



Te Ope Whakaora

Social Policy & Parliamentary Unit

Working for the eradication of poverty in New Zealand

Unit Brief June 2020

From the Director

Since our last Unit Brief in March, the world has been turned upside down! Covid-19 sent so many plans out the window—including ours at SPPU. Our plans for the year all seemed redundant when we got together to work out what we now needed to do. As we scabbled around trying to figure it out several things became clear.

New Zealand was going through a crisis that was going to impact people and communities hugely, and that quick decisions were going to have to be made—almost ‘on the hoof’—by our national and community leaders within a void of quality and timely (immediate) information. Maybe this was where we as a Salvation Army could be of significant help? We had a wide range of staff, volunteers and officers responding amazingly on the ground, and also our unit with its capacity for social analysis able to pull information together quickly.

This was the genesis of our Covid-19 Social Impact Report and Dashboard. There have been four fortnightly reports come out that have had great pick-up in the media, with politicians, other community groups and for people within the Salvation Army. We hope that this has been helpful in shaping local and national responses to the crisis.

These reports will continue in some form, but with less frequency and with some deeper analysis regarding solutions to the more significant problems as they emerge. Watch this space.

One reflection that emerged in our dialogue around the crisis—coming as it did so close to Easter—was around the suffering, crucifixion, death and resurrection of Christ. Here was our nation going into a period of pain and suffering; in some sense a kind of crucifixion. However, the amazing point and outcome of the Easter story was the resurrection. It wasn’t a return to normal—nothing could be the same after Christ’s death and resurrection—it was a massive paradigm shift, or transforming moment, in the history of the world.



As people take time to reflect on this time of pain and confusion, our prayer is that we would not go back to where we were before; where homelessness, food insecurity, debt and poverty were all somehow normalised. Where some people were forgotten—left behind.

Sometimes out of shared suffering there comes a new and closer relationship of pulling together, of belonging and inclusiveness with a focus beyond our own individual needs and agenda.

May all this suffering and loss be a transformative moment in our nation’s history—a resurrection of sorts.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ian Hutson

Director—Social Policy & Parliamentary Unit



Out & About

Speaking/Presentations

21/04 Delivered a lecture to a third year Policy and Public Health class at Otago University, via ZOOM. Was an awesome discussion!—Ronji.

21/05 Panel member and presenter to the NZ Planning Institute, focused on urban development, community partnership and social housing—Ronji.

Submissions

09/04 Presented oral submission via ZOOM to the Urban Development Bill with Major Campbell Roberts. Very good hearing before the Committee—Ronji.

29/04 Presented oral submission via ZOOM to the Residential Tenancies Act with Diana Vao (Social Work Team Leader, Manukau Community Ministry). It was a good discussion, representing TSA's unique roles as landlord, tenant and tenant rights advocate—Ronji.

All our submissions are available [HERE](#)

Government

17/04 Letter to Minister Sepuloni re: access to welfare benefits for migrant workers—Paul.

Community Advocacy

Covid-19 Community Sector Landscape meeting with Hon. Minister Poto Williams (Minister of Community and Voluntary Sector)—Ian.

Stakeholder Meetings

02/04 (and ongoing) Involved in Alternative Energy Hardship Working Group with other community group—Ronji.

07/04 Interviewed in Auckland Council Housing Supply Research (social and transitional housing focus)—Ronji.

15/04 FinCap Board meeting—Ronji.

30/04 Tax Justice Aotearoa steering group—Paul.

21/04 & 08/05 New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services meetings—Ian.

04/05 Te Ohu Whakawhanaunga Trust (Broad-based Community Organising, South Auckland)—Ian.

06/05 FinCap meeting with MSD re: Budget 2020 advocacy for increased funding for BFC sector—Ronji.

18/05 Strategy and sustainability interview and discussion with BNZ Bank and Jono Bell from Community Ministries—Ronji.

20/05 FinCap Board meeting, especially reviewing the doubling of funding from Budget 2020 for budgeting services in NZ. Praise God!—Ronji.

21/05 Attended AGM for Nga Tangata Microfinance (NTM). I also sit on the NTM Board—Ronji.

30/04 Tax Justice Aotearoa steering group—Paul.

Media

09/04 Interview on Tagata Pasifika re: help available during lockdown—Ronji.

09/04 Guest on Cooking the Books Podcast on NZ Herald—Ronji.

09/04 Covid-19 NewsHub phone interview—Paul.

20/04 *The Nation* (TV3) interview re: small business and the wider social impact of the lockdown—Ronji.

23/04 Covid-19 Pacific Media Network phone interview.

24/04 Covid-19 NewsHub phone interview—Paul.

26/04 *Sunday Star Times* opinion piece—Paul.

08/05 Covid-19 *Breakfast* on TV One—Ian.

08/05 Covid-19 Radio New Zealand afternoon panel—Ian.

08/05 Covid-19 Newstalk ZB—Ian.

07/05 Covid-19 NewsHub phone interview—Paul.

11/05 Covid-19 Radio Rhema interview—Ian.

12/05 Radio NZ interview re: Budget 2020—Ronji.

19/05 TV3 News interview re: Māori and Pasifika families in damp/mouldy homes—Ronji.

21/05 *The Nation* (TV3) interview re: the Social Impact Dashboards—Ronji.

Continued ...



Media Links

- [Newshub](#)
- [Tangata Pasifika +](#)
- [NZ Herald Cooking The Books Podcast](#)
- [Salvation Army Housing Release](#)
- [Stunday Star Times Opinion \(Stuff.co.nz\)](#)
- [Breakfast](#)

Think Pieces

02/04 [Ian](#)

01/05 [Paul](#)

18/05 [Ronji](#)

Internal Salvation Army

16/04 Responding to TSA Mission Impact Framework project—Ronji.

20/05 Meeting with Ausaga Amoa and Andrew Mitchell, MBIE Briefing paper on BNPL schemes—Ana.

23/04 Māori Ministry Council Hui—Ian.

14/05 Conference call with members of The Salvation Army International Social Justice, (based in New York, including Colonels Richard and Janet Munn) and social justice units in Australia and New Zealand—Ian.

23/05 & 30/05 Māori Ministry Strategic Planning Hui—Ian.

Introducing our new SPPU team member!

Malo E Lelei, my name is Ana Ika, I am a Tongan, born and raised in Mangere, South Auckland. When I was a youth, I was on a path to destruction like many of my peers in my community;

fortunately for me, I crossed paths with people who were able to instruct and encourage me towards another path. On this alternative path, I would come to give my life to Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour. I looked back and realised had it not been for those key people during my adolescent years—who knows where I would be? Therefore, I devoted myself to become that same positive influence for other young people. I have been a youth worker/leader in both paid and voluntary roles here at home and abroad. I have worked as a youth worker with Oranga Tamariki, Barnardos and CanTeen.



They say it takes a village to raise a child but the sword cuts both ways; it also takes a village to hold a child back. During my many years of youth work, I've found that as youth workers we did our best to empower, equip and encourage young people; but there were very few people that were there to empower, equip and encourage the village. Despite the milestones that the young people I worked with achieved, some would often find themselves back at square one because their villages were still at square one. I couldn't understand how so much support could be provided for a young person and yet, if a fraction of that support was channelled towards their village, then maybe they could move forward together.

Unfortunately, that's not how the system works. Take the recent budget for example, \$220 million dollars for school lunches but no budget



allocations for welfare—support the child but not so much the village. Frustrated with the generational revolving door I was seeing, I thought if the system is not working for the collective, then maybe we need to change the rules of the system. Bold statement for someone who was ignorant of the policy realm and government processes.

Despite my naivety, these frustrations were my driving force to move away from my beloved frontline work in the youth sector and into policy. Following the completion of my Masters in Public Policy earlier this year, I am grateful to the Lord for blessing me with this opportunity to join the Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit as a Social Policy Analyst/Advocate. It is a privilege to be in a position to utilise policy to serve my community, but most of all to use this work to glorify and honour our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Catherine Booth once said, 'If we are to better the future we must disturb the present', and for me that means challenging the status quo and advocating for rules of the system to change.

Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.

Isaiah 1:17

Ana Ika

Policy Analyst

We welcome your feedback

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