

COVID-19 Social Impact Dashboard

31 July 2020

THE SALVATION ARMY

Lockdown in numbers



23 March–25 May 2020

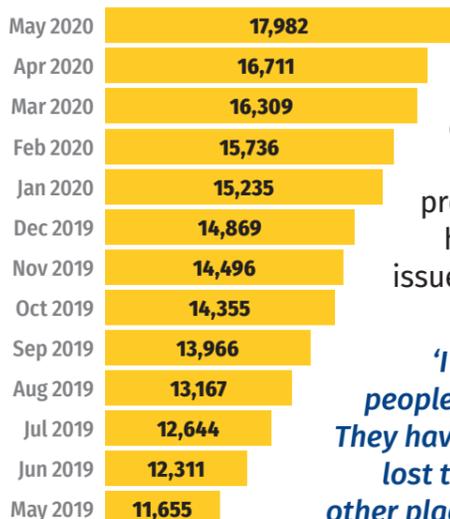
ADDICTIONS

There has been a spike in the number of referrals for alcohol and drug treatment nationwide since the country moved to Covid-19 level 1.

'A small number of clients indicated a desire to gamble again post-lockdown, but most were anxious that they would not be able to maintain abstinence when lockdown stopped. This proved to be correct, as many clients started gambling soon after level 1.'

HOUSING

Applicants on the Housing Register

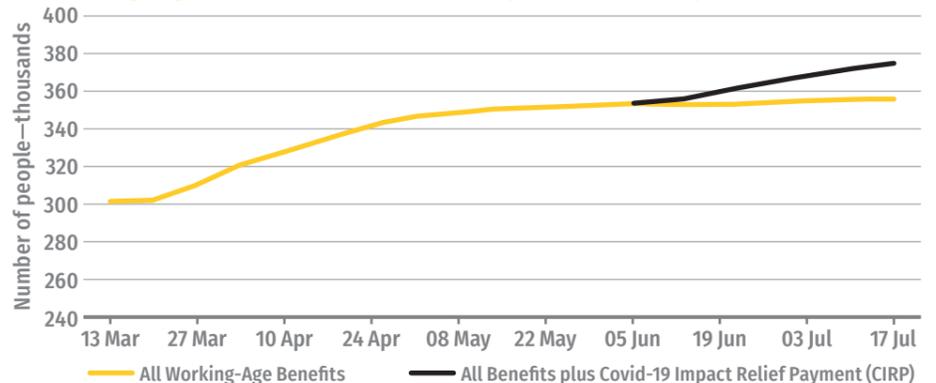


Overall, there was already extreme housing stress for many vulnerable Kiwi before the lockdowns. Some of this changed quickly during Covid-19. But as this new norm emerges in level 1, the pre-Covid-19 stress—mixed with new housing, financial and employment issues—point to some very challenging times ahead.

'I am seeing new group of homeless people emerging—often sleeping in cars. They have lost jobs, unable to pay rent and lost their homes. Some have come from other places hearing Wellington is "better".'

INCOME SUPPORT & EMPLOYMENT

Working-Age Benefits + Covid-19 Impact Relief Payment (Mar–Jul)



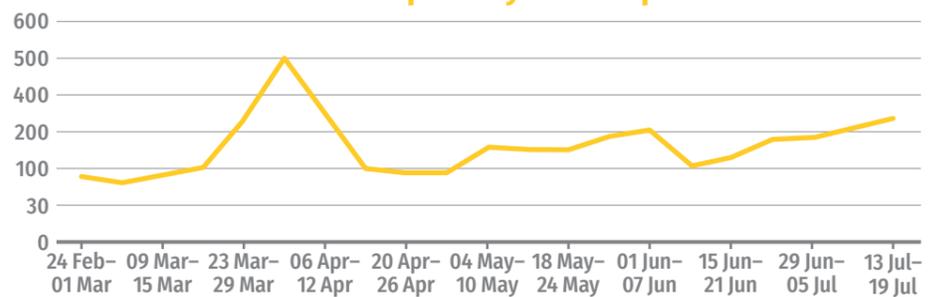
The combination of support for existing employment and higher level of support for those losing their jobs has helped to limit the negative impact on communities.

'Incomes have lowered, although Wage Subsidy/benefit increases offer some assistance.'

'There is a whole new people group who are likely to need our services and are unaware of the services we provide.'

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

Calls to FinCap MoneyTalks Helpline

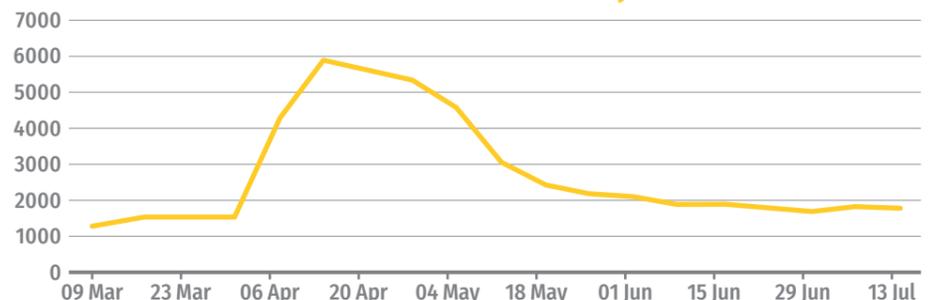


Some of the key building blocks for addressing some of the acute financial hardship are: a new boost in funding from Budget 2020, some relief with the subsidies; more ethical lending options, like the Covid-19 Loans; and rapidly changing policy reforms and protections.

'Sense that people are shocked from Covid-19. Pleading with people; don't hide, don't panic, don't bury your head in the sand if you're facing financial challenges, there's help available.'

FOOD SECURITY

Food Parcel Distribution March–June 2020



Since the release of our last Dashboard, food parcel distribution for The Salvation Army has decreased by 35%, from 2444 in the week of 19 May to 1673 in the week of 30 June.

'When the Government subsidy runs out in early September, there is the possibility that this will create a new wave of food demand.'

'There were people over the lockdown period who had experienced not knowing where the next meal was coming from who had to turn to us for help—they are people who may be very reluctant to come back again because they feel shame in doing this, even if they may be really struggling.'

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

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