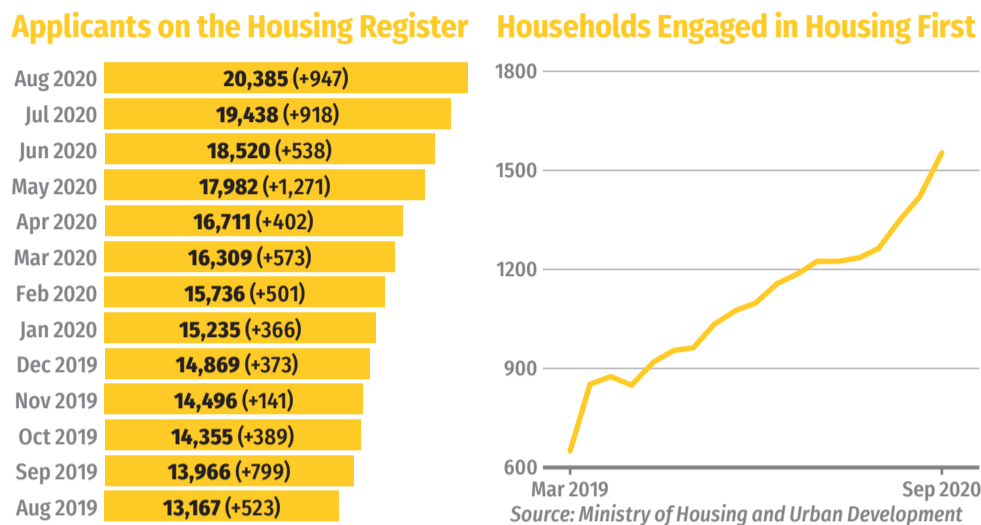


COVID-19 Social Impact Dashboard

27 November 2020

The Salvation Army's sixth Covid-19 Social Impact Dashboard—the final Dashboard—is also serving as a **Briefing to the new Government** where we propose key policy ideas and positions. There's a special spotlight in this version on **Housing**, with updates on **Food Security**, **Financial Hardship**, **Addictions**, **Income Support & Employment**, and a new commentary on **Crime & Punishment**.

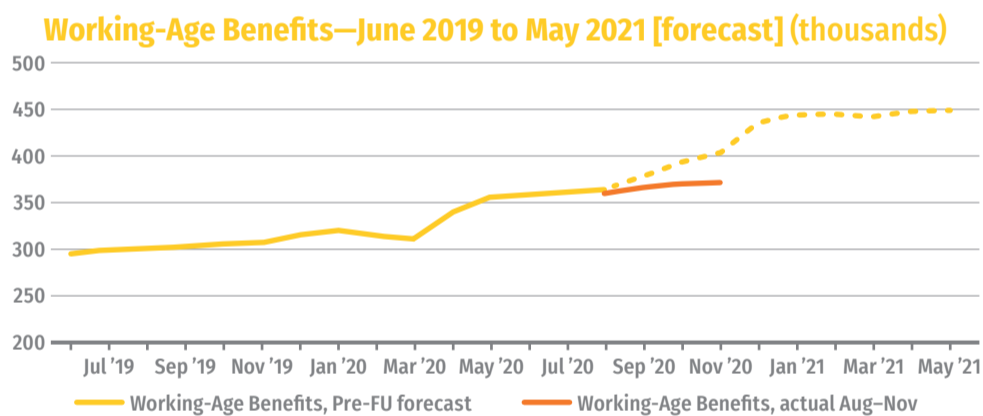
HOUSING



This Dashboard looks at the *sharper end* of housing need—homelessness, emergency, transitional and social housing. We question if all these 'bites' are actually creating better outcomes for people and whānau at this sharper end.

•BRIEFING• More support for community housing providers and iwi/hāpu-based housing initiatives; reforming housing assistance policy; strong review of boarding houses and other forms of emergency housing in the communities.

INCOME SUPPORT & EMPLOYMENT

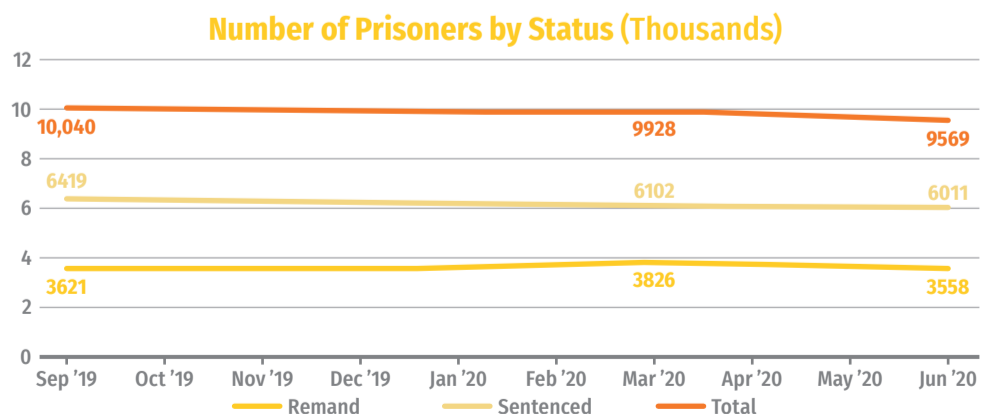


September saw the biggest quarterly increase in unemployment since 1986, rising by 37,000 to 151,000. The number of people receiving Jobseeker unemployment benefit has also increased, nearly 60,000 since the end of February to peak at just over 204,000 in September—a 41% increase in six months.

We are seeing more people who need help who are losing income from employment or ending support through the Wage Subsidy or CIRP payment and who are not entitled to government support. This is on top of existing high needs in our communities.

•BRIEFING• Implement the Welfare Expert Advisory Group recommendations; urgent action is needed focused on employment and training support for those most affected by Covid-19 impacts: young people, especially younger Māori and Pasifika, and the regions and communities worst hit.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

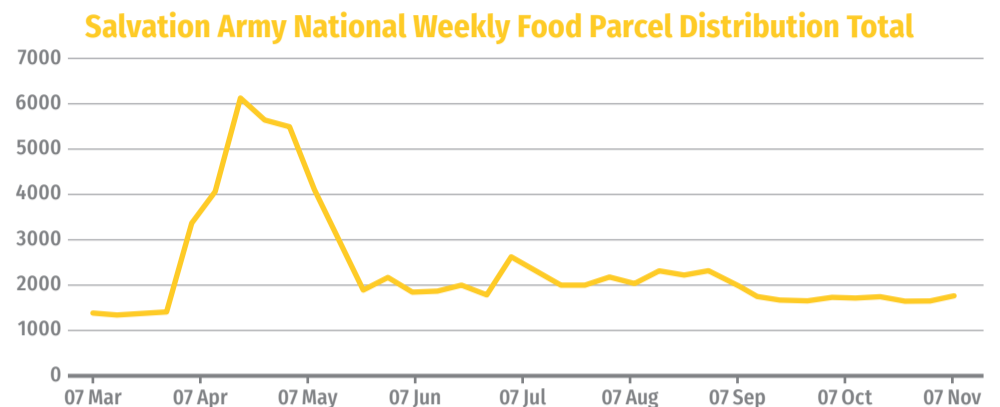


Around 40% of the prison muster are remand prisoners awaiting their court cases. Māori currently represent 52.3% of the prison population, this has increased from 50.4% in 2017.

The Salvation Army's Reintegration Service has increased by 38% since 2017. We currently have 105 accommodation units to support reintegration services.

•BRIEFING• Reforming the Bail Amendment Act; increase funding for reintegration services; concerted efforts around Māori and the criminal justice system.

FOOD SECURITY



Food parcel distribution for The Salvation Army has slightly decreased since the release of our last dashboard, from 1794 (30 June) to 1768 (7 November). Food parcel distribution is 30% higher than pre-Covid-19 levels. When we were able to go further than Whangārei, our eyes were opened. Covid-19 highlighted the real poverty that already existed.

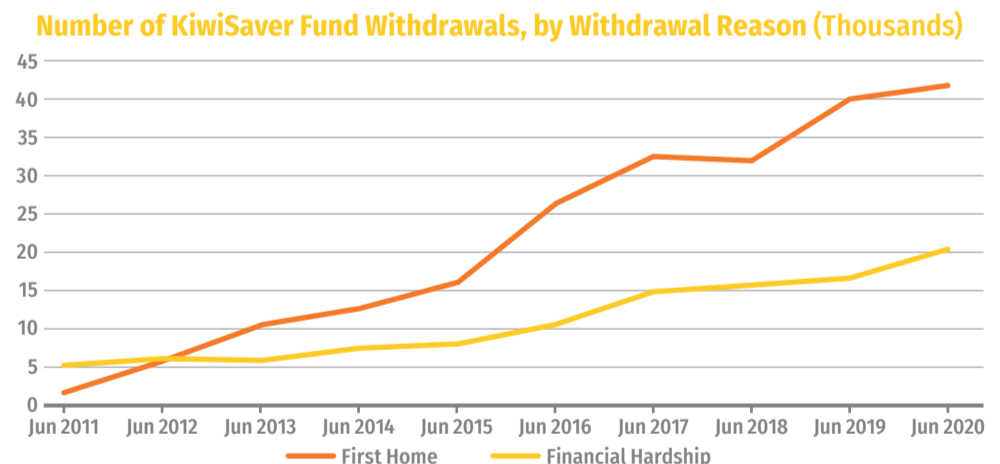
•BRIEFING• Need a model where families are not dependent on foodbanks but are in a position of self-sufficiency; benefits to be increased before Christmas to alleviate the hardships many are facing.

ADDICTIONS

Number of people receiving alcohol and other drug treatment has fluctuated over the Covid-19 period. Significant increase in gaming machine use was reported post-lockdown but may be returning to somewhat 'normal' levels now.

•BRIEFING• Stronger regulation of online gambling; investment in more early intervention and public health AOD services, along with mental health worker support for NGO AOD treatment providers; robust discussion on what decriminalising cannabis could/should look like.

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP



Calls to the FinCap MoneyTalks Helpline have been steady at around the 300+ per week mark since June. KiwiSaver withdrawals for hardship have increased slightly since our last Dashboard, with 2010 members withdrawing funds for financial hardship in September 2020. This is a 30% increase since September 2019.

Our first Dashboard was released on 9 April. Since then, over 3500 new budgeting cases were started by the public with our budgeters between 09/04 and 20/11. Over 5300 face-to-face budgeting sessions were delivered. In this same period, the total debt presented by these clients (for both open and closed cases) was a staggering \$54,682,772.63.

•BRIEFING• Develop debt collection legislation; more investment in safer credit options.



Social Policy & Parliamentary Unit

Working for the eradication of poverty in New Zealand

www.salvationarmy.org.nz/socialpolicy

We welcome your comments on this Dashboard series.

Please contact the authors at social.policy@salvationarmy.org.nz

Keep up to date with the Dashboard series at salvationarmy.org.nz/covid19report