

The newsletter of the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services

Telling the stories of those on the margins

ADAM JAMES RING

One of the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services' aims is to give priority to the poor and vulnerable members of our society. Since our beginnings, we have sought to connect policy with reality, to translate data into a meaningful dialogue with our members and communities.

When we started the *Vulnerability Report* in June 2009, we were responding to what we saw was a growing need among our communities for meaningful and accurate information on the problems facing the poor and vulnerable. With an increasing number of New Zealanders living in poverty and hardship, our aim was to provide the most up to date and accurate information we could gather, accessed from government and community organisations, and in partnership with the Christian agencies of our members.

By placing this information in the wider economic context, we discovered that, more than just diagnose the problem, the data *told a story* of hardship previously unclear or hidden from view. In essence, the trends and statistics of hardship, once collated and interpreted, painted the truest picture of hardship.

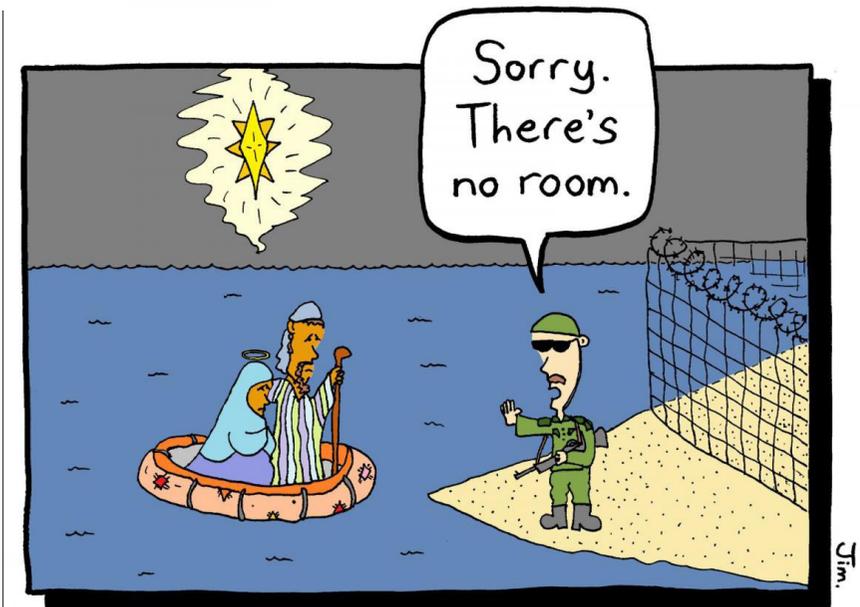
Settling into a theme of sorts, each report featured statistics and trends on a variety of key elements and areas within the community. We looked at the measurable effects of hardship in housing – including

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Happy Christmas everyone!

E ngā kaihāpai i ō tātou kaumātua, i ō tatou whānau rawakore huri noa i ngā motu, nei rā te mihi nui ki a koutou mā i te wā Kirihimete kei te haere. Mā te Atua koutou e tiaki. To those who support our older people, our families in need, Christmas greetings to you all. May God protect and bless you. The NZCCSS office will be closed from 24 December 2015 to 8 January 2016.

emergency and council-house waiting lists – Work and Income benefits and hardship grants, food bank usage, as well as Child Youth and Family figures.

Still in the tail end of the economic recession, the effects of poverty and

hardship upon the community was significant in 2009. Essential living costs were on the rise, as was unemployment, and our members reported a significant spike in many community help programmes. Food banks were running out of food

TELLING THE STORIES OF THOSE ON THE MARGINS

quicker than previously, emergency housing was overstretched and families were struggling to survive on less.

Over subsequent editions of our quarterly report, we saw hardship effecting a new part of our society. Poverty was no longer restricted to low-wage earners or beneficiaries, now middle and working-class families were struggling also. The effects of the recession lingered for many New Zealanders, especially those most vulnerable, and the statistical trends pointed to a deep and worrying low.

What started as an experiment in data collection and collation, quickly came to represent a tangible and keenly felt duty to both our members and to the people of Aotearoa. As we worked with our Christian members,

agencies and the wider community, we laboured under a unifying aim – a just and compassionate society seen through the example and teachings of Christ.

Looking back now over the 21 editions of the *Vulnerability Report*, the statistics do more than diagnose a problem – they tell a story.

With global economic recovery stalling and the terrible tragedy of the Christchurch earthquake, the data highlighted with stark clarity how much our mutual survival and wellbeing hinged on the strength of our togetherness. And as our country moved through a slow economic recovery and a Christchurch rebuild

plagued with problems, we saw again how the most vulnerable of our communities suffered worst of all.

The data showed too how our society was failing the young and Māori in our country. The ravages of

inequality and hardship took its toll, especially on our children, with one in six Pākeha and one in three Māori children living in poverty by mid-2011. In every area and agency of care and support, our members and wider community groups reported of significant pressure-points in community assistance agencies and charities, overburdened as more and more people sought help.

The trends spoke of a large increase in the core services of our members, with some reporting up to a 60% spike in community interventions, including budgeting services, counselling and emergency housing.

The unemployment rate hit a ten year high in 2010, as jobs were harder to come by. Homelessness was steadily on the rise, the worrying signs and symptoms there to see with the Night Shelter and other community services reporting high demand among a climate of increasing median house prices. In the two years leading up to September 2010, the number of people needing hardship assistance had grown by 50%.

Between the years 2009 to 2011, the numbers of people on the unemployment benefit increased by 120%. A significant and troubling sign of a financial and social economy unable

Child Poverty in 1984 was 15% TODAY IS 29%

#itsnotchoice CHILD POVERTY MONITOR

to recover. This could also be seen in the amount of debt we collectively owed, and while this began to decline by 2011, many families with low incomes struggled under the weight of unresolved debt.

Though rents were consistently rising across the country, Government housing assistance by 2012 was on the decline. GST and essential living costs were increasing, while wages and benefits stayed largely stagnant, or increased only by small amounts.

Now in 2015, we still face many of the same problems. Some have improved, some have stayed largely

the same. But the value of what our members provide to the community is beyond question. Christ shows us the way but we must do the work. As the Russian proverb says, “If you pray for a hole make sure you bring a shovel”.

The next *Vulnerability Report*, in early 2016 will be the last one in the current format. We are working with our member organisations to develop a new approach to the data and stories from our networks and look forward to sharing this later in 2016. ■

VULNERABILITY REPORT March 2015 (July 2013)

Building Hope for Better Lives Together

Budget 2015, Better Public Service Targets, The Community Investment Strategy and the Vulnerability Commission work on more effective social services provide the backdrop to the 21st edition of the *Vulnerability Report*. There is a lot of change pending across the social services sector in terms of how and what services are funded, and who will have access to those services. In the face of these changes, the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services remains steadfast in its mission to create a just, compassionate and hope-filled society.

The *Vulnerability Report* action brings together official government data and feedback from our social service agencies. The aim of the report is to re-connect public and policy to the real life experiences of poor and vulnerable people, so we can hope the insights in this report will inform the development of compassionate policy that support all New Zealanders to live a meaningful and dignified life. The 21st edition covers March 2015. Some data collated in April/May 2015 has also been included where available.

Financial sanctions undermine social investment for better outcomes for vulnerable New Zealanders

The Government social investment approach underlies current public sector policy and is premised on a report by Access provided insight into the extent to which financial sanctions are applied by Work and Income Officers. Over a fourteen month period (July 2013 to September 2014) Work and Income applied a total of 15,551 sanctions to working age social benefit recipients. 13,547 of these were for non-payment of job seekers (90,455), sole parents (19,551), Supported Living (13) and other (26). Without data on the number of main benefit recipients for the same timeframe it is difficult to scope the extent of the sanctions across each benefit category but on first

More advocacy needed at WINZ / IRO on behalf of clients who often have no access to phones. Financial issues are far more complex / condition more demanding. Clients talk of needing medical attention for their comorbid stress and depression, self-harm. Children needing counselling because of tension in homes where parents unable to cope.” Presbyterian Support North

WINZ seem to be less tolerant of overstepped timelimits if clients don't respond, and stop benefits. However, understanding what is required can be very challenging to the most vulnerable clients.” Antipostern

Look the numbers appear high, particularly across job seekers and sole parents.

What we do know is the reality of a sudden reduction of an already inadequate income to cover basic life necessities (rent, electricity and food) is further debt to family, friends or third-tier money lenders. Financial

Month	Graduated	Cancelled	Total
Jobseeker	7,888	52	7,940
Supported living	39	5	44
Sole parent	7,551	0	7,551
Other	268	0	268
Total	15,511	57	15,568

Sanctions applied to working age main benefit recipients between 21 July 2013 and 30 September 2014

Social Investment Strategy *What's happening to social services funding?*

TREVOR MCGLINCHEY

The government is actively promoting the Social Investment model – spending more now so that the tax-payer will spend less in the long run – as the mechanism to justify greater spending in the social sector. This was first signalled in the Welfare Reforms where stopping people from being “welfare dependent” was the justification for greater expenditure in getting people into employment. This model has now spread out to the wider social services.

While the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) agrees that “investing” in people is sensible – we have to be careful not to take this analogy too far. Those with the most of a particular type of need, the kinds of needs that government sees as leading to a track of long-term benefit receipt or of imprisonment, can be demonstrated to be likely to give a good return on investment. The expenditure of twenty or thirty thousand dollars when the person is a child to ensure their family has the skills to support them. Along with meeting other needs, such as getting

specialist education, will help that child leave school with a formal qualification. This type of result on average is likely to result in less government support in benefit payments, in imprisonment costs and welfare supports over the lifetime of the child.

This type of equation is easy to understand. What is more difficult is understanding how supporting a family that does not meet government criteria may mean they will never end up in the place where intensive support is needed. Providing counselling, parenting support and other services to families who are not in the targeted “vulnerable group” may mean these people will never get into that category. But without that additional support they may well have. This is a much more difficult equation – yet one that should be calculated.

Government is set on reprioritising the funding it uses to support families and communities, tightly tying funding to the most vulnerable and calculating the return on investment for this group. They appear to be

planning to “reprioritise” social services funding from the less-vulnerable to the more-vulnerable. NZCCSS believes government should increase their social investment in the more vulnerable – but not at the expense of those in our communities who actively seek support so they do not find themselves in trouble. Rather than investment through reprioritisation, investment through increasing the overall funding into social services is needed.

The reprioritisation model could mean a long pipeline of families, who as a result of not being able to access support when needed, gradually find themselves becoming more and more desperate – more and more vulnerable. At which stage they will be eligible to access a much more expensive range of interventions. This is not a good investment! A real social investment is putting more into the system – not just reprioritising what you already spend.

This doesn't mean government should not seek evidence of effective delivery, of achieving outcomes

and making a change. Good quality providers should be rewarded by ongoing contracts. Providers who cannot demonstrate their effectiveness should be worked with and if still unable to prove their worth they should have their contracts cancelled. However, not providing a full range of preventative services in order to focus all resources on the most vulnerable could prove to be a very bad investment as more and more families fall through the widening gaps in the social support networks and end up needing intensive and expensive social supports. In all of this work we must also remember people are more than just economic units and only worth supporting when the return is calculated to be high enough! ■

This article was originally published on [Community Scoop](#).



Trevor McGlinchey is the executive officer at NZCCSS.



A bright spot

Lisa Woolley, CEO of VisionWest (and current NZCCSS president) has had a stellar year of recognition of her services to community development and addressing social issues.

Special congratulations go to Lisa for receiving the Outstanding Achievement Award for Professional Excellence in Housing as announced by the Australasian Housing Institute (AHI) in Perth on 28th October. This follows on from her Regional Hero Medal award in this year's Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Awards and two Westpac business leadership awards last year.

It's a privilege to work with leaders like Lisa, and to know that issues like housing are being guided with true professionalism grounded in our local communities. ■

Publications around the motu

Year in and year out, an enlivening area of our shared meeting room at NZCCSS is an ever-changing array of colourful and professionally produced newsletters and magazines received from member organisations around the country. In print and online they universally deliver heartening and uplifting forms of positive news that deserves the widest possible readership.

Commencing with this issue of *Kete Kupu* we are highlighting a selection of stories from these inspiring and informative publications – either in precis form, excerpts or fully reprinted – with a special focus on ‘frontline workers’ and social services.

Proclaim the kingdom and heal

In the Spring 2015 issue, *Taonga* editor Julianne Clark-Morrison ran a story of her visit to Nelson where she met the region’s faith community nurses and ‘sussed out’ their ministry.

Setting the scene with a story about the care being offered to an incorrigible character by the name of Dave, Julann came to the nub of what parish nurses do, in these words:

“They use their skills – social, medical, and spiritual – to help others live

more fully, starting from where they are now”.

Anglican parish nurses have worked in Aotearoa since the late 1990s, writes Julann, and while modern parish nursing is still new, she notes that its roots reach back to the times of Florence Nightingale.

One of the observations that Julann draws from her interviewees is that “in wider nursing practice a referral to the chaplain is all it takes to tick the spirituality box”, and that of all the competencies required of registered nurses not a single one mentions spiritual health. As observed by one nurse “spirituality is in the ‘too hard’ basket for most health professionals”.

That certainly isn’t the case with the nurses in Julann’s article, which goes on to profile nurses providing care in a set of evocative vignettes.

World Homeless Day Sleep Out

Changes to government social policy, housing affordability, rental increases, job access, pay equity are just some of the many issues driving growing numbers of homeless people in New Zealand.

As part of World Homeless Day, over 200 Wellingtonians slept rough on couches, under cardboard shelter or in cars overnight on Friday 9 October.

The national event aimed to raise awareness of homelessness and to support homeless charities. More than 500 people from cities around New Zealand took part raising \$70,000, almost \$60,000 of which was from Wellington – just under \$18,000 for The Soup Kitchen and \$14,000 for the Homeless Women’s Trust.

Based at St John’s Methodist Church the Wellington event was combined between The Salvation Army, Downtown Community Ministry, the Homeless Women’s Trust, the Night Shelter and The Suzanne Aubert Compassion Centre Soup Kitchen.

Participants, including Mayor Celia Wade-Brown and City Councillor Paul Eagle, met for soup and bread before visiting and hearing from staff and clients first hand at the Homeless Women’s Trust, Night Shelter, Downtown City Ministry, Soup Kitchen, the Salvation Army Caravan and City Mission.

The Soup Kitchen was started by Suzanne Aubert and the Sisters of Compassion 114 years ago and its work today, involves not only feeding homeless people, but walking the street to meet and help the people in need connect with other social services.

‘The Homeless Women’s Trust has, in two years, helped more than 64 women transform their lives,’ says Sr Catherine Hannan. After visiting the different organisations the groups met back at St John’s to discuss what they had learnt, before heading outside to sleep. Homelessness affects about one in 120 New Zealanders (Source: *Welcom* – November 2015)

Real support for the hard to reach

David Hanna

The government should be encouraged to follow a Methodist approach when dealing with hard to reach families in Aotearoa. ‘Hard to reach’ is the term government uses for those in the worst social demographics. These are people who under-achieve in education, have poor health, and are over-represented in crime, incarceration and unemployment.

The government’s social investment approach focuses on those most at risk of a lifetime of negative (and costly) outcomes.

Under this approach, it is designing programmes to help hard to reach families move in a positive direction. To do this, government agencies use statistics to identify groups who do not benefit from social investment. Significant in this group are those



PUBLICATIONS AROUND THE MOTU

termed 'hard to reach'. The term 'hard to reach' is most commonly associated with gangs. Supporting gangs is a sensitive issue for most politicians. They are reluctant to be involved with gangs because of their unlawful activity.

In 2014, the government released its gang strategy. It established a multi-agency approach that uses intelligence gathering, law enforcement, intervention, rehabilitation and reintegration to address New Zealand gangs. This strategy is limited because it connects all 'gang members' with criminal behaviour. It fails to see 'gangs' as social groupings with strong inter-generational family systems. This limits options for creative change and puts government in a bind.

The social investment approach wants to engage with 'hard to reach' communities but the gang strategy potentially alienates them.

A tough focus on crime is not the issue; that is the purpose of our police. But simply linking association with gang communities as a problem can lead to more families being split apart, more parents in prison, and more children placed at risk.

Do we really want more children in care or solo parents who depend on welfare?

Hard to reach families distrust government and 'helping' agencies.



Their common history of experiencing a lack of respect leaves them angry at the 'system'.

John Wesley focused on the hard to reach of his time. These were people who mainstream society dismissed as 'no hopers'. Wesley Community Action follows this Methodist approach.

We focus on respectful relationships. We listen to the stories of individuals and families. We support them to shape their own solutions. Our approach facilitates positive social connections and creates the environment for people to step into a new future if they chose. It is the Wesley way to harness the strength of these networks and social groups to effect positive change from within, with

some external supports. When we do this we hear of their positive aspirations for their children and their hopes for a better life.

Wesley Community Action's Rangatahi team provides support to make positive changes in the lives of hard to reach families in Wellington. Members of the Rangatahi team belong to the community that they serve. They have shared experiences and understand the stresses and realities of hard to reach people's lives, and they are passionate about supporting positive change.

They also have the professional support and guidance from the wider Wesley team. As part of the community they are trusted and respected. This enables them to look beyond surface issues.

Where another service might address an issue such as a drug use, Wesley can go further. Our team 'peel back the layers' to identify issues that support this behaviour. We encourage Minister of Social Development Anne Tolley and her Ministry to learn from our Methodist approach. By understanding that the people in 'hard to reach' communities have wisdom and expertise, they can codesign strategies that really do make a difference.

(Source: Touchstone – December 2015)

Trust supports youth transition to independence

Jade Reidy

New Zealand has the lowest state care leaving age in the English-speaking world.

While young Kiwis leave home on average at 23, vulnerable 17-year olds leaving care are expected to cope on their own, against all odds.

While a government review of Child Youth and Family Services (CYFS) may look to raise that age and increase support services, Dingwall Trust in South Auckland has already stepped up to meet this need.

Nine years ago, Dingwall Trust, formerly Dingwall Presbyterian Orphanage Trust Board, added a new programme to its existing family-style residential care for children.

Called "Care to Independence", it offers youth-led, community-based support for 15-20 year-olds. Each young person leaving care gets a personal adviser, supported boarding in a flat and other practical help to make the transition to independence.

"We started the programme because we had concerns that support was getting thinner and thinner over time," says Chief Executive Tracie Shipton.

"When we looked over Dingwall's 85-year history of stepping in where parents are unable, we have always

been a place that offered support and gives what most parents would want for their own kids – a nurturing environment."

New Zealand is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention says that anyone under 18 is a child. Dingwall, along with other social agencies, consider that ending placements at 17 is inconsistent with our obligations under the Convention.

Research from Monash University in Australia also shows that each 17-year-old who leaves state care can cost the state more than \$700,000 due to poor outcomes that include homelessness, justice and correction costs, being young parents, and long-term welfare dependence.

In New Zealand, 83 percent of prison inmates under 20 have a care and protection record with CYFS. Last year, New Zealand had 4,034 young people in care placements. That figure will rise if the care leaving age is raised to 21, as Tracie expects to happen when the CYFS review panel tables its recommendations to Government in late 2015.

Tracie sees this as a "quick win" and has other aspirational goals for vulnerable young people.

"These young people don't have the option to come home if something goes wrong. I'd like to see every young person have their first

PUBLICATIONS AROUND THE MOTU

university degree funded and be offered social housing,” she says.

“They need solid support to reduce the stigma attached to being raised in care. This prejudice affects their ability to get accommodation and employment, which are critical to independence.”

At 17, children leaving care are not eligible for Housing New Zealand homes. Once they do turn 18, they are caught in the waiting lists and are not seen as a priority group, says Care to Independence programme manager Sarah Ashton.

They fall through the gaps, with no way back and viable pathways forward, she says.

At 20 and newly graduated from the programme, Kellie now sees how vulnerable she was.

“What many young people leaving care don’t realise is that once you’re discharged you can’t go back.

“Most 17-years-olds think of the freedom and liberties that come with being independent, but fail to recognise the responsibilities and financial pressure of living independently. It escapes us whether we can feed ourselves, how we will make rent the next week, how we will afford to go to the doctors and just how alone we can end up being.”

Preparation should begin from 15 onwards, says Tracie, and be individualised according to need, as Dingwall’s Care to Independence programme is.

Despite the need for a formalised national programme, she believes that the Government is unlikely to get it right on its own. Partnering with social providers is a better recipe for success.

Last year alone, Dingwall Trust set up 18 new flats for care leavers. They were equipped through an initiative of St Kentigern Girls’ Presbyterian School, called The Sharing Shed.

Students and staff donate bedding, pots and pans, cutlery, crockery, appliances, whiteware and furniture to offset the very expensive task of setting up home.

Book review: *Wealth and New Zealand***Wealth and New Zealand**

by Max Rashbrooke
Bridget William Books (2015)
Reviewed by Adam James Ring

The Bridget Williams Books’ series of **BWB Texts** are promoted as “short books on big subjects”, and subjects certainly don’t get much bigger than those tackled in recent years by journalist and researcher Max Rashbrooke.

Two years ago Kete Kupu marked the launch of *Inequality: A New Zealand crisis*, a collaborative book supported by **Closer Together Whakatata Mai** and edited by Max, in its **September 2013 issue**. Subsequently he contributed *The Inequality Debate* to **BWB Texts** in March 2014.

The book includes excellent graphs displaying such information as the growth of the *NBR* Rich List from 1986 to this year, households’ gross savings in dollars by income quintiles, an international comparison of the share of total wealth held by the

top tenth of the population, mean value of property and other assets by income deciles, the percentage of GDP going to wages and salaries as well as New Zealand’s wealth-to-income ratio.

While poverty has largely been the focus when discussing and investigating inequality, as Rashbrooke points out, poverty is only one side of the coin. Very much its equivalent is the flipside – the largely untapped issue of ‘wealth accumulation’. Who has it, where it comes from and how it effects our society are important factors in the overall inequality debate.

The book interrogates housing (particularly in Auckland) and its impact on wealth and inequality, as well as the geographical distribution of wealth, the uncertain relationship between philanthropy and social wellbeing and how New Zealand compares in the wealth stakes with other countries. It also provides what the publisher calls “arresting descriptions” of the problems accompanying high wealth and inequality and wide income gaps, and floats some policy responses that can be roughly grouped into five areas; namely:

1. Reducing income imbalances
2. Narrowing the initial distribution of wealth
3. Using tax and endowments to further close the gap
4. Taking the heat out of housing
5. Building a more democratic society

This publishing series by **BWB** – commissioned as short digital-first or e-reader works – is certainly unlocking diverse stories, insights and analysis. There are already some 40 titles, with a schedule for another 16 in place for 2016. ■



Wise heads on wealth and inequality

STEPHEN OLSEN, NZCCSS MEDIA ADVISOR

London School of Economics professor Robert Wade and journalist Max Rashbrooke make for a formidable pairing when it comes to framing essential questions about wealth and inequality.

The two combined to give a public talk on 26 November to a packed auditorium at the Royal Society of New Zealand in Wellington.

Structured around opening addresses, followed by a round of questions and answers facilitated by economist Geoff Bertram, the evening brought some excellent clarity to a range of complex issues that impact, one way or another, on all aspects of society.

For his opening turn at the dias, Rashbrooke began with a reference

to the response his new book *Wealth And New Zealand*, subtitled ‘We can understand poverty only by understanding affluence’, had been garnering.

Earlier that week he had written about its reception for [the Guardian](#), noting first of all that the core of the book is straightforward information: new data showing that the wealthiest 10th of New Zealanders own more than half of all assets, while the poorest 50% have just 4%.

“My book fires no angry salvos at the affluent, calls no-one to the barricades,” he wrote. “So I was a little surprised to find that only a couple of days after my book’s launch, I was described on social media as ‘consumed by hatred’. Others labelled me a ‘dangerous communist’ and a ‘depressive leftie.’”

Rashbrooke conceded that some people simply find any focus on wealth and the wealthy unsettling – or as the book’s publisher Bridget William Books put it in a promotional flyer, “It is almost as if talking about wealth – really talking about it – is one of our last great taboos.”

Rashbrooke: “Most of the talk to date about ‘inequality’ has actually been about poverty, the problem of the poorest families falling behind the middle. Inequality is also about

the most affluent households pulling away from the rest”.

A fond user of metaphors, Rashbrooke spoke about the distribution of wealth in terms of it being a 10 storey building.

In New Zealand the top two floors of that building would be owned solely by the wealthiest 1%.

He also said that focusing just on poverty within the debate on inequality is similar to just seeing one half or the downside of a seesaw.

If you’re at the ‘bottom end’ then your income (flowing like a river) isn’t going to accumulate into enough personal wealth sufficient to open up opportunities, or provide security in tough times, or give you something to borrow against, or act as a basis to foster a larger stake in society from.

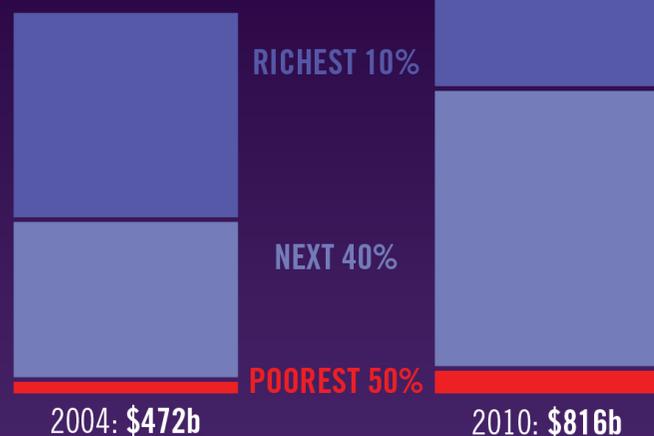
Another favourite Rashbrooke metaphor is that wealth is like a reservoir, and, mixing metaphors, the wealthy have only become wealthy by drawing on a common pool of resources. A common pool that includes “driving on roads we all paid for, passing information through government-funded communication

networks, employing a workforce educated at everyone’s expense”.

Robert Wade applied a much larger lens to shifts in macroeconomic settings that have, in a contradictory way, had the consequence of flattening economic growth across the OECD, while a more regressive tax system has accompanied less progressive social protection spending. Basically a road to living within our means, along which Governments “shrink away from disaffecting the wealthy” and the middle class keeps showing a high tolerance for austerity.

Wade called it a “trap” to be fixated on taxation, or taking away wealth, as a silver bullet for reducing inequalities. Instead of redistribution of wealth, he favours predistribution,

New Zealand’s net worth almost doubled between 2004 & 2010. Here’s how we divvied it up...



CLOSER TOGETHER
WHAKATATA MAI
REDUCING INEQUALITIES

In a more equal New Zealand we'll ALL be better off



Professor Robert Wade and Max Rashbrooke.

WISE HEADS ON WEALTH AND INEQUALITY

or “not giving it to them in the first place”. He later went on to describe the most recent economic crisis not as a credit crisis, but as an “underlying wage crisis”.

Other contributing factors to being on the verge of Victorian-style levels of inequality that surfaced during the Q&A session were the decline of unions and the omission of the finance sector in macroeconomic modeling despite that sector’s dominance.

Most importantly this was an opportunity to, in Max Rashbrooke’s words, “discuss these issues, calmly and rationally, because we are seeing patterns of wealth which we struggle to understand”.

“If we can’t talk about these issues, we have little chance of knowing how to respond to them – and we will become ever more isolated from the growing international debate on wealth. For either of those things to happen would leave New Zealand all the poorer”. ■

See page 6 for a brief review of *Wealth and New Zealand*.

Alternatives to pokie money needed

PAUL BARBER

NZCCSS was among thirty groups that provided comments on the proposed changes to pokie machine (Class 4 gambling) gambling rules. Most of the submissions came from pokie trusts, with only a handful from other individuals or organisations. With the lack of publicity and short time-frame for comments, this is probably not surprising.

Pokie machine trusts are at risk of abuse and manipulation because of the vast amounts of cash involved. Proceeds that could be distributed back to communities could end up going into the pockets of operators and others who make very good money out of the industry. Risks include operators artificially inflating their running costs as well as paying unnecessarily high salaries and fees to their executives and boards. It takes a huge amount of policing of the industry by the Department of Internal Affairs to try and keep the sector under control. A recent ‘mystery shopper’ check done by the Department demonstrated that all but one of 102 gambling venues visited failed to respond appropriately to obvious problem gambling behaviour, which shows how difficult it is

to ensure that the gambling sector behaves responsibly.

It was a real step forward last year when stricter rules were introduced requiring a higher proportion of pokie machine proceeds to be returned as grants into the communities where the money is lost on gambling. The new rules required from September last year an increase the minimum rate of return to the community from 37.12% to 40%, increasing again next year to 41% and in 2018 to 42%. Barely a year into the new process, Minister Peter Dunne announced an about face and sought feedback of on reducing the rates required. This was prompted by concerns about possible reduced profits for pokie trusts meaning they have less to distribute to the community. The consultation document supporting the proposals did not produce any evidence for this possibility because the new policy has only just begun to be implemented.

Alternative Funding Sources Needed

Community organisations seeking to raise funds are caught between a rock and a hard place when it comes seeking funding, as there are so few alternatives. The various community

trusts distributing grants from the proceeds of pokie machines are major funders of community work, sport and culture. Yet the pokie machines cause considerable harm and some community organisations refuse to take money sourced from gambling. The Problem Gambling Foundation has produced useful information on ways to raise funds without using pokie machines called: Putting the ‘fun’ back into fundraising: how your organisation can thrive without pokie funding but it is also important to continue to reduce the amount of gambling harm being caused in our communities through pokie machines.

NZCCSS and others have been calling for reduction in the number of pokie machines and for active moves by Government to fund alternative forms of community grant funding to replace any lost funding through reductions in the pokie trust grants. In our comments on the proposals, we strongly opposed any changes to the current rules. It is truly bizarre situation when the success of communities in reducing the amount of gambling losses and therefore gambling harm should be seen as a ‘problem’

Putting the ‘fun’ back into fundraising

How your organisation can thrive without pokie funding



Glenda Northey



for the gambling industry requiring them to be further ‘supported’. Surely a better response Government response should be to provide alternative sources of funding.

You can read more about the proposed changes and review all the submissions on the Internal Affairs website. ■



Paul Barber is a policy advisor at NZCCSS.

Hikoi for Homes

“We’re here because we care,” was one of the rallying calls to gathered marchers at the Wellington leg of November’s Hikoi for Homes.

After proceeding from Cuba Mall to Civic Square, the marching band that had accompanied the Wellington Hikoi for Homes passed the musical baton on to others who provided a series of songs between a series of speakers.

In amongst the singing even Building and Housing Minister Nick Smith’s name popped up, in a set of lyrics from Women’s Trade Union ensemble Choir Choir Pants on Fire as they sang “truth to power”.

Dr Nikki Turner, first of the speakers, set out the issues that gave rise to the Hikoi for Homes – also held in Auckland and Christchurch – in no uncertain terms.

Turner is described on the CPAG website as an academic General

Practitioner – in addition to working as a GP at the Pacific Health Medical Centre in Strathmore, Wellington, she also holds positions at both the University of Auckland and the University of Otago (Wellington campus).

Turner spoke of “families and children who get sick, and recurrently sick, because their housing is inadequate”.

The diseases, such as chronic lung conditions and rheumatic fever, that children contract leave them “cripples for their adult life” said Turner, calling the deprivation of their basic human right to be protected through safe housing a “national shame”.

Fittingly the first song interlude, by folk musician Nigel Parry, had at its centre the tragedy of Otago toddler Emma-Lita Bourne, who died last August after being hospitalised with pneumonia.

Before starting Parry praised the coroner who had the courage to assign a link between Emma-Lita’s death and living in a cold, damp State house. An excerpt from the song includes these words: “... they shared the damp and mould, now she’s never growing old, but Emma had a home”.

New Zealand expert on housing and health,

Professor Philippa Howden-Chapman, spoke next, making reference to both the poisonous risks of mould and of the historic housing stock in this country that invites dangerously below-par temperatures indoors.

“It’s not an accident that children fall behind in their schooling through illnesses, and end up in emergency wards... we’re here because we care and we can do it better”.

Howden-Chapman didn’t hold back from calling out those Government ministers who have demonstrated a gross dismissiveness of the scale and nature of the housing infrastructure problem, while merrily signing off on billion dollar contracts for road infrastructure.

She called not just for safe housing, but secure housing, and housing stable enough for families to be settled in one place during their children’s schooling years and upbringing.

“It’s time to say to the Government, do you care?”

When State Housing Action Network (Shan) organiser Ariana Paretutanganui-Tamati spoke she said both National and Labour governments had dropped the ball on State and social housing.

She warned that the run-down state of Housing New Zealand stock was an ongoing excuse for its divestment,

and “if National was unchecked it would all be sold”. She also used the term ‘social cleansing’ for the actions of the current government, adding that it is known around the world that “only the State can (provide) housing at the scale needed”.

Lastly Paretutanganui-Tamati warned that New Zealand was being taken back to Victorian times and families’ ability to build any equity had been “stopped”.

Another speaker, Paul Barber (of NZCCSS but representing Living Wage), reminded everyone present that the renting population

in New Zealand was not only one third of households, but up to one in two New Zealanders.

Barber spoke of a generation being left behind and in support of moves such as Wellington City Council’s decision on a Living Wage as “one part of a response”.

Pointing to the persistence and hard work paying off in the case of moves to a Living Wage he also gave a reminder that the housing crisis is not due to “mysterious forces beyond our control”.



Paul Barber, NZCCSS and Living Wage Wellington.



Otago University’s Professor Philippa Howden-Chapman.



“Unaffordability is an outcome of low incomes, and it’s not true we can’t do anything about these problems – we can”.

Seven Sharp Demands

As a demonstration of public mood, the Hikoi for Homes organisers – including the Child Poverty Action Group, Auckland Action Against Poverty, First Union and Unite – are hopeful that messages are heard loud and clear by politicians.

Be that by Cabinet ministers – and all parties – ahead of next year’s

HIKOI FOR HOMES

Budget, or local body pollies ahead of the Local Government elections next year.

At its sharp end, Hikoi for Homes set out to make “a resounding statement to a government that’s negligent in providing basic living standards and welfare for its people”.

Seven calls to action that it put forward are:

1. An immediate stop to the sell-off of State and council housing
2. A \$1 billion annual budget for the provision of more state, public and not-for-profit housing
3. Setting minimum standards for all rented housing
4. Greater tenure protection for tenants
5. Rent freeze for five years
6. A statutory right to be housed
7. State subsidies for modest income homeownership programmes.

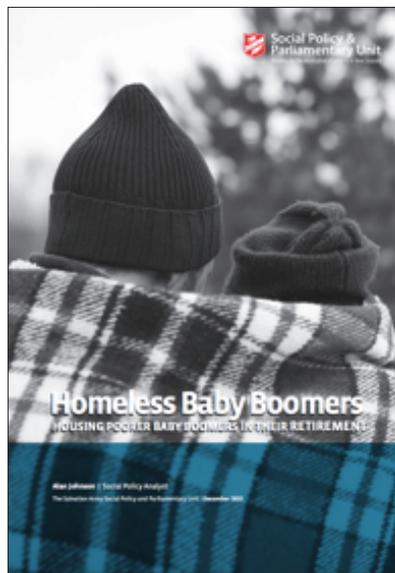
All with Philippa Howden-Chapman’s question implicitly sitting behind them: “It’s time to say to the Government, do you care?” ■

Another rollercoaster year on the housing front

STEPHEN OLSEN, NZCCSS MEDIA ADVISOR

Housing related issues have continued to grab headlines during 2015 – along the spectrum of an obsession with property prices through to the unfolding family tragedies of deaths that have been directly tied to the poor and unhealthy state of housing.

In among all of the government-level hand-wringing and high-level policy directions around housing, many of us have come to look to the Salvation Army’s Social Policy & Parliamentary Unit for its quality research and commitment to shining a light into the myriad aspects of housing in a searching and fearless series of reports. Between 2011 and 2013 these reports included: *A snapshot*



of overcrowding in South Auckland; The politics of Auckland’s housing; and Give me shelter – a call to action. This year there have been a trifecta of reports: the *Hard Times* report into homelessness in West Auckland in August, the *Invisible in the SuperCity* report on hidden homelessness in Auckland last month, and this month’s launch of *Homeless Baby Boomers*.

Throughout all of these reports a consistent thread has been the dedicated research efforts and authorship of social policy analyst Alan Johnson, and fellow analysts Reina Tuai Harris and Ronji Tanielu.

In *Homeless Baby Boomers*, Alan Johnson puts forward a consideration of the housing futures of the around 200,000 people who in 2030 will be aged over 65 years old and not own their home. A key point revealed in the report is that only 62 per cent of Baby Boomers who retire at 65 after 2025 can expect to be home owners, compared with over 77 per cent of 65-year-olds who retired in 2011. It goes on to estimate that in the upper North Island alone up to 33,000 extra rental properties will be required to meet the need of retiring Baby Boomers in the next few years.

Other estimates in the report are that 30 to 35 per cent of future retirees will rent their retirement house

and given current superannuation rates will require State rental assistance. Consequently, the number of people requiring Government rent assistance would rise from an estimated 35,000 in 2015 to as many as 100,000 by 2025.

After 2025, demand for residential care in rest homes, geriatric hospital and dementia units will also increase sharply, peaking around 2033. On one estimate catering for this growth between 2025 and 2030 would require one new 100-bed aged care facility to be built every two and a half weeks.

At the time of the launch of the report at the Salvation Army’s Mt Albert Centre, Alan had this to say: “The change in fortunes for those retiring is a direct result of actions taken in 1991 by Finance Minister Ruth Richardson’s in the so called ‘mother of all budgets’”. As well as its welfare benefits, this was a budget he said, that scrapped home ownership programmes, introduced market rent for state houses and sold off the Crown’s \$2.4 billion dollar mortgage portfolio – in other words, a multiple setback.

By the end of 58 pages of detailed analysis, the report zeroes in on five policy recommendations to address the housing needs of low and modest income older New Zealanders:

1. That the **Accommodation Supplement be reviewed** as a matter of urgency with a view to addressing historic shortcomings in the level of assistance provided and to better meet the income and housing needs of low and modest income older people;
2. That Government **extend income related rent subsidies to local authorities** as a first step to local government taking a leadership role in the provision of rental housing for older people;
3. That **Government engage local government** in an initial debate to consider local housing markets and the need to cater for a migrating population of older people to regional cities and towns;
4. That a **residential care strategy** be prepared and backed with sufficient budgets to ensure adequate provision of aged care facilities over the next ten years;
5. That a **programme of interventions be developed** to limit the risk of those in late middle age and early old age becoming homeless for the first time due to financial hardship, relationship breakdown and health problems. ■

Health of older people: Where there's HOP there's hope

As signalled in both *Policy Watch* and *Kete Kupu* in July, Minister of Health Jonathan Coleman and Associate Minister of Health Sam Lotu Iiga rediscovered the idea of having strategies this year, with moves to review and review the NZ Health Strategy and the Health of Older People Strategy.

The current Health of Older People Strategy (HOP) was published in 2002, following the release of the Health Strategy in 2000. The Ministry of Health is leading the update, and as stated [on its website](#), the intention is that the next HOP Strategy will provide a direction for future services to meet the health and disability support needs of older people, and the development of services in the medium term.

Unfortunately no evaluation of the existing strategy was ever completed or published, although, as we noted in July, the Hope Foundation published an evaluation of progress of the strategy by researcher Sarah Hood in 2010.

On 30 October NZCCSS provided a seven-page document of comments as input to the HOP Strategy review, with our guiding principle informed by our mission and the agencies with who we work, expressed firstly in this question:

What would a Health of Older People Strategy look like that is genuinely focused on responding to the situation of older people with a particular concern for those who are poorer and more vulnerable?

The importance of wellness

In our comments we welcomed the focus in the draft Health Strategy on wellness and maintaining wellness and the initial message from the HOP Strategy team that “improved health and equity for all” is a driving outcome focus for the health and disability system.

We emphasized the importance within the HOP Strategy of using inclusive framing for overcoming the marginalization of vulnerable older people in society and increasing participation; with a particular emphasis on:

- Housing vulnerability
- Dementia and other Long Term Conditions
- Social isolation and loneliness
- Socio-economic vulnerability
- Abuse and violence
- Rural and small town communities
- Workforce

Our leading key message was that the HOP Strategy is being developed in a policy context that does not appear to prioritise the health of older people, given it does not feature as one of the top health targets. We flagged this as a “significant omission” and strongly recommended that Health of Older People be included as a key health target.

We also made the point that the HOP Strategy interacts with a range of other overarching or related strategies, such as the NZ Disability Strategy, and that new next iteration must specifically identify areas of alignment and areas where change may be needed.

Housing and older people

On housing and older people, our main points were that this needed to feature more prominently in the HOP Strategy.

In our considered view the Social Housing Reform process has not made it easy enough for existing housing providers for older people to access government funding, nor provided the stable policy frameworks as yet that would encourage innovations such as intergenerational housing. We also advocated that the HOP Strategy needs to recognise the vital role of social housing, including local

authority and community housing and all of the options provided by NZCCSS members in supporting older people to live well and as independently as possible.

One of the questions that the draft HOP Strategy prompted for us was that its proposed outcomes frameworks did not appear to given the same emphasis to older people participating in decisions about their health as set out in the current HOP Strategy. We argued for a strong presence of consumer participation.

Similarly we argued for strong evaluation processes, noting that the current HOP Strategy does a poor job on that score – with reference to a feedback process in the sector being virtually non-existent.

In a broad comment we assessed that not enough has been achieved for Maori and Pacific older people, and that, more broadly again, the needs and aspirations for care and support for different ethnic groups, including Asian New Zealanders, needs greater recognition.

Further hopes for HOP strategy

Under the heading of integration of services our comments expressed the frustration across NZCCSS networks at a lack of progress, and an

undervaluing of integration that goes across primary/ secondary care and underutilizes aged care's role in rehabilitation and regaining function.

Allied to this we made the point that blind tenders and competitive contracting work against integrated approaches to care and support, not aided by heavy documentation requirements. And on the need for the HOP Strategy to clearly engage with the primary health linkage we posed three questions:

- Have better preventative services become a reality?
- Have integrated models of care to prevent hospital admissions actually been achieved?
- What more can be done?

Lastly, and very importantly, we urged that more attention be given within the HOP Strategy to opportunities for communication and relationship building such as the active Elder Care forums seen in Canterbury.

There will be the chance for further comment in early 2016 when the draft of the updated Health of Older People Strategy goes to public consultation. ■

Valuing People, Living Well – your chance to join us

What do you want out of a conference experience?

That is the question we have been asking of ourselves and our people as we have been planning our 2016 conference. Looking at the feedback we have had from our previous conference, it is clear people want great keynote speakers, stimulating break-out sessions mixing the practical with the 'big picture' issues as well as the real stories and compassion for those we work with, plus the chance to network and have fun.

Registrations for the conference will open at the end of January in the meantime make sure you have the dates in your diary. In the meantime, here is a little bit more information about the programme as it comes together.

Great keynote speakers

"fantastic conference – very thought provoking, great speakers – loved the actual client/carers presenting"

Over the two days of the conference there will be six keynote speakers as well as plenary sessions and

workshops. Keynotes will be looking at themes such ethics and business, balancing money and mission in not-for-profit services, science and innovation – what this can bring to our sector, and what the latest research has to offer to help us in providing better support for older people. We are aiming also to hear the perspective of kaumatua through the voice of prominent leaders and researchers as well as delving into the opportunities and risks of new ways of funding services such as social bonds and learning more about where the major Government health strategies currently under review are heading. We are delighted that our confirmed keynote speakers includes prominent business leader Mark Powell, CEO of The Warehouse Group, leading social

researcher and former Director of the Institute for Research on Ageing Dr Judith Davey and aged care sector leader Selwyn Foundation CEO Garry Smith.

Well-balanced and stimulating programme

"It was a good mix of professional, practising and political (system) conversations."

The three break-out streams are designed so that both those in management and in more front-line roles can find useful insights and professional development. The streams will cover topics relevant to those working in home based and community support settings as well as those working in

aged residential care and retirement living.

Topics in the mix include dementia pathways and dementia friendly environments, caring for the whole family, working with Pacific matua and kaumatua, innovations in housing for older people, respite and relief for carers, working with culturally diverse communities, measuring performance, palliative care, individualised funding, the Eden Alternative, designing great spaces, workforce development issues, and latest research findings.

"Excellent conference – very stimulating and well targeted balanced with the real stories and compassion for those we serve."

Social events and networking

The conference dinner is once again the centrepiece of the social programme and this will be a great evening of good food, entertainment and great company. Our conference sponsors and exhibitors will be hosting pre-dinner drinks so you can have the chance to learn more about their organisations, products and services and there will also be opportunities for site visits in also planned where organisations showcase their work.

Business partnership opportunities

There are great opportunities for business partners to support our conference. This is an excellent opportunity to showcase your agency and its work through the wide range of sponsorship, exhibit and display

options. Check out the options on the conference website and talk to our great conference organisation team at [DCMS](#) about what works best for you.

If there are organisations you are working with who you think should be at our conference, please let them know about this and put them in touch with the conference team. ■

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services
SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE CONFERENCE
 Thursday 12th - Friday 13th May 2016
 Rendezvous Hotel, Auckland
www.nzccss.org.nz

Valuing people living well

New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services

Legislation and submissions

A chance to do more to improve housing

Many lives, especially those of young children, would be saved if we had decent standards for rental housing in New Zealand. It is good news that the Government is finally doing something but proposed new laws set the standards too low to make any real difference.

The Government has now brought a draft law into Parliament to introduce [minimum standards for rental housing](#). The proposed standards were announced in July and the [October Kete Kupu](#), our analysis was that the [proposed changes are half-hearted](#) and not likely to achieve the desired results. They also ignore the [wealth of evidence from research](#) showing the wide social, health and economic benefits of higher standards are well above the costs.

Take action and make submission for higher standards

NZCCSS and others groups will be analysing the new Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill to see

what is actually being proposed and we hope to make our draft analysis available before submissions close on the Bill on **27 January 2016**.

Make a submission on the Bill – go to the Parliament website to view the [Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill](#).

At the same time as Parliament is asking for submissions, the department responsible for administering the rental laws, the [Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment](#) (MBIE), is asking for comment on changes to regulations will set the rules about how much insulation, how many smoke alarms and which properties will be excluded from the new requirements.

More information is on the [MBIE website](#) where you can download [Questions and Answers](#) about the regulations and as well as a full [discussion document](#) and comment is due by **11 February 2016**.

Easter Trading Bill

The consciences of Government MPs will be “whipped” into line it seems as a new [Easter Trading Bill](#) has been introduced into Parliament. The Minister sponsoring the Bill, Michael Woodhouse, has [previously voted against changes](#) but he has now ironed out his conscience and declared himself “comfortable” with fronting this legislation.

Catholic social justice agency Caritas is appalled about the proposal and [Caritas Director Julianne Hickey](#) voiced their concerns immediately after the plans for new legislation were announced in late August. She said, “We know from long experience how precious our few remaining shop-free days are for families

and communities. There are a range of activities that take place at Easter because most New Zealand workers are guaranteed time off work – including church activities, but also sports tournaments, school reunions, hui, unveilings and other marae gatherings.”

The [NZ Herald](#) has [pointed out the incoherency and inconsistency](#) of the approach being taken. It “passes the buck” to local councils and will result most likely in a confusing mis-mash of responses as potentially towns only minutes apart choose different policies.

The [Shop Trading Hours Amendment Bill](#) is before the Commerce Select Committee and submissions are open until **21 January 2016**. ■



Kete Kupu Word Basket

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