION ARMY COMMUNITY MINISTRIES' HOMELESSNESS SURVEY

Purpose of this survey:

The Salvation Army's Community Ministries receive regular inquiries from families seeking urgent assistance to find accommodation. The extent and acuteness of this housing need appears to be becoming more serious with instances of mothers and children living in cars in public car parks.

To assist with the Army's advocacy for more attention to be paid to providing affordable housing the Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit (SPPU) wishes to collect information on the extent and nature of this housing need on a systematic basis. SPPU is asking staff of the Community Ministries to complete a short survey form for each individual or family contacting us who are seeking assistance with housing. This survey form is provided separately.

Defining homelessness

Homelessness can be defined in a number of ways. For simplicity and clarity the definition offered by Statistics New Zealand is to be used for this survey¹. This definition is based on four types of housing. A more detailed description of each of these is provided. These four types are:

- ▶ Without shelter
- ▶ Temporary accommodation
- ▶ Sharing accommodation
- ▶ Uninhabitable housing

Privacy requirements:

The Salvation Army is legally and morally obliged to comply with the overall intent and requirements of the Privacy Act 1993. This Act has various requirements around the collection, storage and use of private or personal information. To meet these requirements four responses are needed from those collecting and recording information for this survey. These requirements are:

1. Please make the person seeking assistance aware that information on their housing need is being collected for the purposes of advocating for more to be done in providing affordable housing.
2. Where people appear unhappy about the collection of this information a survey form cannot be filled in.
3. Do not collect information or record details of an individual's circumstances where this information may make it possible to identify that person's or their family's identity.
4. Do not store the survey alongside other information which might identify that person's or their family's identity.

Descriptions of homelessness

Statistics New Zealand in their discussion of definitions of homelessness offer four categories or types of homelessness as follows²:

Without shelter - living situations that provide no shelter, or makeshift shelter, are considered as without shelter. These include living situations such as living on the street, and inhabiting improvised dwellings, such as living in a shack or a car.

¹ Statistics New Zealand. (2009). *New Zealand Definition of Homelessness*. Wellington: Author.

² Ibid.

Temporary accommodation - living situations are considered temporary accommodation when they provide shelter overnight, or when 24-hour accommodation is provided in a non-private dwelling, and are not intended to be lived in long-term. This includes hostels for the homeless, transitional supported accommodation for the homeless, and women's refuges as well as people staying long-term in motor camps and boarding houses, as these are not intended for long-term accommodation.

Sharing accommodation - living situations that provide temporary accommodation for people through sharing someone else's private dwelling. The usual residents of the dwelling are not considered homeless.

Uninhabitable housing - living situations where people reside in a dilapidated dwelling are considered uninhabitable housing.

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