



New Zealand Council Of  
Christian Social Services

POVERTY INDICATORS  
PROJECT UPDATE:

# **A Snapshot Comparative Analysis of Foodbank Use**

**December Quarter 2004 and  
December Quarter 2007**

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Christian Social Services**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The need for foodbanks shows no sign of going away. Thousands of people around Aotearoa New Zealand still need the help of foodbanks to feed themselves or their families. This is the main conclusion to be drawn from the data in this latest update on the usage of foodbanks provided by New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) member agencies.

In the December Quarter (Quarter 4) of 2007 NZCCSS worked with three foodbanks operated by some of its member agencies to prepare a “snapshot” of the work undertaken by these foodbanks and the problems faced by those accessing support. This information was then compared with data collected during the December Quarter 2004 as part of the Poverty Indicators Project survey of foodbanks that ended in December 2004. The three foodbanks that provided data for this report were all part of the earlier survey.

### Key facts:

This review has seen little change in the food poverty situation for households accessing the three foodbanks. Food poverty exists when access to adequate food is compromised or threatened by factors such as inadequate income. Similar numbers of households were accessing these foodbanks in the Quarter 4 2007 as in Quarter 4 2004. The three participating foodbanks in Hamilton, Dunedin and Invercargill assisted around 2,500 people in the three months ending December 2007.

- Many thousands of people continue to need foodbank assistance. The number of foodbanks that are part of the NZCCSS networks remains virtually unchanged (135 in 2007 compared to 140 in 2005). NZCCSS member the Salvation Army assisted more than 5,000 households including nearly 15,000 people through their 37 foodbanks throughout the country in the December 2007 quarter
- Foodbanks are a place of last resort for many people. Over the three months surveyed, most people used the foodbank only once, which implies that there is a large group of people affected by food poverty who turn to foodbanks only when all other options are exhausted.
- Around half of households supported through foodbanks include children.
- Most foodbank users receive income solely from benefits but the proportion has dropped slightly across the foodbanks surveyed. This suggests more people who are in part-time or casual employment are resorting to foodbanks.
- The proportion of people using foodbanks who receive income only from wages rose in two of the three foodbanks surveyed. This shows that despite the full roll-out of the Working for Families income support package there are still people in paid employment who need foodbanks.
- Disposable incomes for foodbank users continue to be very low and they are rising more slowly than average wages.

- Debt continues to be a main reason for people to need foodbank assistance, with rates of indebtedness as high as or higher than three years ago. This debt includes arrears for basic utilities such as electricity, gas or telephone.
- Housing costs continue to be an ongoing source of hardship for people using foodbanks. Approximately a third to a half of foodbank users are spending more than 50% of their net income on housing costs.
- The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) Foodbank Strategy was launched in 2002 with the goal of reducing and ultimately eliminating the need for foodbanks in New Zealand. MSD confirms that the strategy is still current with the focus of their work being on improving and maintaining relationships between local Work & Income offices and foodbanks, establishing a consistent approach to working with foodbanks and ensuring clients receive their full and correct benefit entitlements. NZCCSS notes that in the five years to the end of 2007 this Strategy appears to have had no significant impact on reducing the need for foodbanks.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Over many years, community agencies have been calling for changes to reduce the need for foodbanks because in a country such as New Zealand they should not be necessary. Foodbanks are an indicator of intense hardship, because many people experiencing food poverty do not go to a foodbank unless they have exhausted other forms of help (such as loans or benefit assistance) and are desperate or courageous enough to ask for assistance.

Specific recommendations arising out of this snapshot of foodbanks are:

1. Income levels remain too low for many people. The kind of income assistance offered through the Working for Families package to people in employment who have children needs to be extended to all those on low incomes (e.g. those on benefits or those in employment without children), because they make up the majority of those resorting to foodbanks.
2. Benefit levels should be more closely indexed to increases in food costs as measured by the Food Price Index, as these costs impact very directly on low income households and are rising faster than general inflation as measured by the Consumers Price Index.
3. The MSD Foodbank Strategy needs to be re-visited in consultation with the sector to develop and implement a plan of action that will actually achieve a measureable reduction in the need for foodbanks.

Strategies to reduce poverty must recognise the wider stress and distress that financial hardship creates, including the lack of confidence to engage with any system to access needed help. A holistic policy perspective that encompasses the value of social well being and social functioning for the good of the whole community is needed - one that uses resources intentionally to redress injustice.



## INTRODUCTION

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) focuses on the plight of the most marginalised in our society in an ongoing quest for a more just and compassionate society in Aotearoa New Zealand. In 2008 our work is governed by a Call to More Action entitled *Aroha tetahi ki tetahi, Let Us Look After Each Other*. Our focus on food poverty is part of this work.

### This Snapshot Review

This project has sought to revisit the original 2001-2004 Poverty Indicators Project (PIP) by analysing the change in foodbank use (if any) in the three years since the close of that project. Its results flag broader underlying themes of poverty current within the communities that our member social service agencies serve. Three of our members (Hamilton Combined Christian Foodbank, Presbyterian Support Otago Foodbank, Dunedin and Southland Foodbank, Invercargill) agreed to resume collecting data for Quarter 4 2007 for this PIP Snapshot Update. Four of the other original PIP members could not participate due to the strain on resources to collect additional data. Since 2004 the Salvation Army has begun collecting data nationally from all 37 of their foodbanks and they have provided NZCCSS with their national data. This data represents a subset of PIP data and has enabled some comparative analysis with Quarter 4 2004 for Salvation Army Manukau foodbank (that was part of the original PIP survey). A table of the national data for the Salvation Army is also included in Appendix B.

### Foodbanks – Indicators of Poverty

There is no official poverty line in New Zealand. However, NZCCSS has identified the growth and patterns of use of foodbanks in New Zealand since the 1980s as a key indicator of poverty. Food poverty remains a problem and this PIP Update contributes to a clearer picture of the current issues around food poverty. Based on the United Nations definition of food security, food poverty or food insecurity exists when access to adequate food is compromised or threatened by factors such as inadequate income<sup>1</sup>.

The time between the December 2004 end of the Poverty Indicators Project and the Quarter 4 2007 (that this report focuses on) is typified as a period of prosperity. There was a high level of employment and correspondingly low unemployment rates. The Government's income support package Working for Families was fully implemented and rising house values increased the personal wealth of many. However, despite these positive economic indicators this report demonstrates that foodbanks continue to be called on as people on insufficient income struggle to afford rising living costs for basic items such as food, travel costs, utilities and rent.

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<sup>1</sup> "Food Insecurity and the Food Bank Industry, Political, Individual and Environmental Factors Contributing to Food Bank Use in Christchurch", K. McPherson (University of Canterbury, August 2006) p.16

Other recent studies of foodbank use in Auckland and Christchurch point to similar issues. The Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) has analysed usage of the Auckland City Mission foodbank since 1996 and the trend has been constant increase in the number of food parcels distributed<sup>2</sup>. Both the CPAG analysis and a 2006 study of foodbanks in Christchurch found that inadequate benefits and the burden of housing costs are key indicators of foodbank use. For those in these situations a crisis would often push the household over the edge financially with food being treated as a “discretionary” expense and families would either go hungry or seek foodbank support. Both analyses conclude that foodbanks have become a socially institutionalised part of the welfare landscape in New Zealand. State involvement is required to provide a sustainable solution to the entrenched problem of poverty, deprivation and food insecurity faced by a specific group of New Zealanders.<sup>3</sup>

### Poverty Indicators Project

In April 2005, NZCCSS completed an extensive four year survey known as the Poverty Indicators Project<sup>4</sup> (PIP) as part of the ongoing work to assess the well-being of some of the most vulnerable members of our community. Seven foodbanks were chosen in part because they represented a diversity of providers in terms of regional location, urban/rural mix, denominational culture and size of operation.

The purpose of the project was three-fold:

- To strengthen our members’ data gathering processes;
- To obtain regular and reliable information on poverty trends; and
- To use this information more effectively to inform the public about poverty issues.

The participating sites were involved in the selection of a set of indicators to build a profile of poverty. These covered five main areas: Income, Housing, Demographics, Employment and Debt. Foodbank providers also assisted in the development of a standard client questionnaire<sup>5</sup>. The data captured from the PIP questionnaire attempted to build a profile indicating poverty by analysing the following categories:

- Income. This profile identified the main financial contributors for each household, whether income was from wages and general income or from benefits and supplements, also the amount of weekly net after-tax income received.
- Housing. This profile explored the cost of housing, nature of tenure and space intensiveness (or level of crowding) in accommodating people. It also investigated the stability of housing.

2 Wynd, D “Hard to Swallow, Foodbank use in New Zealand”, CPAG, 2005. Updated statistics are cited in “Left behind: How Social & Income Inequalities Damage New Zealand Children”, CPAG, 2008.

3 Food Insecurity and the Food Bank Industry: Political, Individual and Environmental Factors Contributing to Food Bank Use in Christchurch, Kate McPherson, Geography Department, University of Canterbury, 2006. pp.41-47, 95-97.

4 Forgotten Poverty? Poverty Indicator Project: Foodbank Study Final Report, NZCCSS, 2005.

5 Whale, A “Working Together: Government, the Community Sector and the Poverty Index Project” 6<sup>th</sup> Biennial National Foodbank Conference p.27

- Demographics. This profile captured who uses foodbanks in terms of family type, gender, age, ethnicity and the number of children living within households.
- Employment. This profile examined issues related to employment such as whether users of foodbanks were employed, the nature of tenure (whether temporary, casual, part-time, unpaid).
- Debt. This profile investigated whether people had debt and if so, where it was situated, the level of debt to government agencies, including Work and Income and what situation people faced with respect to utilities (such as phone, power, gas), that is; whether they were up-to-date, in arrears or currently disconnected.

### **Ministry of Social Development's Foodbank Strategy**

In 2001, the then Minister for Social Development expressed the desire that the government would like to see foodbanks go out of business<sup>6</sup>. In December 2002, MSD initiated a three to five year foodbank strategy aimed at reducing and ultimately eliminating the need for foodbanks. Key elements included:

- Establishing and maintaining relationships with foodbank operators.
- Establishing a consistent approach for working with foodbank operators; and
- Ensuring clients receive their full and correct entitlements.<sup>7</sup>

The results of an internal survey by NZCCSS in 2005 highlighted a number of issues with the implementation of the MSD Strategy. These included:

- Many foodbank clients were still not receiving full and correct entitlements to income support
- Stronger connections between local Work and Income managers and foodbanks were needed to ensure consistent implementation across foodbanks, and
- There was a need for a community development approach to support strategies that work from the ground up.

Preliminary findings from other current NZCCSS research as well as feedback from the community sector suggest that many families still have problems in accessing their entitlements with Work & Income.

As part of this PIP snapshot, MSD and Work & Income officials provided an update on the MSD Foodbank Strategy. They advised that the Strategy is still current and that as part of the Strategy Work & Income continues to have a strong focus on ensuring full and correct entitlements.

<sup>6</sup> Wynd, D "Hard to Swallow, Foodbank use in New Zealand", Child Poverty Action Group Paper 2005 p.35.

<sup>7</sup> Foodbank Strategy Regional Resource Guide December 2002 National Commissioner R Smith.

Work & Income advise that they see working with foodbanks as a partnership approach and that foodbanks are free to choose how and when to meet with Work & Income staff in their areas. For some larger foodbanks this is a formal relationship, while for others local relationships needed to maintain flexibility and remain informal. Work & Income officials stated that Work & Income offices would welcome sharing of information from foodbank operators when they are encountering changes in their foodbank use due to local environmental factors.

The experiences reported to NZCCSS in the course of this research and informally from our members working with the poor and marginalised in our communities do not indicate that progress is being made towards the successful implementation of the MSD Strategy. Our conversations with MSD have not made it clear how MSD is monitoring its 2002 Foodbank Strategy to ensure that progress is being made towards its stated goals.

NZCCSS recorded 140 foodbanks belonging to our member networks in 2005. In 2008 NZCCSS still lists 135 foodbanks for our member networks. **The same number of food parcels were distributed in Quarter 4 2007 by the participating foodbanks in this report as for Quarter 4 2004.** It appears from the current data, and that received from wider sources, that the MSD Foodbank Strategy has not been effective in its stated goal. We acknowledge the recent announcement that the access to food grants has doubled from one every 12 months to one every 6 months. We look forward to seeing how this impacts on the need for foodbanks.

We acknowledge MSD's advice that the strategy is still current, however NZCCSS believes that a review of the Strategy leading to a more active approach is needed to ensure that the ultimate goal of eliminating the need for foodbanks is achieved.

### **Advocacy**

Some foodbanks have developed extensive advocacy services, for example, Wellington Downtown Community Ministry (DCM), one of the providers which participated in the original Poverty Indicators Project. Although unable to collect data for this PIP snapshot update, DCM has a foodbank interviewer who meets with clients to do advocacy work on their behalf. DCM holds weekly clinics with a Work and Income case manager where client benefit issues may be addressed. Other member foodbanks also have advocacy services and some have staff from local Work and Income offices visiting the foodbanks to assist clients with their benefit entitlements. Presbyterian Support Otago provide a free budget advice and advocacy service to advise and support clients in dealing with Work and Income and other organisations and government agencies. An important service offered to foodbank users by some foodbanks is the assessment of the correct benefit entitlement a beneficiary should receive. They provide benefit advocate training for staff to enable provision of better advice for clients about their entitlements.



## Needs assessment

Foodbank services may often provide a point of first contact that leads to an identification of need for other essential services that are provided by the social service organisation. Thus the opportunity to engage with clients and offer support around food poverty may lead to clients accessing a range of other services that may help improve their situation.<sup>8</sup>

## The rising cost of food

New Zealand has seen food prices continue to rise rapidly, with basic food items such as cheese, butter, milk and bread showing huge price increases. These increases are placing pressure on foodbanks. Foodbanks source their food from both donated and purchased food.

While not directly affected by the rising cost for donated food, they face diminishing purchasing power for bought food. Anecdotal feedback from foodbanks is that the rising cost of food is impacting foodbank clients severely. Current government policy adjusts benefits annually for Consumer Price Index (CPI) movement. The most recent CPI increase of 3.1% as of 1 April 2008 will do little to address the rising cost of living for those whose disposable income is absorbed buying food at a subsistence level. The CPI rose by 8.5% between December 2004 and December 2007 but food prices rose faster, with the Food Price Index rising by 11%.

According to the Food Price Index (FPI), over the past year (to April 2008) food prices have increased by 6%, nearly twice as fast as general inflation (CPI) at 3.4%.<sup>9</sup> Key drivers of that increase over the past year are basic food items in the grocery subgroup (up 10.7%). *Essential basic foods have gone up massively in the same period: butter (up 86%), cheese (up 45.5%), fresh milk (up 21.1%) and bread (up 13.1%).*<sup>10</sup> The FPI could be used as an alternative index to adjust benefits, and may be fairer given that those with little disposable income spend a large proportion of their income on food and this index is increasing at a greater rate than the CPI.

Research by Massey University into the cost of eating a recommended 5+ servings of fruit and vegetables a day found that the expense is beyond many families. Findings included that summer was the cheapest time to buy fresh food while winter was the dearest. The removal of GST on fruit and vegetables and the provision of free vegetables to school children were key recommendations that received significant support from people interviewed for the International Social Survey Programme on the Role of Government survey in 2006.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Food Insecurity and the Food Bank Industry: Political, Individual and Environmental Factors Contributing to Food Bank Use in Christchurch, Kate McPherson, Geography Department, University of Canterbury, 2006. pp. 41-47

<sup>9</sup> Statistics NZ, Consumer Price Index March 2008, Food Price Index April 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics NZ, Hot off the Press, Food Price Index: April 2008

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/print.html?path=PO0712/S00005.htm> Fruit and veg costing families a packet. Sunday 2 December 2007, Press Release: Massey University.

## WHAT TRENDS DO FOODBANKS SHOW?

In 2007 a myriad of foodbanks continued to distribute food to a significant proportion of households. The Salvation Army, an NZCCSS member and one of our largest foodbank providers, reported that they distributed just over five thousand food parcels used to support fifteen thousand people (eight thousand of whom were children) nationwide during the three months to December 2007.

Three years after the original PIP, this snapshot has sought to answer the following questions. How many people have been assisted during this period and how does this compare with Quarter 4 2004? How many people are being assisted monthly? What does the foodbank user profile look like? Are people repeat users of foodbanks?

- In Quarter 4 2004, approximately 2,500 people were receiving food parcels or food assistance via the three foodbanks taking part in our recent review (Hamilton, Otago & Invercargill). In Quarter 4 2007 the number of people visiting remains approximately 2,500. Therefore, despite economic and government policy changes and the 2002 implementation of the MSD's Foodbank Strategy to eliminate foodbanks over three to five years, ***there has been no change in the number of people being assisted by our three member foodbanks participating in this current review.***
- The average number of applicants per month using the foodbanks has shown a slight increase for two of the three foodbanks surveyed. Hamilton shows a slight decrease.
- Across the three foodbanks there has been little change in the number of respondents visiting the foodbank more than once during the quarter (28% of applicants, compared with 30% three years ago). So, most users (over 70%) are not repeat visitors, using foodbanks only once in a quarterly period. ***Rather than a small group of recurrent users, a larger group of occasional users continue to be affected by food poverty to the extent of seeking assistance from foodbanks.*** This indicates that the issue of food poverty is widely situated rather than located among a few "high need" households.
- High numbers of foodbank users identified a level of personal indebtedness for themselves which may point to the use of foodbanks as a last resort when other options such as credit extensions have been exhausted. (In Quarter 4 2007 89% of applicants at Hamilton were in debt, at Invercargill 71% and Otago 68%)<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Overall, indebtedness has remained as high as or higher than 3 years ago. It is higher for Hamilton (the largest foodbank) is unchanged for Otago and has declined slightly for Invercargill (the smallest foodbank).

## Who Uses Foodbanks?

- The most common household type accessing foodbanks for two of the three foodbanks were sole parent households. In Dunedin, sole parent families were exceeded by single people. This is consistent with the Social Report 2007's findings that since the mid-1990s the proportion of people in sole-parent families living on low incomes has been two to three times that of those in two-parent families<sup>13</sup> Sole parent households are predominantly headed by females, reflecting the feminisation of poverty<sup>14</sup>.
- Around half of respondent households contained children (Invercargill 67%, Dunedin 48%, Hamilton 71%).
- As Table 1 demonstrates, Māori were disproportionately high users of foodbanks in terms of their representation in the general population.

**Table 1**

	<i>Otago</i>	<i>Invercargill</i>	<i>Hamilton</i>
<i>Distribution of Maori in Population</i> <sup>15</sup>	12%	6%	29%
<i>Use of foodbank by Maori recipients</i>	29%	20%	56%

This position was again borne out by the MSD Social Report 2007 which showed that families with Māori members were more likely to have a lower living standard and very low incomes when compared with other families.<sup>16</sup>

- There has been an increase in the number of foodbank recipients from households that receive only wage income from Quarter 4 2004 to Quarter 4 2007.<sup>17</sup>
- The number of elderly people accessing foodbanks was low (less than 1% were aged 65 or over).<sup>18</sup>
- Women continued to access foodbanks at a higher rate than men.
- Single people made up a significant group in terms of household type visiting foodbanks. At the Dunedin Foodbank they were the largest group seeking assistance (39%).
- Consistent with the Quarter 4 2004 findings, high numbers of foodbank users had debt in Quarter 4 2007. ***This may indicate that recipients of food parcels have exhausted other options such as credit extensions.*** For Hamilton, 47% of families accessing the foodbank were without a phone including a mobile in their house in Quarter 4 2007.

<sup>13</sup> The Social Report 2007, pp. 58-61 Population with low incomes

<sup>14</sup> See [www.un.org/womenwatch](http://www.un.org/womenwatch) for UN website fact sheets documenting how women bear the burden of poverty.

<sup>15</sup> The Social Report 2007 pp.126-128.

<sup>16</sup> Across all three foodbanks in Quarter 4 2004 72 out of 767 respondents (9.4%) were in households that only received wage income. In Quarter 4 2007 110 out of 867 respondents (12.7%) were in households that only received wage income.

<sup>17</sup> Statistics New Zealand 2006 Census material.

<sup>18</sup> 7 of 813 respondents on age question.

## Income Adequacy

Disposable incomes of foodbank users continue to be very low and they are rising more slowly than average wages and food costs. While there is no official poverty line measure in New Zealand, the MSD Social Report uses the widely-accepted proxy measure of 60% percent of the 1998 household disposable income median, with 25 percent deducted to allow for average housing costs<sup>19</sup>. The threshold is adjusted for inflation to keep it fixed in real terms and is adjusted (equivalised) for household size and composition. Table 2 depicts the median weekly after-tax household income for the respondents of the PIP Snapshot Update for Quarter 4 2007. Clients were asked for their best estimate of their weekly household net income before debt or other payments were deducted.

**Table 2**

<i>HOUSEHOLDS</i>	<i>Southland</i>	<i>Otago</i>	<i>Hamilton</i>
<i>Median After-Tax Weekly Income</i>	<i>\$375</i>	<i>\$300</i>	<i>\$334</i>
<i>Median Weekly Housing Cost</i>	<i>\$164</i>	<i>\$120</i>	<i>\$165</i>
<i>Median Weekly Disposable Income (after housing costs)</i>	<i>\$211</i>	<i>\$180</i>	<i>\$169</i>

- Most households coming to foodbanks have incomes well below the Social Report poverty measure noted above. For example, a conversion of this measure from 2004 into 2007 dollars comes out at \$308 per week (or \$280 in 2004 dollars) after housing costs for a sole parent household with one child, or \$220 per week (or \$200 in 2004 dollars) for a single person household.<sup>20</sup>
- This is consistent with information available about incomes for households not in paid employment. Average weekly income for individuals not in paid employment was \$236 as reported in the New Zealand Income Survey June 2007 Quarter (NZIS). This amounts to only 35% of the average weekly income for all individuals of \$667 and places beneficiaries well below the poverty line.<sup>21</sup>
- The three years 2004 – 2007 saw a 20% rise in average weekly incomes,<sup>22</sup> whereas the increases in median incomes at the three foodbanks ranged between 7 - 17%. In Hamilton the median income after deducting housing costs actually fell by 5.5%.

The disposable incomes of foodbank users are not sufficient to feed themselves and their families. In Table 3 below the University of Otago Department of Human Nutrition Study in 2007 Estimated Food Costs data shows the amount of money different family types would need to spend if they were to get all their basic nutritional

<sup>19</sup> Social Report 2007, p.60

<sup>20</sup> B.Perry, "Household Incomes in New Zealand; trends in indicators of inequality and hardship 1982-2004", MSD, 2007. Table E.4 p.56

<sup>21</sup> New Zealand Income Survey : June 2007 quarter tables 6 & 1.

<sup>22</sup> New Zealand Income Survey : June 2007 quarter table 1.

requirements met. Because of the inadequacy of disposable income in Hamilton and Otago households who use foodbanks, there would be little or no residual disposable income to spend on power, phone, transport, school, health, clothing and other household costs if the estimated basic family food costs are met first.

**Table 3**

	<i>Couple</i>	<i>Couple &amp; children<sup>23</sup></i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Sole Parent<sup>24</sup></i>
<i>Estimated weekly basic family food costs<sup>25</sup></i>	\$97	\$173	\$50	\$123
<i>Hamilton average disposable income</i>	\$159	\$135	\$71	\$179
<i>Dunedin average disposable income</i>	\$121	\$199	\$95	\$141
<i>Invercargill average disposable income</i>	\$389	\$338	\$131	\$215

- Anecdotal comment from foodbanks NZCCSS had contacted over 2006 were that greater numbers of recipients were being referred to Budget Advice agencies due to debt and less disposable income.
- Work & Income have stated to NZCCSS that their national policy is not to refer people to foodbanks, however our members commented that recipients were being referred directly to the foodbank by Work & Income because their food grants had been used up. Clients reported that increased living costs such as power and petrol were being paid first, leaving insufficient money for food.

### **Housing Affordability**

Housing costs continue to be an ongoing source of hardship for people using foodbanks. Between a third and a half of foodbank users spend more than 50% of their net income on housing costs.

Most foodbank users rented (76% from the three member foodbanks) and the majority of respondents rented in the private market. Many people coming to foodbanks were paying more than half of their after tax income in rent so that high housing costs were an ongoing source of hardship for many people.

- Two of the three foodbanks saw a decline in the number of respondents who were State house tenants.
- There appears to be a correlation between the growth in private rental housing and the increased housing costs incurred by those using a foodbank.

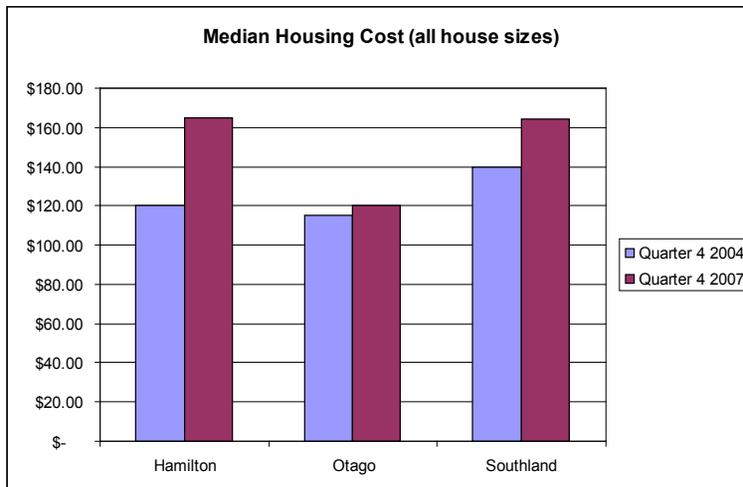
<sup>23</sup> Figures based on a man, woman and two children (took the average cost for a child of any age).

<sup>24</sup> Figures based on a woman and two children (took the average cost for a child of any age)

<sup>25</sup> Based on figures for Dunedin from the University of Otago Department of Human Nutrition study in estimated food costs, 2007.

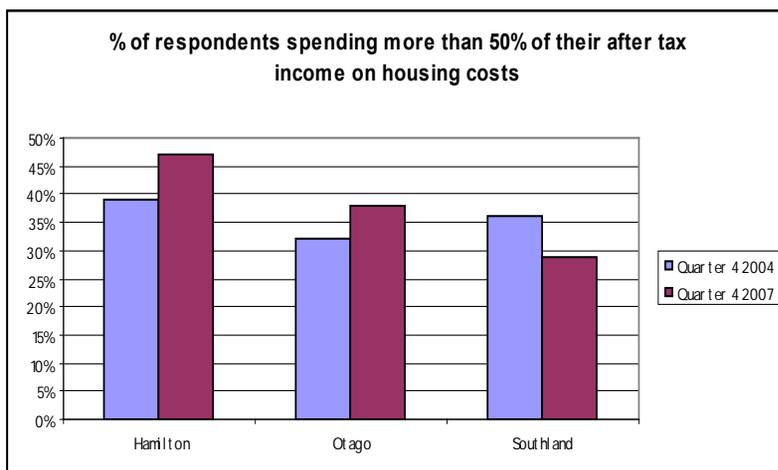
Graph 1 below shows that median housing costs have risen for all of the three foodbank agencies respondents compared with Quarter 4 2004. The rise in the median cost of housing was, at 38%, the highest in Hamilton.

**Graph 1**



Graph 2 below shows that foodbank users are facing very high housing costs in relation to their incomes. The Social Report measures hardship based on the number of households who have had to spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs<sup>26</sup> (note that Housing NZ Corporation income-related rents are capped at 25% of after-tax income). Foodbank users are found at the most vulnerable end of the housing market with many paying rent well above the 30% level. For those on low incomes, increases in housing costs have greater impact as the proportion of residual income available to put towards other costs such as power, transport, clothing and food is lower.

**Graph 2**

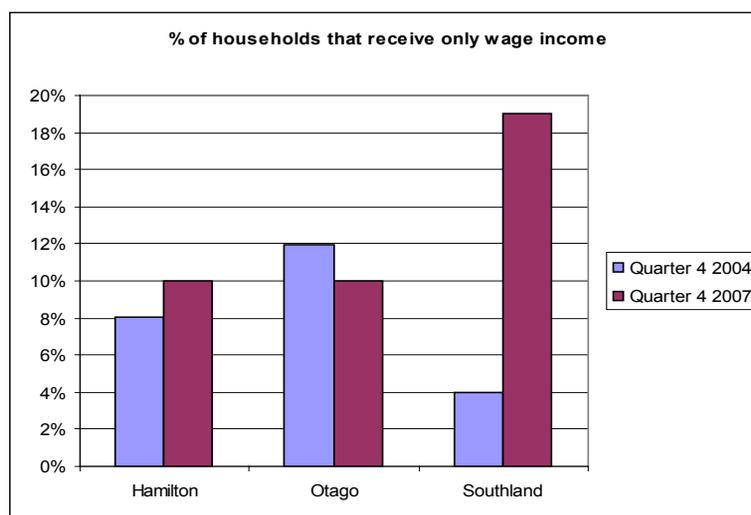


26 The Social Report 2007, Ministry of Social Development, p.62

### Foodbank Recipients in Employment

In 2007 there appear to be more households receiving part or all of their income from wages than in 2004. Access to paid employment does not protect people from needing to resort to foodbanks. It would be reasonable to expect that when households gain access to income from employment that they should no longer need to resort to foodbanks, yet this is clearly not the case.

Graph 3

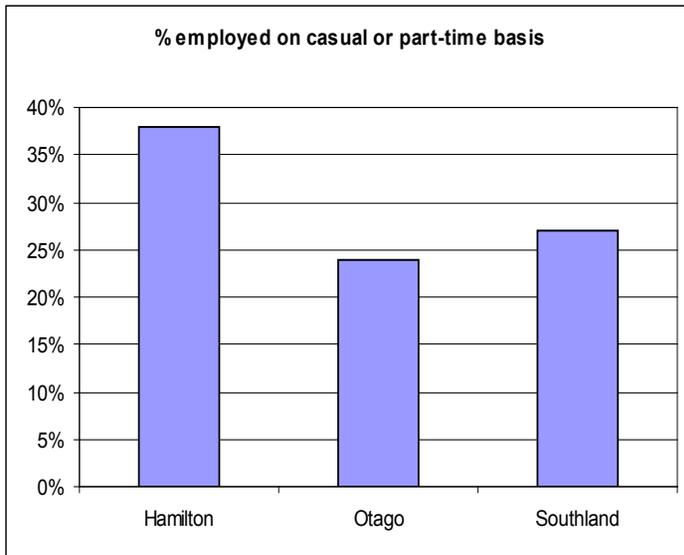


- Graph 3 above shows that over 10% of foodbank clients from the three participating member foodbanks were in households that received wage-only income. In Hamilton and Southland more wage-earners were coming to the foodbanks than had been the case in Quarter 4 2004. In its 2005 PIP report NZCCSS raised its concern that New Zealand increasingly operates a low wage economy<sup>27</sup>. Since then the Working For Families income support package for people in paid employment with families has been fully implemented. Foodbank users include a significant proportion of low-waged employed suggesting that the *Working For Families package does not seem to have led to a noticeable improvement in the situation of these people*.
- This may be because people are not accessing their Working for Families (WFF) entitlements (although official figures suggest very high take up rates of more than 95%<sup>28</sup>). It is therefore more likely that the households coming to foodbanks are simply not eligible for all of the components of the WFF package, particularly the \$60 per week In Work payment. Families with dependent children that do not meet the working hours requirement will miss out on this payment (50% or more of households using foodbanks contain children, so it can be assumed that many of these children may not be gaining any significant benefit from Working for Families).

27 Forgotten Poverty? Poverty Indicator Project: Foodbank Study Final Report, NZCCSS, 2005, p.20

28 Working for Families – Q & As, Press Release NZ Government, 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2008

**Graph 4**



- In Graph 4 each foodbank shows more than 20% of those who were employed to be employed on a casual or part-time basis. This is a significant increase in access to employment since 2004. NZCCSS is concerned that these people may simply have exchanged their previous circumstance of inadequate benefit income for employment in casualised low-waged jobs and continue to need the assistance of foodbanks.

### **Debt and Access to Utilities**

Debt continues to be a main reason for people to need foodbank assistance, with rates as high or higher than three years ago. A 2003 study of indebtedness concluded that:

“The most significant factors in shaping debt and poverty dynamics are clearly structural – namely income, family structure, access to employment and affordable childcare, gender, ethnicity, access to the credit market and organisational responses to debt recovery. Situational and often, unexpected events such as illness, death and unemployment were shown to have a marked influence on these dynamics<sup>29</sup>”

The impact of debt is unevenly distributed in New Zealand. When comparing net worth for non-partnered individuals and couples, debt is most heavily concentrated in the low income groups. For instance:

- In two of the three foodbank agencies there has been a decline in the number of foodbank applicants in debt to Work & Income. This may be a result of improved systems at Work & Income leading to fewer overpayment errors, or there may have been changes to rules that mean beneficiaries are entitled to fewer advances.

<sup>29</sup> Dr L. Williams & Dr M. O'Brien, The Dynamics of Debt for Low Income Families, NZCCSS 2003, pp. 26-27, 67

- Comparing Quarter 4 2004 with Quarter 4 2007, all three foodbanks had seen an increase in the number of applicants in arrears with electricity bills.
- One foodbank recorded less applicants without a phone (including mobile phone) in their house between Quarter 4 2004 and Quarter 4 2007, but the other two recorded increases in the number of households without phone access.
- Disconnection rates were as follows:
  - At Otago, 21 respondents were currently disconnected from either phone, gas or electricity. There were another 120 cases where households did not have connections to one or other (or any) of these utilities.
  - At Hamilton, 5 respondents were disconnected from either phone or gas or electricity. There were another 285 cases where households did not have connections to one or other (or any) of these utilities.
  - In Invercargill, 2 were disconnected but 26 lived without a phone.

## CONCLUSION

This review has seen little improvement in the poverty situation for households accessing the three foodbanks previously profiled for the Poverty Indicators Project. Similar numbers of households were accessing these foodbanks in Quarter 4 2007 as in Quarter 4 2004.

One slightly different aspect is that while the number of respondents receiving income solely from benefits has declined across all three foodbanks, there has been an increase in the number of households that receive income only from wages for two of the three – pointing to a growing number of ‘working poor’. Working for Families and a reduction in unemployment has not reduced the need for foodbanks. The number of households accommodated within the private rental market has continued to grow and the numbers of respondents spending more than 30% of their income on housing has continued to climb (as has the number spending more than 50% of their income on housing). Income levels are too low for many people and NZCCSS recommends that the kind of assistance offered by Working For Families needs to be extended to all those on low incomes (e.g. those on benefits or in low-income employment without children) because they make up the majority of those resorting to foodbanks.

University of Otago data shows the amount of money different family types would need to spend if they were to meet all their basic nutritional requirements. The rising cost of food is outstripping the rise in income for respondents covered by this review. Households accessing the foodbanks in our study are in a position where their ability to feed themselves and their families is taking a backseat to meeting the other costs of living. This is made worse by high levels of indebtedness, including indebtedness to power companies and the number of households without essential

utilities. Indexing benefit levels more closely to the cost of food through the Food Price Index would be immediately fairer to those with very low incomes, as a much higher proportion of their income is spent on food.

Between 2000 and 2004 the original Poverty Indicators Project provided a rich source of information about the situation of foodbank users, however, the seven foodbanks who participated were only a small cross-section of the foodbanks operating throughout New Zealand. Those seven still operate today. The Government strategy initiated in 2002 aimed at reducing and ultimately eliminating the need for foodbanks appears to have had no significant impact on reducing the need for foodbanks in the five years to the end of 2007. The MSD Foodbank Strategy needs to be re-visited in consultation with the sector to jointly develop a set of actions that can actually achieve a significant reduction in the need for foodbanks.

Over many years community agencies have been calling for changes to reduce the need for foodbanks because in a country such as New Zealand they should not be necessary. Foodbanks are an indicator of intense hardship, because many people experiencing food poverty do not access a foodbank unless they have exhausted, or have been turned away from other forms of help and are desperate or courageous enough to ask for assistance.

Although often difficult to set exact measures for, poverty affects all aspects of peoples' lives. An increase in the proportion of working people using foodbanks indicates that the Government strategy to move people from benefits into employment has not significantly impacted on food poverty. Foodbanks are part of the welfare landscape of New Zealand and their elimination requires the concerted action of both government agencies and non-government organisations.

Strategies to reduce poverty must recognise the wider stress and distress that financial hardship creates, including the lack of confidence to engage with any system to access needed help. A holistic policy perspective that encompasses the *value* of social well being and social functioning for the good of the whole community is needed. This approach needs to be mindful of environmental factors contributing to the disparities across our communities and use resources intentionally to redress injustice.



## APPENDIX A – Foodbank Summaries, Observed Trends & Patterns

Hamilton 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter 2004 and 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007 Comparative Analysis			
	Q 4 2004	Q 4 2007	% change
<b>FOODBANK PROFILE</b>			
Average Number of applicants per month	122	116	-5%
Number of applicants completing survey	367	348	-5%
Total Number of people assisted / living in same residence	1390	1264	-9%
% of respondents visiting foodbank more than once during quarter	31%	14%	-56%
<b>DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE</b>			
% of respondents who are sole parents	48%	38%	-20%
% of respondents who are single	21%	19%	-6%
% of respondents who are female	73%	69%	-6%
% female and sole parent	NA	27%	
% of respondent households with children	73%	71%	-2%
% of respondents aged 25-39 years old	52%	49%	-6%
% of Pakeha respondents	25%	33%	32%
% of Pacific Island respondents	3%	5%	55%
% of Maori respondents	67%	56%	-16%
<b>INCOME</b>			
Median Household Net Income	\$299	\$334	12%
Median Household Income Less Median Housing Costs	\$179	\$169	-6%
% respondent households that receive income solely from benefits	85%	84%	-1%
<b>HOUSING</b>			
% of respondents in private rental housing	42%	49%	15%
% of respondents in state housing	43%	35%	-19%
Median housing cost (all sizes)	\$120	\$165	38%
% of respondents spending more than 30% of their income on housing	74%	73%	-1%
% of respondents spending more than 50% of their income on housing	39%	47%	21%
% of applicants not up to date with housing payments	16%	18%	12%
% of respondents living in accommodation where there are more than 2 people per bedroom	12%	15%	20%
% of applicants that had moved more than once over the past two years	36%	67%	87%
% of respondents living in temporary situation	2%	2%	8%
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>			
% of households that receive only wage income	8%	10%	25%
% of households that receive some wage income	15%	16%	7%
% of employed on casual or part-time basis	10% (3 of 29)	38% (13 of 34)	282%
% of unemployed & seeking work, unemployed for more than 6 months	76% (107 of 141)	67% (84 of 126)	-12%
<b>DEBT</b>			
% of applicants in debt	77%	89%	16%
% of applicants in debt to Work & Income	63%	71%	12%
Number of clients paying over \$40/w to Work & Income	25	22	-12%
% of applicants in arrears on utility bills	31%	6%	-79%
% of applicants in arrears with electricity bill	22%	25%	14%
% of applicants without phone in house	34%	46%	36%

NA - Not Available

## HAMILTON COMBINED CHRISTIAN FOODBANK

### Foodbank Profile

The Hamilton Combined Christian Foodbank is a Trust made up of agencies spanning several denominations. Clients request food parcels through one of several Christian social service agencies located around the city. Each agency is distinct, providing a range of services for their clients. Food parcels are delivered to the agency for the client to pick up there.

- there has been a 5% decline in the number of applicants per month to this foodbank in quarter 4 2007 compared to quarter 4 2004.
- Less people have visited the foodbank more than once in the quarter compared with quarter 4 2004.

### Demographic profile

- at 19% single people continue to be a significant household type using the foodbank.
- nearly 70% of clients are female.
- 71% of households had dependent children, similar to Quarter 4 2004.
- The majority of clients continue to be in the age range of 25 to 39 years of age.
- There has been a movement of around 10% in ethnic mix visiting the foodbank with more Pakeha respondents, 33% in Quarter 4 2007 (compared to 25% in Quarter 4 2004) and less Maori respondents, 56% in Quarter 4 2007 (compared to 67% in Quarter 4 2004).

### Income

- There has been a 12% increase in the median net income of the foodbank's clients since Quarter 4 2004. Despite this, the median disposable net income has declined 6% from \$179 in Quarter 4 2004, to \$169 in Quarter 4 2007
- 84% of respondent households received income solely from benefits, slightly less than in Quarter 4 2004.

### Housing

- The percentage of respondents accommodated in private rental housing grew 15% to 49% for Quarter 4 2007 compared to Quarter 4 2004.
- State housing tenants who were foodbank respondents dropped 19% from Quarter 4 2004.
- In the comparison period Quarter 4 2004 to Quarter 4 2007, 73%-74% of respondents have consistently spent more than 30% of their net income on housing. By Quarter 4 2007, 47% were spending more than 50% of their net income on housing.
- In Quarter 4 2007, the proportion of clients in arrears on their housing payments was 18%. This had increased from 16% in Quarter 4 2004.
- There has been a 20% increase in the number of clients experiencing space pressure with 15% living in accommodation where there were more than two people per bedroom.

- 
- Since Quarter 4 2004, there has been a large increase in the transitory nature of respondents accommodation with 67% of clients having moved more than once over the past two years.

### **Employment**

- 10% of households in Quarter 4 2007 received only wage income, a growth of a quarter from Quarter 4 2004.
- There has been a large increase in the number of respondents employed on a casual or part-time basis. In Quarter 4 2004 this was 10% of respondents but for Quarter 4 2007 this had grown to 31%.
- Of the foodbank respondents, long term unemployed had dropped from 76% in Quarter 4 2004 to 67% in Quarter 4 2007.

### **Debt and Arrears**

- The percentage of applicants in debt had grown from 77% in Quarter 4 2004 to 89% in Quarter 4 2007 (a percentage increase of 16%).
- The percentage of respondents in debt to Work & Income had also grown from 63% to 71%.
- A significant number of respondents made debt repayments to Work & Income in excess of \$40 per week (25 people in Quarter 4 2004 and 22 people in Quarter 4 2007).
- 25% of respondents were behind in paying their power bills and 46% were without a phone in their house at Quarter 4 2007.

**Presbyterian Support Otago Foodbank 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2004 & 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007  
Comparative Analysis**

	Quarter 4 2004	Quarter 4 2007	% change
<b>USE PROFILE</b>			
Average Number of applicants per month	132	145	10%
Number of applicants completing survey	397	435	10%
Total Number of People Assisted / living in same residence	948	1017	7%
% of respondents visiting foodbank more than once during quarter	35%	45%	27%
<b>DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE</b>			
% of respondents who are sole parents	25%	30%	21%
% of respondents who are single	35%	39%	11%
% of respondents who are female	61%	56%	-8%
% female and sole parent	NA	19%	
% of respondent households with children	49%	48%	-3%
% of respondents aged 25-39	43%	39%	-9%
% of Pakeha respondents	81%	75%	-7%
% of Pacific Island respondents	2%	2%	0%
% of Maori respondents	14%	20%	37%
<b>INCOME</b>			
Median Household Net Income	\$280	\$300	7%
Median Household Income Less Median Housing Costs	\$166	\$180	9%
% respondent households that receive income solely from benefits	67%	73%	9%
<b>HOUSING</b>			
% of respondents in private rental housing	52%	53%	2%
% of respondents in state housing	18%	15%	-15%
Median housing cost (all sizes)	\$115	\$120	5%
% of respondents spending more than 30% of their income on housing	69%	75%	9%
% of respondents spending more than 50% of their income on housing	32%	38%	19%
% applicants not up to date with housing payments	45%	40%	-11%
% of respondents living in accommodation where there are more than 2 people per bedroom	2%	3%	27%
% of applicants that had moved more than once over the past two years	38%	40%	4%
% of respondents living in temporary situation	3%	9%	211%
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>			
% of households that receive only wage income	12%	10%	-17%
% of households that receive some wage income	33%	27%	-18%
% of employed on casual or part-time basis	10%	24%	144%
	(11 of 114)	(28 of 119)	
% of unemployed & seeking work, unemployed for more than 6 months	60%	66%	11%
	(60 of 100)	(63 of 95)	
<b>DEBT</b>			
% of applicants in debt	68%	68%	0%
% of applicants in debt to Work & Income	57%	35%	-38%
Number of clients paying over \$40/w to Work & Income	8	10	25%
% of applicants in arrears on utility bills	28%	2%	-91%
% of applicants in arrears with electricity bill	21%	50%	138%
% of applicants without phone in their house	8%	17%	112%

NA - Not Available

## **PRESBYTERIAN SUPPORT OTAGO DUNEDIN FOODBANK**

### **Foodbank profile**

Presbyterian Support Otago operates a foodbank and community welfare service from the Cameron Centre in Dunedin. In addition, a free advocacy service provides advice and support for clients in their dealings with Work and Income and other organisations. Budget advice is also offered free of charge by staff.

- In Quarter 4 2007 there has been a 10% increase in the number of applicants per month using this foodbank compared to Quarter 4 2004.
- 45% of respondents used the foodbank more than once during the Quarter

### **Demographic profile**

There has been little change in the demographic makeup of clients using Presbyterian Support Otago foodbank. These characteristics are:

- 30% of clients are sole parents
- 39% are single
- 56% of clients are female
- about 50% of clients are in households with dependent children
- 75% are of Pakeha ethnicity.
- There has been an increase in the number of Maori respondents (from 14% in Quarter 4 2004 to 20% in Quarter 4 2007).

### **Income**

- The median household net income has increased from \$280 in Quarter 4 2004 to \$300 in Quarter 4 2007, a 7% increase.
- Disposable net income (that is, median household net income less median housing cost) has increased from \$166 in Quarter 4 2004 to \$180 in Quarter 4 2007.
- The proportion of clients for whom a benefit is the only source of income has increased 9% over the comparison period.

### **Housing**

- The number of clients in private rental accommodation has remained consistent from Quarter 4 2004 to Quarter 4 2007 at just over 50%. Clients accommodated in state housing has declined over this time.

### **Employment**

- Consistent with Quarter 4 2004, 10% of households receive only wage income.
- Foodbank recipients employed on a casual or part-time basis was 10% in Quarter 4 2004 and has grown to 24% in Quarter 4 2007. This reflects a similar trend to the Hamilton foodbank.

- The majority of clients who are unemployed, and are looking for work, have been unemployed for more than 6 months. Long term unemployed (more than 6 months) has risen from 60% in Quarter 4 2004 to 66% in Quarter 4 2007.

### **Debt and Arrears**

- The majority of Presbyterian Support Otago foodbank clients are in debt. 68% of applicants recorded having debt in Quarter 4 2007 which is consistent with the level of indebtedness recorded in Quarter 4 2004.
- The number of respondents in debt to Work & Income has declined to 35% in Quarter 4 2007 compared to 57% in Quarter 4 2004.
- 10 clients make higher than \$40 weekly debt repayments to Work & Income in Quarter 4 2007 which is consistent with the number of clients repaying this amount in Quarter 4 2004.
- 50% of clients are in arrears with their electricity bill in Quarter 4 2007 which has risen from 21% in Quarter 4 2004.
- 17% of clients had no phone in their house in Quarter 4 2007 compared with 8% in Quarter 4 2004.



**Invercargill Foodbank 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2004 and 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007  
Comparative Analysis**

	Quarter 4 2004	Quarter 4 2007	% change
<b>USE PROFILE</b>			
<i>Average Number of applicants per month</i>	26	28	8%
<i>Number of applicants completing survey</i>	77	84	9%
<i>Total Number of people assisted / living in same residence</i>	192	224	17%
<i>% of respondents visiting foodbank more than once during quarter</i>	0%	5%	
<b>DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE</b>			
<i>% of respondents who are sole parents</i>	43%	39%	-9%
<i>% of respondents who are single</i>	34%	36%	5%
<i>% of respondents who are female</i>	77%	61%	-21%
<i>female and sole parent</i>	NA	35%	
<i>% of respondent households with children</i>	57%	67%	17%
<i>% of respondents aged 25-39</i>	48%	65%	36%
<i>% of Pakeha respondents</i>	84%	65%	-22%
<i>% of Pacific Island respondents</i>	0%	4%	
<i>% of Maori respondents</i>	14%	29%	104%
<b>INCOME</b>			
<i>Median Household Net Income</i>	\$320	\$375	17%
<i>Median Household Income Less Median Housing Costs</i>	\$180	\$211	17%
<i>% respondent households that receive income solely from benefits</i>	87%	70%	-19%
<b>HOUSING</b>			
<i>% of respondents in private rental housing</i>	71%	69%	-3%
<i>% of respondents in state housing</i>	6%	14%	138%
<i>Median housing cost (all sizes)</i>	\$140	\$164	17%
<i>% of respondents spending more than 30% of their income on housing</i>	86%	79%	-8%
<i>% of respondents spending more than 50% of their income on housing</i>	36%	29%	-20%
<i>% of applicants not up to date with housing payments</i>	6%	11%	79%
<i>% of respondents living in accommodation where there are more than 2 people per bedroom</i>	1%	1%	19%
<i>% of applicants that had moved more than once over the past two years</i>	39%	18%	-54%
<i>% of respondents living in temporary situation</i>	0%	1%	
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>			
<i>% of households that receive only wage income</i>	4%	19%	376%
<i>% of households that receive some wage income</i>	13%	29%	120%
<i>% of employed on casual or part-time basis</i>	0% (0 of 7)	27% (4 of 15)	
<i>% of unemployed &amp; seeking work, unemployed for more than 6 months</i>	68% (13 of 19)	68% (15 of 22)	0%
<b>DEBT</b>			
<i>% of applicants in debt</i>	74%	71%	-3%
<i>% of applicants in debt to Work &amp; Income</i>	68%	46%	-32%
<i>Number of clients paying over \$40/w to Work &amp; Income</i>	3	3	0%
<i>% of applicants in arrears on utility bills</i>	10%	0%	
<i>% of applicants in arrears with electricity bill</i>	9%	18%	98%
<i>% of applicants without phone in their house</i>	51%	31%	-39%

NA - Not Available

## **SOUTHLAND FOODBANK INVERCARGILL**

### **Foodbank profile**

The Southland foodbank is situated in Invercargill and provides food parcels for people in the Southland region. Clients are referred to the foodbank from local social services agencies.

- 28 households used the foodbank monthly in Quarter 4 2007 compared with 26 in Quarter 4 2004.
- Only 5% of recipients visited the foodbank more than once during the quarter.

### **Demographic profile**

- 39% of respondents were sole parents in Quarter 4 2007.
- 36% of respondents were single households in Quarter 4 2007 which has remained consistent with Quarter 4 2004.
- Most respondents (61%) were female in Quarter 4 2007 although this has declined from 77% in Quarter 4 2004.
- 67% of households had dependent children Quarter 4 2007 which was an increase from Quarter 4 2004.
- The number of households with respondents in the age range 25-39 has increased from 48% in Quarter 4 2004 to 65% in Quarter 4 2007.
- Respondents of Maori ethnicity have increased from 14% in Quarter 4 2004 to 29% in Quarter 4 2007. At the same time, respondents of Pakeha ethnicity have declined from 84% to 65%.

### **Income**

- Median net income of clients using the food bank has increased 17% from \$320 in Quarter 4 2004 to \$375 in Quarter 4 2007.
- Foodbank recipients deriving their income solely from benefits has declined from 87% in Quarter 4 2004 to 70% in Quarter 4 2007.

### **Housing**

- The number of respondent households in private rental accommodation has remained consistent at 69% in Quarter 4 2007.
- Clients in state housing has increased from 6% in Quarter 4 2004 to 14% in Quarter 4 2007.
- Median house costs have risen 17% from \$140 in Quarter 4 2004 to \$164 in Quarter 4 2007.
- The number of clients spending over 50% of their income on housing has declined from Quarter 4 2004.
- 11% of applicants are not up to date with their housing costs compared to 6% in Quarter 4 2004.
- The number of foodbank recipients that have moved more than once over the past two years has declined from 39% in Quarter 4 2004 to 18% in Quarter 4 2007.

- Very few Southland foodbank clients are in overcrowded living situations or temporary accommodation.

### **Employment**

- There has been significant growth in the number of foodbank client households that received only wage income from 4% in Quarter 4 2004 to 19% in Quarter 4 2007.
- Zero respondents were employed on a casual or part-time basis in Quarter 4 2004 while 4 respondents are employed on this basis in Quarter 4 2007.
- 15 respondents who were unemployed and seeking work in Quarter 4 2007 had been unemployed for six months or more.

### **Debt and Arrears**

- The majority of food bank clients are in debt. This has remained consistent at around 70% from Quarter 4 2004 to Quarter 4 2007.
- Very few clients have debt repayments to Work & Income over \$40 per week.
- The percentage of respondents in arrears on electricity bills increased from 9% in Quarter 4 2004 to 18% in Quarter 4 2007.
- The number of households without a telephone in their house declined from 51% in Quarter 4 2004 to 31% in Quarter 4 2007. Nonetheless, this is still close to one third of households that were without a phone.

## APPENDIX B – Salvation Army Data

<i>Salvation Army Manukau Foodbank Quarter 4 2004 &amp; Quarter 4 2007 Comparative Analysis</i>		
	Quarter 4 2004	Quarter 4 2007
<b>USE PROFILE</b>		
<i>Average Number of applicants per month</i>	92*	327
<i>Number of food parcels distributed during the quarter</i>	765**	980
<i>Total Number of people assisted / living in same residence</i>	1368*	3148
<i>% of respondents visiting foodbank more than once during quarter</i>	48%	47%
<b>DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE</b>		
<i>% of respondents who are sole parents</i>	43%	42%
<i>% of respondents who are single</i>	17%	24%
<i>% of respondents who are female</i>	72%	71%
<i>% female and sole parent</i>		36%
<i>% of respondent households with children</i>	78%	60%
<i>% of respondents aged 25-39</i>	62%	NA
<i>% of Pakeha respondents</i>	5%	17%
<i>% of Pacific Island respondents</i>	32%	22%
<i>% of Maori respondents</i>	61%	51%
<b>INCOME</b>		
<i>Median Household Net Income</i>	\$283	NA
<i>Median Household Income Less Median Housing Costs</i>	\$118	NA
<i>% respondent households that receive income solely from benefits</i>	83%	83%
<b>HOUSING</b>		
<i>% of respondents in private rental housing</i>	43%	44%
<i>% of respondents in state housing</i>	45%	30%
<i>Median housing cost (all sizes)</i>	\$165	NA
<i>% of respondents spending more than 30% of their income on housing</i>	86%	NA
<i>% of respondents spending more than 50% of their income on housing</i>	58%	NA
<i>% of applicants not up to date with housing payments</i>	29%	NA
<i>% of respondents living in accommodation where there are more than 2 people per bedroom</i>	17%	NA
<i>% of applicants that had moved more than once over the past two years</i>	43%	NA
<i>% of respondents living in temporary situation</i>	3%	NA
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>		
<i>% of households that receive only wage income</i>	6%	9%
<i>% of households that receive some wage income</i>	17%	NA
<i>% of employed on casual or part-time basis</i>	17%	NA
<i>% of unemployed &amp; seeking work, unemployed for more than 6 months</i>	83%	NA
<b>DEBT</b>		
<i>% of applicants in debt</i>	84%	NA
<i>% of applicants in debt to WINZ</i>	74%	NA
<i>Number of clients paying over \$40/w to WINZ</i>	11	NA
<i>% of applicants in arrears on utility bills</i>	26%	NA
<i>% of applicants in arrears with electricity bill</i>	18%	NA
<i>Number without phone in their house</i>	57%	NA

NA - Not Available

\*2004 figure a sample only \*\*Figures supplied as comparison with 2007 Salvation Army national data

## **SALVATION ARMY MANUKAU CITY COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SERVICES**

### **Foodbank profile**

Salvation Army Manukau City Community and Family Services operate a foodbank in conjunction with a range of other social services. Clients who request a food parcel are interviewed to ascertain their situation and needs and are referred to the agency's budget services. Due to limitations on their resources, this foodbank sampled clients for the 2004 PIP Project. In 2007 the Manukau foodbank continued to contribute a more limited set of data to the Salvation Army national database and it is these figures that are used in the analysis below.

- A comparison of the average number of recipients per month and the total number of people assisted during the quarter is not possible between 2004 & 2007. However, based on comparisons supplied by the Salvation Army from their national data, the number of food parcel recipients over the whole quarter increased by 28% between 2004 and 2007.
- The percentage of recipients visiting foodbanks more than once during the quarter has stayed consistent at 47% for Quarter 4 2007.

### **Demographic profile**

- Consistent with 2004 there is a high proportion of sole parents, women and households with children at levels that are consistent with the other foodbanks surveyed.
- However, there has been some change in the demographic makeup of clients using this foodbank, with an almost 50% increase in the number of single people accessing the foodbank
- The proportion of Pakeha has increased more than threefold while there has been a reduction in the number of Pacific and Maori accessing this foodbank. This trend is contrary to what is observed in the other foodbanks and the reasons for this are not clear.

### **Income**

- The proportion of clients for whom a benefit is the only source of income has remained consistent at 83% for Quarter 4 2007, the highest rate of all the foodbanks covered in this study.

### **Housing**

- 44% of recipients had private rental accommodation at Quarter 4 2007. This proportion has not changed significantly since 2004 (43%).
- The number of recipients accommodated in state housing has declined significantly from 45% in Quarter 4 2004 to 30% for Quarter 4 2007.

### **Employment**

- 9% of households receive wage only income in Quarter 4 2007, an increase from 6% in 2004 and consistent with the trends shown in other foodbanks.

## **SALVATION ARMY NATIONAL DATABASE OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

The national Salvation Army data can provide only a limited basis for analysis, given that 2004 comparisons are not available. In the areas where comparisons are possible, the national data from the Salvation Army, representing a very large cross-section of foodbanks, gives support to the analysis and conclusions made from the smaller NZCCSS survey data.

- There are a total of 37 foodbanks nationwide that are part of the Salvation Army network. In the December 2007 quarter they distributed just over 5,000 thousand food parcels to households supporting nearly 15,000 people.
- On average across the country just over half of recipients visited the foodbanks more than once in the three months to December 2007

### **Demographic profile**

- At 37% nationally, the proportion of sole parents accessing the foodbanks is consistent with patterns through the other foodbanks surveyed.
- As with other foodbanks surveyed, just over half of the households assisted contained children (54%).

### **Income**

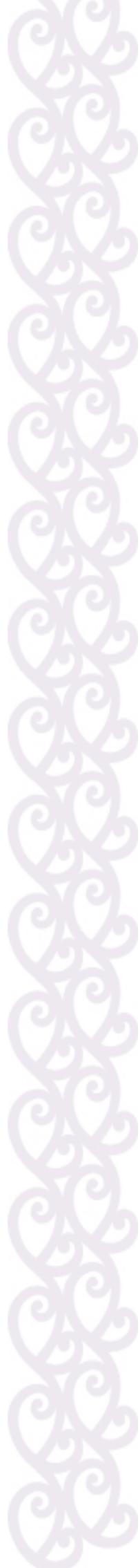
- Nationally 70% of foodbank clients receive income solely from benefits, a proportion in line with the evidence from other sources.

### **Housing**

- At 49% the proportion of foodbank clients living in private rental housing is consistent with the Manukau data (49%) and with the other foodbanks, where around half or more are in private rental housing.

### **Employment**

- At 9%, the proportion of households with only wage income is similar although slightly lower to other foodbanks.



Salvation Army National Database of Service Delivery Quarter 4 2007

	Quarter 4 2007
<b>USE PROFILE</b>	
<i>Average Number of recipients per month</i>	1670
<i>Number of food parcels distributed during quarter</i>	5011
<i>Total Number of people assisted / living in same residence</i>	14977
<i>% of respondents visiting foodbank more than once during quarter</i>	54%
<b>DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE</b>	
<i>% of respondents who are sole parents</i>	37%
<i>% of respondents who are single</i>	30%
<i>% of respondents who are female</i>	66%
<i>% of respondents who are female and sole parent</i>	32%
<i>% of respondent households with children</i>	55%
<i>% of Pakeha respondents</i>	36%
<i>% of Pacific Island respondents</i>	10%
<i>% of Maori respondents</i>	42%
<b>INCOME</b>	
<i>% respondent households that receive income solely from benefits</i>	70%
<b>HOUSING</b>	
<i>% of respondents in private rental housing</i>	49%
<i>% of respondents in state housing</i>	23%
<i>% of applicants that had moved more than once over the past two years</i>	27%
<i>% of respondents living in temporary situation</i>	1%
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>	
<i>% of households that receive wage only income</i>	9%
<i>% of households that receive only part-time wage income</i>	2%

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***Hamilton Combined Christian Foodbank***

***Salvation Army National Headquarters and Salvation Army***

***Manukau***

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**About NZCCSS****Our Membership**

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) is an umbrella organisation with membership comprising the six mainstream Christian church social services agencies across New Zealand, namely Catholic Social Services, Presbyterian Support New Zealand, the Anglican Care Network, Baptist Union of New Zealand, the Methodist Church of New Zealand and the Salvation Army.

**Our Mission**

NZCCSS works for a just and compassionate society in Aotearoa New Zealand. Recognising that we live in inter-dependence with one another, NZCCSS seeks to measure the well-being of the most vulnerable amongst us to gauge the well-being of our whole society.

**Our Structure and Key Work Areas**

NZCCSS is governed by a national Council made up of two representatives from each denomination. A small Secretariat team, headed by the Executive Officer, carries out the day-to-day work of the Council. This includes information gathering, research on social services and building relationships with government officials. The majority of NZCCSS work comes under three main policy areas:

- Poverty and housing
- Children, young people and families
- Services for older people

A policy group oversees the policy and research work that NZCCSS does in each of these areas. Each Policy Group is made up of at least two council representatives plus social services managers, academics or others with particular expertise in that area.

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New Zealand Council Of  
Christian Social Services