



**SOCIAL POLICY AND
PARLIAMENTARY UNIT**

Working for the eradication of poverty in NZ

A New Zealand that demands attention

A report identifying the social issues experienced by the social services of the Salvation Army.

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the social services of The Salvation Army

Bonnie Robinson
Deputy Director
The Salvation Army New Zealand, Fiji and
Tonga Territory
Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit
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16b Bakerfield Place, PO Box 76249, Manukau City. Phone 09 262 2332. Director: Major Campbell Roberts.

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Executive Summary

The Salvation Army has a long tradition of caring for the most vulnerable and at risk in New Zealand. This tradition brings us into direct contact with and awareness of many of the social pressures facing individuals, communities and society as a whole. With the establishment of a national Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit in February 2004, The Salvation Army has decided that it is appropriate to begin to record and make wider use of this valuable front line experience and information.

This report gathers some of the experiences of social service staff of The Salvation Army, identifies the key social problems they observe and records their ideas about potential solutions. The report details the services of The Salvation Army that relate to these problems, and places the problems within the wider statistical context provided by census and other government data. The findings of the report are used to set an agenda of further work for both The Salvation Army, as it establishes its Social Policy and Parliamentary unit and, as a partner in the meeting of social need, for government.

The following policy and practice issues are identified as an agenda for further research and policy development:

1. Urgent action on social housing and home ownership

Housing is identified as one of the most important social issues facing low income families, older people, teenage mothers, single men and people with mental health conditions. Inability to access and afford stable housing is the primary problem, with discrimination, poor maintenance, inability to enter home ownership, overcrowding, and lack of supported housing experienced as ancillary issues. In response to these problems a multi-dimensional approach, with an emphasis on social housing and home ownership is suggested.

2. The benefit system needs fundamental reform

Poverty and low income are problems for the majority of clients of The Salvation Army. The basic inadequacy of benefits, (including student allowances), the complexity of the benefit system, the impact of inter-generational poverty, and loan sharks/debt are considered causative. Suggestions for change range from practical ideas to better meet immediate needs, to a re-examination of the efficacy of targeting and universality within the benefit system.

3. Focus on the barriers to employment

Unemployment is viewed as a key driver of poverty. Salvation Army staff observe that people face multiple barriers to employment including; lack of English language, mental health/health problems, lack of affordable childcare, lack of transport, difficulties mixing part time/casual employment with benefits. Lack of motivation and general exhaustion amongst some low income households are also viewed as barriers to employment or upskilling. A holistic approach that deals with the multiplicity of barriers, and increased levels of post employment support, are seen as ways forward.

4. Justice reform should be about rehabilitation

Salvation Army courts and prisons staff bring a practical perspective to issues of justice and rehabilitation. Staff are concerned at the trend towards harsher penalties when they experience rehabilitation to be under funded and inadequate in many cases. Staff consider a more positive and long lasting approach to be an increased emphasis on dealing with the causes of crime, and adequate rehabilitation funding to enable offenders and their families to establish new communities, attitudes, and habits.

5. Develop services for those who do not fit within the family structure

Two groups of individuals; single men and people with moderate mental health problems, are identified as forgotten people, for whom there are few services. Housing, employment and support for daily living are often required by these clients but such services either do not exist or are over-stretched. Families are the priority for most government and community service providers, and the key vehicle for the delivery of social interventions. Those who have no family are in danger of being left behind.

6. Value parenting and support it practically

Salvation Army staff working with families observe that parenting is sometimes difficult for all families. Families under pressure due to over or under employment, poverty or low income, divorce and re-partnering can find it very hard to cope. The lowering of the drinking age in particular is observed to be dis-empowering for parents already struggling to enforce safe rules around alcohol and drugs. Greater availability of information and support for families struggling with early or low level problems, real practical 'work life balance' measures, especially for fathers, and an overall increase in the way New Zealand values the work of parents, are considered important steps to ease the pressure on parents.

7. Treat pokies as a serious public health issue

The rapid proliferation of pokies has given rise to a serious addiction problem, especially amongst young people and women. Stricter regulation of pokies, and an increase in the education and treatment options available are suggested.

8. Continue efforts to make alcohol abuse socially unacceptable

Binge drinking is an increasing problem, with a worrying upward trend amongst women. Continued education about the dangers of binge drinking, and the raising of the drinking age are suggested as ways forward.

9. Treat the causes and educate about the dangers of party drugs

The underlying causes of drug use, particularly depression amongst teens, requires increased attention. Education amongst young people and their parents about the real dangers and harm to health that party drugs can cause is also suggested.

10. Ageing in place – fund the vision

The Salvation Army is concerned that inadequate funding will prevent ageing in place from being implemented in a safe, holistic and consistent manner. Low income older people are particularly at risk as they may be trapped in inadequate housing and cannot purchase private services. An injection of funding into home, community and residential care is considered urgent if New Zealand is to cope positively with the care needs of its ageing population.

11. Address the values side of social need

Behind many of the practical needs of the clients assisted by The Salvation Army are negative attitudes and values. Individualism and lack of concern for others, the loss of connectedness to a family or group, low or no aspiration for a better life and the lack of a coherent values system are seen as underlying causes of poor individual and communal decision making. Socio-economic circumstances and personal values influence each other and long term solutions to negative social situations require attention to both.

12. Remove funding silos and excessive compliance costs

In delivering services to vulnerable people The Salvation Army also gains experience of what does and does not work in terms of contracting and accountability with funders. While the relationship with government is generally positive and productive The Salvation Army, like other not for profit providers, does experience some bureaucratic frustrations which at times hinder our ability to deliver services as effectively as we would like. Current concerns include funding silos that make holistic services administratively difficult, micro management by contracting agencies, the potentially onerous and costly implications of the Charities Commission and changes to the Financial Reporting Act. Removing barriers to multi agency funding, respect for the accountability systems and structures we already have in place and consultation about changes to relevant legislation are suggested as ways to improve the partnership with government.

Introduction

The purpose of this report

The Salvation Army has been meeting the needs of vulnerable New Zealanders for over 120 years. As they go about caring for people, Salvation Army staff experience many of the pressures and issues facing our society. This is valuable information, but the daily needs of people have to come first, and often Salvation Army staff find there is little time for recording or reflecting on the information gleaned from daily experience.

With the establishment of the Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit for The Salvation Army in February 2004, The Salvation Army has decided that it is appropriate to begin to more effectively harness the diverse range of information and ideas generated by our practical caring work.

The purpose of this report is to gather together some of the experiences and opinions of front line Salvation Army staff in order to establish an agenda for the work of the Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit. A secondary purpose is to publicise the work and views of The Salvation Army. Research has shown that although most New Zealanders know of and feel supportive towards The Salvation Army, they have very little knowledge about the services we actually provide. This report will assist us to better inform government and the wider community about the daily work of The Salvation Army and the key social pressures we consider require attention by both community and government.

Methodology

An unstructured face-to-face or phone interview was held with a range of Salvation Army staff around New Zealand during April 2004. Some staff were interviewed in groups, the majority were interviewed on a one-to-one basis. The two questions asked of every staff person were:

Tell us about the key social issues you experience in your work.

What solutions would you propose to the issues you have identified?

Answers to these questions were recorded and then analysed by theme. Once the key themes were identified, a short questionnaire to weight the overall importance of the themes was sent to a wider group of Salvation Army staff.

Structure of the report

The major social issues identified by Salvation Army social service staff are:

- Problems with affordable housing
- Poverty and low incomes
- Unemployment and underemployment
- Justice and rehabilitation
- People forgotten by the system – single men and people with moderate mental health problems
- Addictions
- Problems with parenting
- Inadequate funding to meet the care needs of our older population
- Negative attitudes and values
- Concerns about accountability requirements within government contracts.

The key issues raised under each of these themes and the suggestions for change are discussed below. The analysis also details the services of The Salvation Army that relate to these issues and places the issues within the wider statistical context provided by census and other data.

Trapped or Transient – Problems with Affordable Housing

'I see so many people going from house to house and they seem to lose everything; belongings, jobs, schools, friends, along the way. It just goes on and on. One kid had been to four schools in one year, no wonder he didn't want to go to school.'

- Social Worker, Salvation Army Community and Family Services

'Housing is often the essential missing ingredient that prevents the work we do with people from achieving real, long-lasting change.'

- Manager, The Bridge Addiction Services

Salvation Army services related to housing

The Salvation Army is involved in the provision of housing, through supported accommodation for people who need a supervised housing situation, through residential care services for older people, temporary accommodation, Independent Living Units for older people, Bethany (a home for pregnant young women), the provision of household goods such as furniture, and advice on accessing housing and the accommodation supplement.

Salvation Army experiences of housing

Housing is viewed as a key issue for low income clients of The Salvation Army. Housing was the issue noted most frequently by Salvation Army staff interviewed for this report.

Housing issues identified by Salvation Army staff include:

Affordability of rents

Many low income clients of The Salvation Army struggle financially because of the high proportion of their income they pay on rent. In major metropolitan areas Salvation Army staff note that the accommodation supplement is of limited help because of its bluntness, rents vary widely

within urban areas but the accommodation supplement stays the same. While some clients can be assisted through budgeting advice, many are already budgeting well, they simply lack sufficient income to cover the standard rent for the area. One centre (Manukau) reported that 51% of their foodbank clients were paying over 50% of their income on housing.⁵

Security of tenure

Affordability leads to transience, with clients moving house to avoid debt or to attempt cheaper accommodation. Transience brings many other problems such as loss of possessions (which are often 'stored' at relatives or friends until new accommodation is found, and either stolen, lost, forgotten about or damaged), changes of school for children, loss or lack of a community and friendships.

Overcrowding

Affordability issues also result in overcrowding. Salvation Army staff note that bedding is one of the most commonly requested items of furniture, often because relatives or friends have moved into an already full house and more bedding is required. Salvation Army staff also express concern about the impact of such overcrowding on the health of their clients, especially very young children.

Inability to enter home ownership

Staff note that home ownership is not even a dream for many clients. Low incomes, both from benefits and from wages, and the high cost of renting, mean clients can not save for anything, let alone something as long term as a house. Staff reflect that for some clients this can bring with it a sense of disenfranchisement from the community. Clients feel no sense of ownership or belonging. They have no stake in the area in which they live and know it is likely they will soon be moving.

Lack of housing for people with special needs

Salvation Army staff note that they often find it difficult to access accommodation for people who do not fit into the standard rental, or flatting situations. In particular, single men and people with mental health or personality disorders are difficult to house. They can cause problems for neighbours or alternatively neighbours are afraid of them and sometimes unpleasant towards them. Some have difficulty managing their budget and/or a household without support. Such people do not fit into standard adult

STATISTICS ON SALVATION ARMY HOUSING RELATED SERVICES FOR THE YEAR 2002/03

- Supported Accommodation: 274 beds
Bethany Centre Home for Pregnant young women:
21 beds, 36 non residential clients, 103 ante natal residential clients, 52 post natal residential clients
- Independent Living Units: 401 units
- Safe flats for women with children: 4
- Safe flats for women on their own: 5
- Supported accommodation: 274 beds
- Residential Care: 633 beds

STATISTICS ON HOUSING IN NEW ZEALAND

- 68% of households own their own home, with or without a mortgage. This is a drop of 6% from a decade ago.¹
- 26% of rental housing is in the private sector.
- 6% of housing is social housing.
- In February 2004 212 families and individuals were on Housing New Zealand's 'urgent' waiting list and 4,916 were on the 'serious housing need' waiting list.²
- In 2001 24% of households spent more than 30% of their income in rent, a rise of 11% since 1988. The lowest fifth of households spent more than 30% of their income on rent, a rise of 16% since 1988.³
- In 2001 3.2% of the population were considered to be living in a 'crowded' housing situation.⁴

flattening/renting arrangements. The limited amount of supported accommodation offered by The Salvation Army cannot meet the needs of all those who require it. In addition the nature of the service The Salvation Army is offering through its supported accommodation is changing due to the high care level needs of men with mental health problems entering this accommodation. The Salvation Army is not just providing an accommodation service but is increasingly offering a health service due to the increasing mental health and social needs of the residents.

Young mothers (aged up to 17) are also difficult to house, as legally they cannot enter into a rental agreement due to their age. Flattening situations are not easy to find and are often unsuitable for a young mother and a baby. Salvation Army staff note that young mothers are often forced into unsustainable housing situations, which starts a cycle of transience and sometimes abuse. Staff working with young mothers believe that what is really required for this group is supported accommodation for up to two years after the girl has her baby. This would provide stability and support at a critical time for mother and child.

Lack of house maintenance

Salvation Army staff note that many of the people they work with live in poor quality housing. The housing is poorly maintained inside and out, and in some cases is cold, damp and unsanitary. This problem is found in both urban and rural areas.

Staff consider that both landlords and tenants are to blame. Some landlords seem reluctant to invest in their property, especially in areas where the income from the rental is low. Staff also note that some landlords do not want to invest in maintenance with clients they consider to be at risk of damaging the property, not paying rent on time, or leaving the tenancy quickly.

Salvation Army staff also find that poor quality housing is caused by the occupants. It is unclear whether it is a lack of knowledge, skill, or self-discipline, but staff find some clients do not put any effort into maintaining their home. Some clients, when maintenance gets out of hand and becomes unmanageable, simply leave and move on to another tenancy.

Amongst low income home owners, Salvation Army staff observe that there is often no money for maintenance, especially external maintenance such as painting, window and roof repairs, maintenance of paths and driveways. Houses can quickly become unsightly and lower in value. There is also a lack of knowledge regarding what is required to adequately maintain a home. Small repairs are ignored or seen as 'not a problem', but later become a large problem, especially where water damage and mould are concerned.

Staff also note that many clients have no insurance, either house or contents. When theft, fire or other damage occurs, they have no resources to replace or repair the house or contents and therefore seek help from The Salvation Army for furniture and household equipment.

What do Salvation Army staff consider needs to happen to housing?

Suggestions for change from Salvation Army staff include the following:

- A re-examination of the effectiveness of the accommodation supplement.
- An increase in the number of programmes/level of assistance to help low income people into home ownership.
- Strategies to assist low income home owners with the costs of maintenance and insurance.
- Education/community development/support to teach and encourage housekeeping and home maintenance skills, possibly starting in schools so that young people can develop appropriate skills.
- Increased funding to community organisations or partnerships with community organisations to provide a greater variety of supported accommodation.
- Improved timeliness in approval for funding of community social housing projects from Housing New Zealand.
- Partnerships between The Ministry of Health, Housing New Zealand Corporation and community organisations so that services for mental health clients, people with disabilities and older people can be better co-ordinated.
- Partnerships between CYF, Housing New Zealand Corporation and community organisations to provide longer term housing and support for young mothers and other at-risk young people.

“I see so many people going from house to house and they seem to lose everything”

Budgeting for a Deficit – Poverty and Low Income

Quite a few of the people who come here budget very well. They come because they are in debt, and they are in debt because they simply don't have enough money to meet their basic costs. We can negotiate with WINZ or with creditors for slower repayments, but we can't solve the basic need for more money coming in each week,'

- Budget advisor Community and Family Services.

'It's not getting any easier for the poor, especially if they have another problem as well, such as health or mental health issues or an addiction.'

- Manager, Community and Family Services

'Most of the people we see are just surviving day to day, they don't have the energy to look ahead, they don't think things can be different for them.'

- Social Worker, Community and Family Services

Salvation Army services related to poverty and low income

Nearly all of the social and community services of The Salvation Army are related to poverty and low income in some way. The Salvation Army seeks to meet the needs of the most vulnerable and this includes those living in poverty or on very low incomes. Poverty and low incomes also create or arise out of other social problems, and these problems send people to The Salvation Army for assistance. Services provided by The Salvation Army in the area of poverty and low income include: foodbanks, furniture and clothing, budget advice, social work support, life skills, counselling, parenting programmes, advocacy/advice with Work and Income, Christmas parcels, community meals, and assistance with a wide range of other costs and needs (e.g. toys for children, medical costs, transport to appointments).

The Salvation Army experience of poverty and low income

Next to housing, issues of poverty and low or inadequate income are the most common cited by Salvation Army staff.

The following issues are experienced by Salvation Army staff in relation to poverty:

Inadequacy of basic benefits

Many of the clients of Salvation Army community services are on benefits of various kinds. Staff note that especially for single men, and families with children (who face higher housing costs, due to living alone (single men) or larger house needs (families)), basic benefits are inadequate to meet daily needs. Many clients are not, however, receiving their full benefit entitlements, and staff spend considerable time liaising with Work and Income over the 'add-ons', such as special benefit and disability allowance.

Staff also note that benefits are too low for those who are dependent on them for lengthy periods or for life, such as sickness and invalid beneficiaries. Many people in these circumstances have few or no opportunities/ability to earn supplementary income, and little or no hope that their circumstances will change.

Inconsistency in the interpretation of benefits and allowances

Staff note that there is inconsistency in approach between different Work and Income offices, especially over discretionary benefits such as special benefit, food grants and other emergency or additional assistance. National policies on these matters are interpreted in a variety of ways by Work and Income offices and even by staff within the same office. This makes it very difficult for people to find their way around the system or to self advocate. Salvation Army staff note that when they go to Work and Income with a client they usually make progress, but this does not assist the client to become self sufficient, and is a very time consuming process.

In one case (Manukau) Work and Income and The Salvation Army have a joint project involving the placement of a Work and Income worker within The Salvation Army's social services. Staff consider this has greatly assisted both clients and staff as it enables entitlements to be checked, and mistakes or gaps rectified at the same time as social work staff are undertaking a thorough assessment of the person's situation. This has reduced frustration and delays for all involved and improved the level of assistance provided to clients.

STATISTICS ON SALVATION ARMY SERVICES RELATED TO POVERTY FOR 2002/03

- Foodbanks: 27519 parcels
- Budget advice services: 4230 clients
- Social work services: 40,361 social work client contacts
- Counselling: 4486 clients
- Christmas Cheer parcels: 2631
- Toy parcels: 1047
- Clothing: 825 direct requests
(other requests comes through social work assessment)

STATISTICS ON POVERTY IN NEW ZEALAND

- Income inequality, which rose sharply between 1987 and 1991 has not fallen significantly.
- As at June 2001, 22.5% of the population were at or below the 60% poverty threshold.
- Children are particularly vulnerable to poverty, with 29.1% of dependent children living in family units below the 60% poverty threshold.
- Children in sole parent households are more likely to live in poverty than children in other household types. In 2000/01 66.3% of children in sole parent households lived below the 60% poverty threshold.⁶

Low wages

Staff observe that employment does not always mean families have enough to live on. Staff deal with requests for budget advice, food assistance and furniture from families with paid employment. The wages are either too low to support the family or the wage is erratic, because the pay is based on the availability of work. Some contract or casual trades-people and labourers find the winter particularly difficult as if it rains they don't have work or enough work.

Inter-generational poverty

Inter-generational poverty is a problem observed by Salvation Army staff, particularly amongst Māori and Pacific Island peoples in some areas of New Zealand (South Auckland, Northland, East Cape, East Coast/Hawke's Bay, rural areas generally). Staff work with families within which two or three generations have been unemployed, or in casual, temporary or low paid employment. This results in a spiral of low or no assets, debt, lack of education and skills, and low motivation and aspiration. Staff observe that while many parents in these circumstances love and do their best for their children, it is hard for children to break out of this pattern. Staff experience the same families coming for assistance year after year.

Loan sharks

Salvation Army budget advice and social work staff are concerned about the impact of loan sharks on low income households, especially amongst Pacific Island communities. Clients arrive with considerable debt that they are unable to pay. Interest rates on these loans are very high and staff note that some clients do not appear to understand the contract they have signed and what the interest really means in terms of the overall cost of the loan. Clients are also unaware that they can access better loans through banks. Some clients use loan sharks because their low incomes and/or poor credit rating mean banks are not interested in their custom. Staff are concerned that some of the advertising of these alternative loan providers deliberately targets Pacific Island families.

Student poverty

While students are often reluctant to go to social service agencies Salvation Army staff do see a number of students who find it very difficult to manage on the maximum allowable loan or allowance for living costs of \$150 per week. Chaplains working at the universities observe this on a wider scale. Unless students are able to find part-time work to supplement their income, it is almost impossible for them to meet basic costs. Budget advice staff working with students have seen the average weekly deficit in a student's budget rise from around \$20 per week (which was manageable) to around \$70 per week (which is not manageable). While staff do see inappropriate spending by students, many try to budget but still struggle to afford

basics and live on an inadequate diet (noodles, tinned fish and cereal being common as the basic diet of students in flatting situations). The fact that this is hopefully a temporary situation while studying is of little comfort or assistance to students who can't pay rent or eat properly right now and does affect the ability of some students to study effectively. Students come to The Salvation Army for practical assistance with costs, but also with emotional issues due to the stress of their financial and living situation.

What do Salvation Army staff consider needs to happen in terms of poverty?

Suggestions for change from Salvation Army staff include the following:

- A simplified benefit system with an adequate basic benefit.
- Funding for longitudinal work with families and individuals to support them to make changes to 'break the cycle' of generational poverty and unemployment.
- Continue to emphasise within Work and Income the importance of ensuring beneficiaries are informed of all their entitlements.
- Government to continue with and increase the focus on regional economic development – so that there is employment in provincial and rural areas and people are not forced to move to high cost cities for employment.
- Funding for groups to provide education amongst low income groups, about the banking system and how to access it so that people are not forced to loan sharks through ignorance of other options.
- Student loans and allowances to be based on a realistic assessment of living costs. Levels should be indexed annually.
- Funding to provide meal services for students, including opportunities for students to learn how to cook nutritious food on a tight budget.
- More training for Salvation Army staff in advocacy with Work and Income and a strategic and co-ordinated response to liaising with Work and Income.



Barriers to a Better Life – Unemployment

‘With a buoyant job market many of the people we see now are at the hard end of unemployment. They have multiple problems, and while we can help them, it takes much longer and is much more difficult,’

- Manager, Employment Plus

‘It shouldn’t just be about getting people into any old job, then saying ‘OK you’re on your own now’. We need to be able to work with people long term, so they can continue to up skill and really have a chance at a better job.’

- Manager, Employment Plus

‘The system works against some people. One guy got offered a job at the airport. But it involved shifts, he didn’t have a car and you can’t get from Manukau to the airport on public transport outside of business hours. Banks wouldn’t lend to him and WINZ isn’t allowed to, so he couldn’t take the job.’

- Manager, Community and Family Services

Salvation Army services relating to unemployment

The Salvation Army is one of the largest providers of training for employment in New Zealand. The Salvation Army’s employment training arm, Employment Plus, offers a range of courses designed to provide people with basic and technical skills for employment. Employment Plus offers courses up to NZQA level four.

Salvation Army experiences of unemployment

A primary cause of poverty amongst clients of The Salvation Army is unemployment. There are a huge variety of reasons why clients of The Salvation Army social services are unemployed, but key factors noted by staff are:

Lack of English language

Salvation Army staff note that refugees and migrants with poor English find it very difficult to obtain work. It is particularly difficult for refugees who may have had little opportunity to prepare themselves for arrival in New Zealand. Staff also note that although some migrants have a reasonable grasp of English, their poor pronunciation or strong accent appears to put employers off as they seem to assume that their comprehension will be poor or that customers or other staff will not be able to understand them.

Mental health problems

Staff who work with people with mental health problems observe that many of them find it difficult to obtain or maintain employment. There seems to be a degree of prejudice against people with a history of mental health problems that can make it difficult to find a job. Some people with mental health conditions also find stress difficult to cope with and it can be difficult to find suitable employment or to cope with problems that might arise once a job is found.

Health problems

Salvation Army staff work with people who suffer long term chronic health conditions. Although such people are capable of some paid employment it can be difficult finding employment that is suitable. Staff note that the standard allowable sick leave is insufficient for some people, who end up taking much of their annual leave to cope with their health or to attend specialist care appointments.

Salvation Army staff also note that parents can find the health of their children a barrier to employment. Many employers do not allow any sick leave within the first six months of employment and this can be an impossible situation for sole parents with young kids who regularly get sick, especially in winter. Day care centres will not take obviously sick children, and if parents do not have family or friends available it can be very difficult to manage a sick child and a job. A chronically sick child, such as a child with asthma, compounds the problem.

STATISTICS RELATING TO SALVATION ARMY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Employment Plus:

- Number of trainees: 4000 per year
- Centres: 100 centres

Courses: 100 different courses offered including:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| • Carpentry, Building and Construction | • Engineering, Welding, Metal Trades | • Security Services, Electronics |
| • Sewing, Fashion and Textiles | • Coach Building, Automotive Skills, Panelbeating | • Conservation Corps |
| • Cooking and Catering | • Retail Marketing, Retail Sales | • Driving School, Heavy Driving Skills |
| • Horticulture, General Farming, Landscaping | • Caregivers, Lifecrafts | • Computer Assisted Learning |
| • Clerical Office Skills, Accounting | • Active Job Search | • Electrical, Electronic Skills |
| • Computer Basics, Business Computing | • Commercial Design, Computer Graphics | • Work Based/Industry Based Training |
| | | • Literacy and Numeracy |

STATISTICS ON UNEMPLOYMENT IN NEW ZEALAND (as at March 2004):

- The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 4.3%
- The seasonally adjusted labour force participation rate was 66.6%
- Of the unemployed, 23.7% had been unemployed for over six months.
- Of those who worked part time 20.6% would have preferred to work more hours.⁷

Lack of affordable childcare, afterschool and holiday care

A shortage of affordable childcare is a real barrier to employment, especially for solo parents. Even with subsidies the cost can be a barrier to employment for those working for minimum rates.⁸ Access is also a problem, with many childcare centres having long waiting lists. This makes it very difficult for solo parents to get off benefit and into work. On benefit, it is difficult for solo parents to afford a large amount of day care. If they do not have this day care in place before they have a job, it may be impossible for them to access it when they do find employment. Staff note that the situation does not necessarily become easier once children reach school age. It is very difficult to find employment that fits between 9am and 2:30pm (the time most parents say you need to leave your job to get to school by 3pm). There is hardly any before-school care available and in some areas, a limited amount of OSCAR care. Holiday programmes may be available, but can be prohibitively expensive for those on even moderate incomes. The cost and hassle of arranging OSCAR and holiday care can be a real barrier to solo parents seeking work. Quite a few parents have to resort to informal child care arrangements with friends or relatives that are sometimes of questionable safety/quality and can fall apart quickly.

Lack of transport

Salvation Army staff note that there is often a mismatch between the location of low cost housing and employment. Public transport often does not meet the gap and this makes it difficult for some people to obtain employment. This is especially a problem for shift workers and those living in rural areas. If they do not own a car, or a car that is suitable (i.e. registered, warranted, and safe to drive), people can miss out on employment opportunities. It can be frustrating for Work and Income staff, Salvation Army staff and the person themselves to identify potential employment, but be unable to obtain it due to transport.

Exhaustion/Lack of motivation.

Salvation Army staff consider that the level of exhaustion amongst some beneficiary and low income families should not be under-estimated as a barrier to people either getting off benefit into paid employment, or upskilling and obtaining a better job. Surviving medium to long term on a low income can be exhausting, especially for sole parents who often juggle childcare, full or part time employment, and all household tasks. Staff observe clients who are simply worn down by the effort involved. They do not have the energy to even think about trying to take on anything else, for example part time study, even if it might result in a better job and a better life later on.

Exhaustion often results in a lack of motivation for change. Some clients display this even if they are in a relatively unstressed situation. Salvation Army staff work with people who seem to have very little by way of aspiration or vision for their future. It can take long term support to turn these people around and help them to create a plan for their lives.

People with multiple problems/barriers to employment

Staff working in the area of training for employment note that with the buoyant job market, many of those left unemployed are at the 'hard end'; they have multiple issues (mental health, skills, attitude and family dysfunction), and are much harder to place in work. Such clients also find it difficult to sustain employment without ongoing support.

Under-employment

Salvation Army staff also see clients who are under-employed. They have some paid employment, but it is insufficient in hours or pay, or it is casual or seasonal, and does not provide sufficient income to meet the client's basic needs. Often this employment is not leading to better paid or more secure employment because it is the only employment available in the area (rural areas, holiday/seasonal towns), or the only employment that fits in with family requirements (e.g. part time cleaning). When such employment does not greatly improve the person's income and there seems no prospect of a better job, staff observe that some people become discouraged and give up on employment.

Difficulties mixing casual and seasonal work with benefit income

There is a particular problem for people who are on a mixture of benefit and casual or seasonal work. The benefit abatement system is complex. As a result people can be left in debt to Work and Income due to overpayment of benefit, or there are delays in receiving benefit after finishing a temporary job. The rules are particularly complex for seasonal work such as fruit picking where people earn different amounts each week. The result is that people are put off taking such work and/or are left with insufficient income some weeks, or at the end of the seasonal work. Staff note that these families are not earning sufficient to be able to save for these events, and often a period of employment results in debt, rather than money in the bank.

What do Salvation Army staff consider needs to happen to resolve issues with unemployment?

Suggestions from Salvation Army staff include the following:

- Beneficiaries able to get a binding quote from Work and Income about what they will lose in benefit if they earn a specified amount of money so that they can budget.
- Post employment placement support to ensure people are able to sustain employment and to help plan further training so they can progress to a better job (career planning).
- The Salvation Army to seek partnerships with business and government to create employment opportunities for those who are unemployed.
- Practical flexibility within Work and Income so that people can get what they really need rather than taking what is available. For example, if a person needs a car to take on a shift work job, Work and Income should be able to provide/arrange a low cost loan to enable them to purchase one.

Sentenced to Failure – Justice and Rehabilitation

'We have to keep on telling people that prison, loss of freedom, is the punishment. They don't need further punishment.'

- Manager, Courts and Prisons Ministries

'Some prisoners are released to nothing: no housing, no income, no real support, no job. It is no wonder so many end up back with their old mates and their old way of life.'

- Social Worker, Community and Family Services

'Harsher penalties is the easy way out of this problem. The harder way, but the only way that will make a difference, is to really put the emphasis on changing lives.'

- Courts Officer

Salvation Army services relating to justice

The general social services of The Salvation Army are available to and used by offenders and their families who often require food, housing, clothing, counselling and social work support. The Salvation Army also provides services directly to the justice system. These services are; courts and prisons officers, prison chaplains and police chaplains. Courts and prisons officers work out of the major courts and assist all people at court; staff, victims of crime and their families, accused and convicted persons and their families. Duties vary from court to court depending on need but include counselling, referral to court solicitors and other helping agencies, guiding people around the Court system/building, drug and alcohol addiction assessments, general social

work support, liaison with staff. Courts officers also undertake assessments for Diversion, and assist with community placements for community-based sentences.

Salvation Army experience of the justice system

Salvation Army staff who relate to the justice system shared the following concerns:

Attitude of some Courts staff

Salvation Army staff working in the Courts note that some Courts staff do not deal well with offenders, accused persons and their families. Salvation Army staff note that many Courts staff are under pressure due to the number of cases and people they deal with each day. As a result some can be unhelpful and dismissive in their attitude to people coming before the courts. This adds to the distress and stress that surrounds a court appearance.

Lack of support for offenders post release

Salvation Army staff consider that often the support for offenders released, either on probation or at the end of their sentence, is inadequate. Staff have contact with offenders who have been released to unsuitable accommodation, no income, and few or no possessions. Addiction and anger issues have not always been adequately dealt with while in prison and with the stress of trying to start again, offenders are often led back into their old lifestyle. Salvation Army staff find that offenders require long term support, and in particular assistance with addictions, finding employment and housing, if they are to have a real chance of permanently changing their lives. Salvation Army staff note that New Zealand has one of the highest rates of imprisonment in the developed world and question whether the lack of rehabilitation is partly to blame.

“Some prisoners are released to nothing: no housing, no income, no real support, no job”

STATISTICS ON SALVATION ARMY SERVICES RELATED TO JUSTICE FOR 2002/03

- Courts and prisons officers: 16 (dedicated staff, other staff also undertake courts and prisons work as part of their social work, community services)
- Prison chaplains: 2
- Police chaplains: 1
- Client contacts: in excess of 8,250

STATISTICS ON JUSTICE IN NEW ZEALAND

- In 2003 there were 5,500 people in prison.
- The prison service manages 6000 prisoners daily.
- The prison population doubled between 1985 and 1999 and is predicted to continue to rise by 3.2% per year.
- The Community Probation Service is responsible for approximately 18,500 offenders daily.
- New Zealand imprisons more offenders than Australia, Scotland, Canada, England and Wales. It imprisons less than the USA.
- Between 1995 and 1998 more than half (57%) of inmates were reconvicted within a year. However, only a very small proportion are reconvicted for very serious offences.⁹

Families of offenders not viewed as part of the rehabilitation process

Courts and prisons staff of The Salvation Army are concerned at the lack of knowledge about and support for the families of offenders. Staff are aware that the children of prison inmates are significantly more likely to end up in prison themselves as adults. Without support, reintegration of the offender with the family is difficult and the whole family suffers and often breaks up, starting or continuing a cycle of dysfunction.

Lack of funding for rehabilitation services within the prison system

Salvation Army Courts and Prison staff consider the funding provided to prisons for rehabilitative programmes, such as employment, skills training, anger management and addictions, is inadequate. They have experienced incidences of offenders getting themselves into programmes in prison only to have the programme stopped half way through due to lack of funds. Staff have also had cases of offenders identifying that they have addiction or anger problems, but receiving no assistance with these. Work and skills training is also not available in all prisons or to all offenders. Offenders are not always enabled or encouraged prior to release to develop new more positive communities/networks (i.e., through contact with a church, sport or cultural club), and therefore tend to drift back to their old criminal community (which has sometimes become better established through prison).

Ignorance and fear driving justice reform

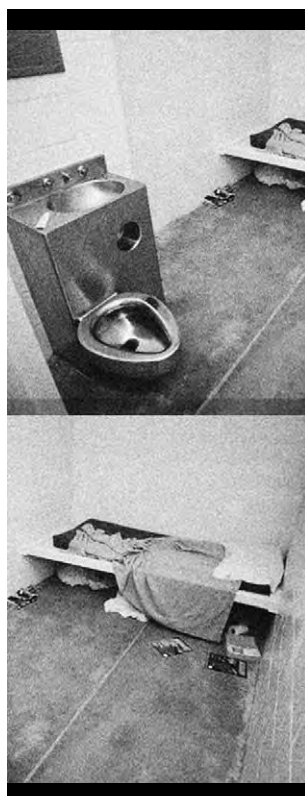
Salvation Army staff work with victims of crime as well as with offenders. They understand the pain, shock and anger victims experience and why some react with demands for harsher penalties. Salvation Army Courts staff are concerned, however, with the direction they perceive justice reform to be taking. Staff observe that those calling for harsher penalties are sometimes unaware of the reality of the justice system, and the issues surrounding rehabilitation and reform of prisoners. Salvation Army staff working in the justice system are concerned when government seems to respond to fear driven calls for harsher penalties. Staff consider that this is taking the easy way out, rather than dealing with the more complex issues of family violence, addiction, illiteracy, employment and housing and the provision of adequate funding for rehabilitation. Salvation Army staff are also concerned that media attention to the small number of extreme cases of violent crime leads to an atmosphere of fear. Knowledge of actual

crime statistics would make the general public less fearful as they would see that the chances of being a victim of a violent crime by a stranger are small and that property crimes such as burglary are decreasing.

What do Salvation Army staff consider needs to happen in terms of justice?

Ideas and suggestions for change from Salvation Army Courts and Prisons staff include:

- Increased resources for and emphasis on rehabilitation both prior to and after release from prison.
- Practical support for offenders upon release – including assistance with stable housing, training and/or employment, and identification and treatment of addictions.
- Increased resources for, education about and encouragement of restorative justice as an alternative to the courts system.
- Training for Courts staff in stress management and people skills.
- Research into the demographics and circumstances of the families of those in prison.
- Support for the families of those in prison and assistance for offenders and their families post release so that offenders are reintegrated into their families and communities.
- Increased funding for and emphasis on enabling offenders to develop positive communities for themselves pre-release through connections with church groups, sports clubs, cultural clubs and employment.
- Wider education of the public about the statistical reality of crime and the justice system.



Forgotten People – Single Men and Mental Health Clients

'Single men seem to be the forgotten people. No one really worries about them because they don't have families and they are male and therefore supposed to be able to look after themselves. There is nothing there for them when they can't.'

- Manager, Community and Family Services

'A lot of the people we see have moderate mental health problems. Not enough to get care from the hospital, but bad enough that most people don't want to deal with them or live next door to them.'

- Community worker, Salvation Army Corps

Salvation Army services related to single men and mental health clients

Single men and people with mental health problems are a significant client group for some of The Salvation Army's social services. The services of The Salvation Army that are most commonly accessed by single men and people with mental health issues are drop in centres, meal services, social work support/advocacy, addictions treatment, and supported accommodation.

Supported accommodation is provided in five locations throughout New Zealand. There are 274 beds (7 for women) offering help with alcohol and drug addictions, life skills and social work support.

Salvation Army experience of issues relating to single men and mental health clients

Salvation Army staff express considerable concern about what they consider the 'forgotten people'; people who seem to have slipped through the cracks of government and in many cases, community services, or for whom there appear to be very few intended services.

Two groups of people generally make up this forgotten group; single men and people with moderate mental health issues. The two groups often intersect.

Single men

Staff of community services, especially those offering some kind of meal or drop in centre, see a rising number of single men. Typically they are unemployed, often on a sickness benefit or invalids benefit for a long-term mental health issue. Some have a history of addiction. Others have personality issues or disorders which do not warrant treatment, but which result in them becoming lonely and isolated. Many of these men appear to have no family or have become estranged from family, and they have few friends. Some find it difficult to manage their daily affairs, budget, or deal with Work and Income or the health system without assistance.

Staff are concerned about the lack of services available for these men. They find an attitude amongst some government and community service providers that these men are not important because they do not have families, and that they should be able to 'fend for themselves.' Staff reflect that this attitude appears mostly to result from pressure on services rather than a fundamental unwillingness to assist these men.

The rules for some assistance also mean that single men are less likely to receive assistance or get less assistance. For example, a single man, although homeless, is unlikely to make it onto the Housing New Zealand priority waiting list because the points system means families with children will always come first.

There is also sometimes simply a physical lack of resources for these men. For example, with some local councils gradually reducing their provision of housing, and the closing of many private boarding houses, there is very little affordable housing available for single men.

People with mental health problems

Salvation Army staff deal with a growing number of people with mental health issues. Some of these people are clients of community based mental health teams, others have undiagnosed or moderate conditions and are not receiving treatment or support from the health system. These people come to The Salvation Army with a wide range of needs; companionship, housing, clothing, food, budgeting, relationship problems, problems with Work and Income. The underlying issue, however, is usually their mental health condition, and their inability to manage their life without some supervision and support. Staff observe that there is

STATISTICS ON MALES LIVING ALONE AND MENTAL HEALTH IN NEW ZEALAND

In 2001 there were 129,576 males living alone.¹⁰

In 2001 the real median equivalent disposable income of single adults was less than \$14,000 per year, compared to \$12,000 for single parents with dependent children, \$24,000 for couples and \$20,000 for couples with dependent children.¹¹

At any one time in New Zealand:

- 12% of adults have mild/moderate mental health problems or disorders
- 5% of adults have moderate/severe mental health problems
- 3% of adults have severe mental health disorders
- .06% of adults have high support needs.¹²

very little on-going assistance available for these people, especially if they are not diagnosed or have personality disorders rather than mental illness. People access services from time to time but what many really require is on-going daily or weekly supervision and support.

Staff of The Salvation Army are willing to work with people with mental health problems and personality disorders, but they do note that this creates pressures within the services they offer. The number of clients presenting with these problems, and the fact that the mental health issues often complicate other problems such as housing or income, mean that more staff time is required to assist these clients. The increased number of clients with mental health issues also changes the nature of the services being offered from, for example, a standard drop in or life skills programme, to a quasi-mental health service.

What do Salvation Army staff consider needs to happen to assist single men and people with moderate mental health/personality disorders?

Suggestions from Salvation Army staff include the following:

- Increased access to mental health services for people with moderate conditions.
- Improved funding for long-term on-going support of people with moderate mental illness who require assistance with life management tasks.
- Ability to cut across government funding silos so that community social services with a high percentage of mental health clients can obtain funding both from CYF and the Ministry of Health.
- Development of social housing specifically for single men, especially in major metropolitan areas. Some of this housing should include a support service as part of the housing package.

Pressured Families – Problems with Parenting

'There is a lot of anger and lack of forgiveness in families'

- Manager, Family Tracing Service

'Families feel there is more support for those who break up than for those trying to stay together.'

- Social Worker, Community and Family Services

'Parents are exhausted, especially those who are both working to make ends meet. They want to be involved [with their kids] but they are too busy and too tired and can't cope when the kids act out.'

- Officer, Corps

Salvation Army services relating to families

Nearly all the social and community services provided by The Salvation Army are provided for and used by families. A wide and diverse range of programmes are offered both by Salvation Army community and family services and by Corps (congregations) to meet the needs of both ordinary and vulnerable families. The most commonly provided services include: social work support, advocacy, counselling, food, housing, furniture and clothing, parenting programmes, budgeting, life skills and other groups/courses, and day-care/crèche.

The Salvation Army is the only organisation in New Zealand to offer a Family Tracing service. This service assists adults who have become estranged or lost contact with a relative to locate them.

Salvation Army experiences of pressured families

Salvation Army staff work with many families. Often families present with practical problems; housing needs, clothing, food. Salvation Army staff consider that behind the practical problems, there is a wider problem of dysfunction within many families. Salvation Army staff observe the following pressures within the families they work with:

Youth and alcohol

Salvation Army staff note with concern what they perceive to be an increase in the number of young teenagers who are regularly drunk or drinking heavily. Staff have noticed an increase in this problem since the drinking age was lowered. Staff have had first hand experience of children as young as 10 drinking alcohol. Teenage drinking has always been a problem but staff consider the problem has worsened in recent years. Staff have contact with parents who are very concerned about their children/adolescent's drinking but are not sure how to deal with it. Parents often find it very difficult to enforce rules about drinking when there seems to be a general acceptance in the community of underage drinking, especially at parties. Parents need support to uphold values or rules that, as far as their teenager is concerned, go against the general trend.

Difficulty dealing with teenage behaviours

Many parents seek assistance from The Salvation Army because they feel stressed out by their teenagers' behaviour. Staff notice two trends here; firstly, some parents seem to be ignorant of normative teenage behaviour and do not want to or seem unable to tolerate a normal range of teenage problems. The second trend is the difficulty parents have accessing help when their teenagers really are out of control. CYF only deals with very severe cases and many parents do not know where to turn for assistance. There are often waiting lists at the community based services. Accessing assistance is especially difficult for low-income families who cannot afford to pay for counselling.

STATISTICS ON SALVATION ARMY SERVICES RELATING TO FAMILIES FOR 2002/03

- Parenting programmes: 2083 clients
- Family Therapy/counselling: 5378 clients
- Groups and courses: 1145 attendees
- Early Childhood Centres: 6 centres
- Family Tracing Service: 217 cases
- Social Work services: 40,361 client contacts
- Furniture/household items: 2121
- Clothing: 825 direct requests
- Toy parcels: 1047
- Christmas Cheer parcels: 2631
- Food parcels: 27519
- Requests for accommodation (direct): 1033

STATISTICS ON FAMILIES IN NEW ZEALAND

- As at the 2001 census, of the population aged 15 years and over:
 - 49.7% were married
 - 4% were separated
 - 6.9% were divorced
 - 6.5% were widowed
 - 32.8% had never married
- In 2003 24% of men and 23% of women marrying were previously divorced.
- In 2001 one in three people aged between 15 and 44 years were living in de facto relationships – up from one in four in 1996.
- In 2001 of all families with dependent children :
 - 71% consisted of a couple with children
 - 29% consisted of one parent with children
 - 18% of sole parent households were headed by a male
 - 82% of sole parent households were headed by a female.¹³
- In 2002 6,982 children were assessed as abused or neglected by CYF.¹⁴

Difficulties associated with both parents needing to work

While Salvation Army staff acknowledge that many families require both parents to work to make ends meet, they notice that some families suffer from the stress of this situation. Families find there are practical problems, such as accessing affordable, quality day care, and out of school care. In rural or smaller provincial areas, such care can be hard to find and expensive. Shift workers find it particularly difficult to access care.

Salvation Army staff also observe high levels of stress and exhaustion amongst parents. This results in fractured relationships and lack of involvement with children. If serious problems arise, some parents have little or no energy left to deal with them, or put off taking action until the problem has become very serious.

Salvation Army staff acknowledge that stress is a problem across all socio-economic groups. In their work however they observe stress as a significant problem amongst low income families, because these families are working long hours but cannot afford to buy in help.

Absentee fathers

Salvation Army staff work with many families where the father is absent. Primarily this is because the relationship of the parents has broken down and the father lives elsewhere. For a variety of reasons some fathers find it difficult to maintain contact with their children and some do not appear to want to continue with the responsibility of parenting.

Staff also work with families where although the parents are still together, work commitments mean the father has very little contact with his children. For some this is because their basic pay is inadequate and they need to work overtime or extra hours to provide enough income. For others they have a well paying job, but long hours of work are demanded by the employer, or are part of the culture of the profession or business.

What do Salvation Army staff consider needs to happen to assist pressured families?

Ideas around helping pressured families include the following:

- Increasing the legal drinking age to 20.
- Ensure legal drinking ages are enforced.
- Improve access to affordable and quality child-care and out of school care.
- Improve access to education, information, support for parents with low-level family issues so problems can be dealt with early.
- Financial assistance for families where one parent chooses to stay at home to raise the children.
- Encourage employers to promote and make real work life balance measures for all employees.
- Encourage employers to provide child-care, and OSCAR care for the children of staff.
- The Families Commission to research and implement strategies to promote the importance of parenting to the health of New Zealand society/economy.

“There is a lot of anger and lack of forgiveness in families”

Pokies and P – Today's Addictions

'Pokie machines have changed the face of gambling addiction in New Zealand. The typical new person coming to us for help is now female and younger, and someone who has never had problems with gambling or addiction before getting hooked on pokies'

- Manager, Addictions and Supported Accommodation Services

'Alcohol seems to be no longer newsworthy as an addiction issue but it continues to be the major source of harm'

- Manager, Addictions and Supported Accommodation Services

Salvation Army services relating to addictions

The Salvation Army is one of the largest providers of treatment for addictions to alcohol and drugs and for problem gambling. It has a long history of service in this area and provides residential, day, individual and group based treatment options, supported accommodation and post treatment support and follow up. The Bridge programme provides alcohol and drug treatment from 10 sites throughout New Zealand and Oasis Centres for Problem Gambling operates from five sites. Supportive accommodation that offers a supported living environment is offered in five locations, with 274 beds available.

Salvation Army experiences of addictions

Issues regarding drug and alcohol addiction and gambling problems identified by Salvation Army staff are as follows:

Alcohol and youth

The Salvation Army opposed the lowering of the drinking age and they consider that all their fears about this have been realised. Staff are receiving an increasing number of calls from the parents of teenagers who are very concerned

about their teenagers drinking and unsure what to do or who to turn to for assistance. The Salvation Army's treatment programmes are unable to take people under the age of 18 years, but are increasingly being asked to take younger clients and have many clients around this age or in their early 20s. By the time they reach the Bridge these young people have already reached 'alcoholic' status. Many say they began drinking at 10 to 12 years of age.

Increasing number of women with alcohol problems

Staff at Salvation Army addiction programmes have seen the number of women seeking help with drinking problems increase in the past decade. Women now make up approximately 40% of those seeking help. Dangerous levels of binge drinking are a particular problem for younger women. Staff also note that some of the children of female

clients show signs of foetal alcohol syndrome and the women concerned now have to deal with their own addiction and lifelong behaviour issues of their children. Some of the women who were binge drinkers have indicated that they were unaware that drinking heavily only on weekends could affect their unborn child – they thought it was only if you drank every day.

'P' and other drugs

Staff working in the area of addictions note that it is very rare to have a client whose only addiction is alcohol. Alcohol is nearly always associated with other drug use. Marijuana is less fashionable but 'P' (methamphetamine) is becoming an increasing problem. P is a problem across all socio-economic groups seen by the Bridge addiction centres.

Staff note that some clients believe that because P is a 'party drug' and they only use it occasionally, that it will not harm them or become addictive. They are surprised to find how quickly using P comes to affect their mental and physical health.

Staff observe that unemployment, learning disorders/educational failure, low self esteem, and poor parental role models are often behind young people's use of drugs. These underlying problems often result in



STATISTICS ON ADDICTIONS IN NEW ZEALAND

- Alcohol related conditions account for 3.1% of male deaths and 1.41% of female deaths.
- The heaviest 5% of drinkers are responsible for drinking one third of all alcohol consumed.
- 25% of those aged 14 to 19 years drink six or more drinks on any single occasion. This figure has increased by 13% since 1990.¹⁵
- Between 22,000 and 50,000 people are estimated to have some kind of gambling problem. This is a conservative estimate.
- New callers to the Gambling Problem Helpline have more than doubled in the past six years, with 4,644 new callers in 2003.
- In 2003 83.6% of callers to the Gambling Problem Helpline said that pokies were the primary cause of their problem.
- In 2002/03 gamblers in NZ lost almost \$1.9 billion. \$941 million of this was lost on pokies.¹⁶

depression. If this goes undiagnosed and treated, young people self medicate with drugs to feel better. The increasing availability of party drugs makes this process both easier and more dangerous for young people.

Pokies

A major concern expressed by staff interviewed for this report was the increase in gambling addiction. Staff blame the rapid proliferation of pokie machines. Oasis Centre for Problem Gambling staff consider pokie machines to have changed the face of gambling addiction. Pokies mean addiction is touching a new group of people who might otherwise not have become problem gamblers. Salvation Army staff are particularly concerned about the impact of pokies on women and young people. Both these populations seem to be vulnerable to problems with gambling on pokies. Staff are also concerned about the concentration of pokie machines in poorer socio-economic areas of New Zealand.

The impact of pokies on women is of special concern, both because many women are mothers and responsible for the care of children, but also because the fall-out from a problem with gambling tends to be more traumatic for women. Men who have a problem with gambling may lose their income and possessions, but often their partners and children will still be there to support them. Additionally the partner may well go out to work to pay back debts. Women are more likely to lose everything; partners leave them and children can be taken into care or custody given to the other parent.

What do Salvation Army staff consider needs to happen to deal with addictions?

Suggestions from Salvation Army staff about dealing with the rise in addictions include:

- A moratorium on the number of pokie machines in New Zealand.
- Limit the number of pokie machines to four per venue.
- Increase the amount of levy paid by pokie machine license holders so that information, education and treatment for problem gambling can be increased.
- Public education and warnings about the addictive qualities of gambling machines.
- Raising of the drinking age.
- Continued and increased public education about the dangers of drinking excessively, especially the dangers of binge drinking and the effects of alcohol on unborn children.
- Improved access to mental health services for teens.
- Continued and increased education amongst young people and their parents about the effect of drugs, including 'party drugs' on their mental and physical health.
- Developing increased services for women and youth.

Isolation and Risk – Older People’s Care Needs

‘Caring for older people at home might be ideal in theory, but in practice it can leave some isolated, lonely and at risk’

- Manager, Services for Older People

‘With the inadequacy of the funding, you have to ask questions about the reality of care into the future’

- Manager, Services for Older People

Salvation Army services for older people

The Salvation Army provides a range of services for older people, both residential and in the community. These services include residential care (rest home, hospital and dementia), home care and Independent Living Units. In addition to the more formal nationally managed services, local Salvation Army Corp and Community and Family services also operate local services such as coffee groups, clubs, outings and other activities.

Salvation Army experiences of providing services for older people

Inadequate funding to develop needed services

The most pressing issue cited by Salvation Army staff regarding the delivery of services to older people is the inadequacy of funding for these services. In both residential care and community/home care, staff consider the funding made available to be inadequate. In home care this leads to high staff turn over as wages are low and hours are not guaranteed. Staff are concerned that the strategic direction of health services for older people is being set up to fail through inadequate resourcing.

Isolation and loneliness of some older people

Salvation Army staff consider that some of the older people they work with who are living in the community are isolated and lonely. Families appear to be increasingly geographically separated and are not physically available to support older members. Although many older people want to remain living in their own home, if they become frail or ill, and especially if they lose the ability to drive, they can become cut off from family, friends and community. The funding levels for home care mean that this service is not able to provide companionship or access to the community. Staff question

whether social need should be taken into account more when assessing older people’s need for residential care.

Older people referred too late/not accessing assistance early enough

Salvation Army staff are concerned that some older people are being referred too late for assistance, especially for residential care. Older people arrive at residential care in an extremely frail and dependent state. Staff are concerned that some older people have been living in the community beyond the point which is safe for them to do so. Not only does this put them at risk of serious injury but also lessens their quality of life. It is not clear why this is occurring but staff consider it to be a combination of lack of knowledge about options, personal choice, and reluctance of some health professionals to promote residential care as a positive option.

Suitability of housing for community care of older people

Salvation Army staff are concerned that the housing many older people live in is inappropriate if they become ill or frail and want to be cared for at home. This is due to location and design features of the generally older houses that older people live in. Staff are concerned that the government policy of ageing in place has not taken account of the practical housing requirements of frail older people. This is particularly the case for low-income older people, those dependent on national superannuation, who cannot afford to change to a more suitable house. The Salvation Army is one of the few organisations to offer rental, (as opposed to the more common purchased or leased), retirement village/supported accommodation to older people. While most older people want to stay in their own home for as long as possible, the policy of community care may result in some older people staying in inappropriate or unsafe housing. Staff also note that even where older people can afford to change housing, it is not always easy to find a suitable house, as much modern low-maintenance housing is two-storeyed.

What do Salvation Army staff consider needs to happen to improve services for older people?

Suggestions for change from Salvation Army staff include:

- Funding to assist community organisations to provide social housing for low-income older people.
- Realistic funding for home care, community care and residential care for older people.
- Education within the building industry regarding how to build disability friendly homes.

STATISTICS ON SALVATION ARMY SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE FOR 2002/03

Rest Homes: 515 beds

Special care (disability care): 16 beds

Dementia care: 51 beds

Home care: 3,500 clients

Hospital care: 51 beds

STATISTICS ON OLDER PEOPLE IN NEW ZEALAND

- People aged 65 and over currently make up 12% of the total population
- The fastest rate of growth in the older population is those living to over 85 years.
- At 85 years 81% of women and 43% of men are widowed.
- The overwhelming majority (93%) of older people live in their own home.
- Of those who do not live in their own home (7% of the older population), 81% live in a retirement home or residential care facility and 9% live in hospitals, and about 30% of those aged over 85 years live in retirement homes or other residential care facilities.¹⁷

Negative Attitudes and Values

'We have a culture of individualism. It's all about me and my needs. There is a lack of respect for others.'

- Manager, Bethany Centre

'So many [clients] have lost any sense of belonging. They are isolated and lonely, but the flip side is that they don't feel they have to care about other people either.'

- Social Worker, Community and Family Services

Salvation Army staff believe that behind the practical needs of many of the individuals and families they work with, are attitudes and values that negatively impact on the life decisions these families and individuals make.

Culture of individualism

Salvation Army staff perceive a strong culture of individualism amongst the people they work with and the wider NZ society. On the positive side this attitude can foster independence and the achievement of personal goals, but on the negative side it leads to a lack of concern for others, lack of awareness of others needs, the use of others for personal gain, and a focus on individual rights rather than collective rights and responsibilities.

Loss of a group/family and a sense of belonging and responsibility toward this group.

Associated with the culture of individualism, is a sense that many of the people The Salvation Army work with are essentially isolated and alone. With the rise in fractured families, decline in the role of the church, dislocation of some Maori and Pacific Island young people from the positive aspects of their culture, many of the clients of The Salvation Army appear to have no sense of connection; nowhere they belong. Some even resist attachment, because they have not experienced it or have found it to be negative.

Salvation Army staff consider that this lack of connection contributes to anti social behaviours as people feel no responsibility towards the community or other people.

Low or no aspiration

Staff of The Salvation Army are also concerned about the lack of hope or aspiration amongst some of the clients of their social services. Staff notice that some clients have no thoughts about the future, they are just surviving on a daily basis. Some do not believe that their life could be anything different or better. This makes it hard to move people on beyond a welfare or hand out mentality. Staff find the reasons for this sense of hopelessness are complex and varied. Hopelessness may be the result of factors such as personal choices, personality issues, family background, exhaustion from surviving on a benefit or low income, addiction and abuse. Some clients have suffered knock

backs when they have tried to improve their lives and are now reluctant to try again.

Lack of a coherent values system

The Salvation Army staff observe that some clients appear to lack any kind of coherent value system. Staff consider that this makes it difficult for people to make good ethical and moral decisions or cope with set backs or difficulties. People without a values system seem to simply react, rather than make active decisions about what is the best or most appropriate way to respond to a given situation.

What do Salvation Army staff consider needs to happen to change negative attitudes and values?

Staff of The Salvation Army recognise that changing personal and societal attitudes and values is a complex and long term task. As a Christian church The Salvation Army is committed to spreading the good news of the Christian faith, and believes that having faith provides the basis for positive life decisions. Salvation Army staff consider the following would assist to turn negative attitudes and values around:

- Promotion of faith as a values system that transforms lives.
- Positive role models for young people; including models of people who have dedicated their lives to others.
- Incorporation of thinking skills in education, life skills and employment training.
- Thinking skills courses being available to all prison inmates, and those undergoing community-based sentences.

“We have a culture of individualism. It's all about me and my needs”

Social Service Delivery Issues

'The financial reporting proposals show a lack of trust in us, even though we are proven service providers of many years standing.'

Manager, Finance

Delivering services provides The Salvation Army with a significant level of information about the effectiveness of the processes currently used by government to engage with community service providers. While Salvation Army staff appreciate the funding made available and the generally positive relationship with government, they do experience some bureaucratic frustrations which they consider hinder their ability to deliver services as effectively as they would like. Key issues affecting the delivery of services are:

Funding silos

Salvation Army staff find the needs of their clients often cut across government funding boundaries. It is, however, very difficult to obtain joint funding for services or projects. Where multiple agencies are willing to fund the same service or project, this often results in multiple accountability systems that take time and money to administer. This is a long term and on-going problem that often gets talked about but on which there appears to be little progress. Salvation Army staff strongly believe that the majority of their clients require a holistic approach and that current funding silos prevent effective service delivery.

Micro management

While staff are very willing to be accountable for government funds, they are concerned and sometimes frustrated by the intense level and detail of this accountability. Staff consider that in some situations government micro manages community sector service delivery and becomes inappropriately involved in operational aspects of the services. Meeting the resultant compliance requirements takes time and money that could be better spent on service delivery. Staff observe that accountability practices do not take into consideration the different nature and organisation of community social services. Often staff feel like they have to try and fit the government agency administrative/accountability box, rather than the government agency identifying what is really required and working co-operatively with The Salvation Army to find a mutually agreed accountability system. This concern also applies to some operational matters, like invoicing and payment processes where in some cases service providers have had to develop additional or customised systems and processes, beyond that needed for other customers, without real consideration of the compliance cost created.

The Charities Bill and Financial Reporting Act changes

Administrative and accounting staff who support the social services of The Salvation Army are particularly concerned about the implications of both the Charities Bill and the proposed changes to the Financial Reporting Act. They consider that both these pieces of legislation will result in increased cost to community organisations through increased reporting requirements, and the actual cost of

having to register with the Charities Commission. The Financial Reporting Act changes in particular have significant implications for community organisations as most community organisations will be required to expand and change their financial reporting practices. Staff of the Salvation Army are particularly concerned about the lack of consultation around the development of the Financial Reporting Act changes. They consider the process of developing these changes did not fulfil the government's own guidelines for consultation with the community sector and reflect a lack of knowledge of the sector.

What do Salvation Army staff consider needs to happen to deal with problems associated with the funding and accountability of social services?

- Real progress on funding across current funding silos, including the development and implementation of a variety of alternatives contracting and funding models.
- A more consultative approach to accountability requirements and operational requirements that does not impose unnecessary or significant compliance costs.
- Improved contract processes that address longer term funding to cut down on the costs of annual contracting rounds, agreement on contracts finalised well before the contract period commences, and annual inflation indexing of contract prices.

Implications of Salvation Army Experiences for Service and Policy

This report gathers the experiences and ideas of Salvation Army staff. Its primary purpose is to assist The Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit to set its agenda of research and policy work. The opinions gathered here confirm the statistical and other research of government and community social services and indicate that the issues of housing, poverty, unemployment, addictions, rehabilitation and care of older people require constant and in some cases urgent action. These issues are not new because they have not been resolved, staff still see these problems everyday. This report therefore also sets an agenda for government. The Salvation Army is very willing to play its part in solving issues of social need through practical service delivery and the development of innovative policy ideas, but we need other partners to achieve wide scale long-term change. Government especially has a responsibility to listen to the experiences and ideas of organisations such as The Salvation Army and in response develop and implement policy initiatives that will positively change the circumstances of the people seeking our assistance.

The information for this report was gathered prior to the government budget. We recognise that some of the issues raised in this report have been at least partially addressed by aspects of the budget. Changes to the accommodation supplement, family support, the child care subsidy and the introduction of the in work payment will, once fully implemented in 2007, address some of the concerns Salvation Army staff raise. In particular, issues around the interaction of the benefit system with employment, barriers to employment and access to affordable housing will be partially ameliorated by these budget measures. Many of the concerns expressed in this report, however, still require action by both government and the wider community.

The agenda for further research and policy development that arises from the experiences of Salvation Army social service staff is as follows:

1. Urgent action on social housing and home ownership

The report confirms that housing is central to the well being of individuals and families, and to the success of other social interventions. The absence of affordable healthy housing is identified as one of the primary causes of social need amongst clients of The Salvation Army. It is also a contributing factor to the failure of other social interventions for some clients. The problems with housing identified by staff show that the issue of housing is multi dimensional,

encompassing structural issues such as supply and demand and incomes policy, and personal issues such as lifestyle choice, and life-skills. There is a clear need for more social housing, especially housing that includes social support for people with special needs and for policies that will enable more low income households into home ownership. Overall the ideas for change from staff suggest that solutions need to be as multi-dimensional as the problem.

2. The benefit system needs fundamental reform

The experience of Salvation Army staff who advocate for clients suggests that the complexity of the current benefit system is problematic for beneficiaries, Work and Income staff and social service providers. The need for a series of supplementary benefits to make up an adequate income and the increasingly targeted nature of assistance means some people miss out due to lack of knowledge, communication difficulties, or different interpretations of the rules by Work and Income staff. Increasingly people who are having difficulty with Work and Income require the

assistance of an advocate, which adds to the cost of meeting clients needs and is essentially disempowering. Future reform of the benefit system needs to consider the practical implications, for all involved with the welfare system, of targeting and universality. In the short term, Work and Income and community organisations need to examine practical ways of working more effectively together for the benefit of clients.

3. Focus on the barriers to employment

The experiences of Salvation Army staff working within social service and employment programmes suggests that getting people into employment is important, but that it takes more than the right skills. Skills training is vital, but alone it will not remove all the barriers to employment. Issues to do with the needs of children, personal/family/community motivation, and the interaction of the benefit system and paid work all influence the ability of people to obtain and remain in employment. Employment programmes also need to be long term, and support people post employment.

4. Justice reform should be about rehabilitation

The work of Salvation Army courts and prisons staff suggests that adequate funding for rehabilitation and support of offenders and their families both during and after their sentence is critical to reducing recidivism. Offenders need to be supported to deal with specific causes of their offending, and to create new positive communities, networks and aspirations. There is also a need for wider public education so that the general public is aware of the facts of crime, recidivism and how the prison system works, rather than responding to myths and a few high-profile cases.



5. Develop services for those who do not fit within the family structure

Current social policy and social welfare delivery focuses almost exclusively on the family as the focus of concern and the mechanism for delivering social interventions. Experiences of Salvation Army staff suggest that for some groups of individuals in society, the family either does not exist or is not positive, and that therefore they miss out on needed services. Single men in particular appear to be a forgotten group for whom there are few specific services. People with moderate or undiagnosed mental health problems are also often on their own and struggle to get the help they need. While families will always be a major focus, services and policies need to be aware of, and flexible enough to encompass, the minority for whom family is not available.

6. Value parenting and support it practically

Salvation Army staff interaction with families suggests that parenting is often a difficult task, and that parents need information and support in a wide variety of ways to do it well. Access to support before situations reach crisis level may decrease levels of stress amongst families. The government could support families by increasing the legal drinking age. This would be a tool to help parents and teens to resist underage and inappropriate drinking behaviour.

A fundamental shift in the way parenting is valued is also required so that all sectors, business, government and community, understand, value and support (in practical ways), the work that parents need to put in to raise children well.

7. Treat pokies as a serious public health issue

The experiences of Salvation Army addictions staff suggest that pokies represent a serious public health issue. The rapid proliferation of pokies and the equally rapid increase in number of people with problem gambling suggests that regulation of pokies needs serious attention.

8. Continue efforts to make alcohol abuse socially unacceptable

Problems with the abuse of alcohol continue. Attitudes to drinking continue to be problematic, with binge drinking a particularly dangerous, but seemingly socially acceptable, past time for many men and an increasing number of women. The lowering of the drinking age suggested a maturity about alcohol that The Salvation Army does not consider New Zealand has in practice. We need to continue to pursue public and targeted education and treatment programmes, and examine how we can make the misuse of alcohol socially unacceptable.

9. Treat the causes and educate about the dangers of party drugs

The underlying causes of drug use need continued attention. In particular, depression amongst teens requires increased attention and treatment options.

There appears to be a growing acceptance amongst the young, but also amongst some parents, that a certain level of recreational drug use is normal, acceptable and safe. We need to continue to educate young people, parents and the general public about the real health risks of any drug taking.

10. Ageing in place – fund the vision

Ageing in place is a positive and widely supported strategy, for it to become a reality however, and for New Zealand to cope positively with our ageing population, the vision needs to be adequately funded. Inadequate funding at all stages along the continuum of care will result in gaps through which poorer older people will inevitably fall.

11. Address the values side of social need

As a Christian church and social service provider, The Salvation Army is focused not only on the socio-economic circumstances of clients, but also on their mental, emotional and spiritual well being. The experience of staff is that the emotional/spiritual and the socio-economic influence each other. Negative attitudes and values can trap people in negative situations. Conversely, poverty, lack of education, ill health and other negative socio-economic circumstances can cause people to lose hope, trust and respect for others. Changing lives, individually and communally, for the long term requires a focus on both values and socio-economic circumstances.

12. Address funding silos and excessive compliance costs

The Salvation Army, like other not for profit community social service organisations, is structured financially and managerially in a particular way for a variety of historical, philosophical and practical reasons. Contracting with and being accountable to government will be more efficient and cost effective if we (and other third sector organisations) can have our organisational structures respected and limits are placed on compliance requirements. Services will be more effective if financial barriers to holistic service delivery are removed.

The above are broad themes that require further, more detailed work to determine their specific implications for social service delivery and social policy direction. In the coming months the Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit of The Salvation Army will use these broad themes to develop a programme of policy and research to address some of these themes in more detail. We will also be talking with government about their role in progressing this agenda. The purpose of this work and discussion will be to improve the services and policy that affect the lives of New Zealand's most vulnerable citizens. Success will be measured by a positive change in stories we hear and the statistics we gather.

Notes

- 1 Housing New Zealand Corporation
Building the Future: Towards a New Zealand Housing Strategy,
Housing New Zealand Corporation 2004, page 8
- 2 Data from Housing New Zealand website – quoted in the Child Poverty Action
The Child Friendly Index (October 2003 to March 2004)
Urgent need = ‘Severe and persistent housing need’,
Serious Need = ‘Significant and persistent housing need.’
- 3 The Ministry of Social Development, *The Social Report 2003*, Wellington 2003,
Ministry of Social Development, page 71 and 72
- 4 *ibid* page 74
- 5 Figures are for the first quarter of 2004.
- 6 All statistics from Ministry of Social Development *op cit*.
- 7 Statistics New Zealand, *Household Labour Force Survey March 2004 quarter*, Statistics New Zealand, Wellington, 2004.
- 8 Note: the information for this report was gathered before the Government Budget 2004.
Revised levels of childcare and OSCAR subsidies and increased funding to these services are likely to be of some
assistance with the problems described in this section.
- 9 All statistics from: Department of Corrections, *Managing Offenders in the Department of Corrections*,
Department of Corrections, Wellington, December 2002
- 10 Statistics New Zealand, *Census 2001*
- 11 Statistics New Zealand, *Household Economic Survey 2001*
- 12 Mental Health Commission, *Briefing to the Incoming Minister of Health*, August 2002
- 13 All statistics from: Statistics New Zealand, *Census 2001*
- 14 Ministry of Social Development *op cit* 2003 page 100
- 15 All figures regarding alcohol are from “*Minimising Alcohol and Other Drug Related Harm*”
a fact sheet from the Ministry of Health.
- 16 All figures on problem gambling are from either “*Problem Gambling in New Zealand*”
a fact sheet from the Ministry of Health or Ministry of Health,
Preventing and Minimising Gambling Harm Wellington 2004, The Ministry of Health
- 17 All statistics from Statistics New Zealand, *Census 2001*.

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**SOCIAL POLICY AND
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SOCIAL POLICY & PARLIAMENTARY UNIT
New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga Territory

AUCKLAND OFFICE
Phone (09) 262 2332 • Fax (09) 262 4103 • Mobile 027 450 6944
PO Box 76249, Manukau City

WELLINGTON OFFICE
Phone (04) 802 6269 Ext 8230