



Do Justice!!

“Do Justice, Love Kindness and Walk Humbly With Your God” Micah 6:8

A Newsletter on Social Justice Issues

apartments are replacing their rental accommodation. The rental housing needs of several groups of elderly could well collide with the most unfortunate outcome of competition between them. The longer they are squeezed into a vacuum in the planning of Special Housing Areas and other developments and become invisible to the public, the more likely it is to happen.

Meanwhile, areas of confusion remain. An example is an elderly person with health problems who was misinformed for three years about whether he was on a HNZ waiting list. Before 2011 he had been on Category C list, but C and D had been abolished when tenancy renewal processes began in that year. It took several conversations, a very confusing letter and contradictory sentences on the 2014 re-vamped websites, before HNZ eventually admitted he and others like him would almost certainly need to be homeless before they could get on Categories A or B: possibly living in a garage, in a car, in a tent or in the open.

Auckland Council's Housing Project Office has responsibilities for social housing and housing for the elderly and Local Boards, and the recently established Auckland Senior Citizen's Advisory Panel, are becoming aware of the extent of the issues. Meanwhile, Grey Power is doing its own lobbying with Auckland Council.

Party housing policies are emerging in the lead up to the General Election. We could assess the proposals by the degree they build up an ecumenical understanding of the Common Good. But we need to walk our talk or our credibility with society will not hold as come of the providers have strong links to various Christian denominations.

In the meantime, we could visit '*This Home is Occupied*' – State housing issues addressed in an exhibition at AUT University's ST.PAUL St Gallery, 40 St Paul's Street, Auckland City. It will be open 30 May – 25 July. More information: www.stpaulst.aut.ac.nz

Treaty of Waitangi and Constitutional Change: There will be a Symposium with the UN Special Rapporteur for Indigenous Rights in Hamilton on 24th and 25th July. The title is '*The Implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Aotearoa*'.

Further information is available at <http://waikato.ac.nz/law/news-events/undrip-symposium/context>

Economic Inequality: Effects on Children and Families. A Forum on Issues and Solutions.

Venue	St Columba Centre 40 Vermont St, Ponsonby	
Date	Tuesday July 15 th Time 7.00pm to 9.00pm (followed by supper)	
Speakers	Dr Russell Wills	The Children's Commissioner
	Dr Susan St John	Child Poverty Action Group
	Dr Lance O'Sullivan	New Zealander of the Year and GP
	Darryl Evans	Mangere Budgeting Services Trust

Just Action 2014. The Salvation Army is once again offering a Just Action conference in New Zealand, and this year it takes the form of a road show. This means we are offering a one day event, in four centres as follows:

Dunedin: Thursday 21 August	Wellington: Tuesday 26 August
Christchurch: Saturday 23 August	Auckland: Thursday 28 August

Dr Russell Rook will be the main speaker. More information at

<http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/our-community/calendar/just-action-our-backyard>

Welcome to the July edition of Do Justice for 2014. This newsletter prepared by Auckland Diocesan Social Justice Group looks at various Social Justice Issues.

Globalisation.

It is easy to associate globalisation with corporations that span the globe and the movement of relatively low skilled jobs from the developed to less developed countries. But there is much more to globalisation.

Historians regularly point out that the concept of the “Nation State” is relatively new in historical terms and only began to emerge in the 17th century. Globalisation is even younger although it has been around a little longer than many appreciate. During the 19th century various strategic blocks of Nation States emerged, mainly in Europe, and this ultimately led to the First World War. Immediately afterwards the first global organisation was established – The League of Nations. However the League was ineffective in preventing the Second World War so the United Nations was established in 1945. Despite all its failings we have not had a devastating World War since the UN was founded.

With the United Nations have come a whole galaxy of international organisations - World Health Organisation (WHO), World Bank, International Monetary Fund, International Labour Organisation (ILO), World Trade Organisation, formally GATT, and many more.

But what is less well known has been the formation of a number of private international groups. In 1954 a group of leading businessmen and politicians meet at the [Hotel de Bilderberg](#) in [Oosterbeek, Netherlands](#). The leaders from Europe and the USA discussed ways to better understand the cultures of the United States and Western Europe so as to foster cooperation on political, economic and defense issues. The annual meeting of the Bilderberg Group meets in complete privacy to discuss world issues and has continued to meet annually. The list of participants that can be seen on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Bilderberg_participants. Includes many of the western world's present and former leaders.

In 1971 the first meeting the World Economic Forum (WEC) took place in Davos, Switzerland and has been held each year since. The WEC is

- is an International Institution committed to improving the state of the world through public-private cooperation.
- engages political, business, academic and other leaders of society in collaborative efforts to shape global, regional and industry agendas. Together with other stakeholders, it works to define challenges, solutions and actions, always in the spirit of global citizenship.

Membership of the WEC, according to the WEC website, comprises 1,000 of the world's top corporations, global enterprises usually with more than US\$ 5 billion in turnover. The WEC has been a strong promoter of the neoliberal free-market agenda which Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and President Ronald Reagan implemented in the 1980s. The WEC meets annually and, unlike the Bilderberg Group its meetings are open to the world's press.

Another interesting large private international organization is the Trilateral Commission founded by David Rockefeller in July 1973, to foster closer cooperation among North America, Western Europe, and Japan. Its founding declaration said:

- "Growing interdependence is a fact of life of the contemporary world. It transcends and influences national systems... While it is important to develop greater cooperation among all the countries of the world, Japan, Western Europe, and North America, in view of their great weight in the world economy and their massive relations with one another, bear a special responsibility for developing effective cooperation, both in their own interests and in those of the rest of the world."
- "To be effective in meeting common problems, Japan, Western Europe, and North America will have to consult and cooperate more closely, on the basis of equality, to develop and carry out coordinated policies on matters affecting their common interests... refrain from unilateral actions incompatible with their interdependence and from actions detrimental to other regions... [and] take advantage of existing international and regional organizations and further enhance their role."
- "The Commission hopes to play a creative role as a channel of free exchange of opinions with other countries and regions. Further progress of the developing countries and greater improvement of East-West relations will be a major concern."¹

The Trilateral Commission meets biannually and has a membership similar to the Bilderberg Group. Like the Bilderberg Group the proceedings are private.

Then, of course, there are the G8 and G20 meetings of world leaders. The next G20 meeting is in Australia and our Prime Minister has been invited by the host government to attend.

Whilst regular meetings of world leaders is essential for the peaceful resolution of actual and potential problems one has to wonder why it is necessary for key business and political leaders, primarily from the developed world, to meet in secret so often. It is not as if there are not enough opportunities for them to meet. What does get discussed at these meetings? Some conspiracy theorists claim that the Bilderberg Group and the Trilateral Commission in particular are planning a world government controlled by big business. This may seem outrageous but why has so little been done to rein in the world bankers responsible for the Global Financial Crisis of 2008?

Housing. A crisis for not just first home buyers.

In the run-up to the General Election inequality and its effects on all of us, especially many young families and identifiable groups of older people, are fast becoming General Election issues. Key among these issues is the need for a higher percentage of social housing in Special Housing Areas, affordable rental housing for the elderly with fixed or low incomes, and

increased government subsidies for the care of people in Rest Homes, Hospitals and Dementia Units.

Changes to the roles of the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), Housing New Zealand (HNZ) and Work and Income have happened earlier this year. From the 14 April 2014 HNZ tenants had to work out which of the three 0800 numbers to ring about what sorts of issues. Many tenants became bemused and confused even when they found a diagram on the MSD website called, 'Who you wanna call?' A related factor was that some local HNZ offices had re-opened before April 2014 after being closed for some time. However, nationally none of them provided a phone contact and some were not listed because they shared space with another agency. All HNZ residents including frail, elderly and unwell people were expected to get themselves down to the office, with no certainty that their tenancy manager would be available. But this was just the beginning of much more major changes.

On the first of July the MSD took over assessing people for HNZ and Community Providers social housing. They will also re-assess the tenancies of selected HNZ tenants. The website says they will be those tenants who are already paying 'market' rentals. But this group is not necessarily straight forward. For example, some of these families have several part-time low paid jobs as they try to keep their heads above water. They are unlikely to have the time or energy to hunt for rental accommodation in the local private housing market or put together a three week bond. And what is to be gained by removing young families or frail/older people from their established community support and educational systems?

It is now clear that among the 800 or so tenants who will be re-assessed in the first year, there will be a significant proportion of elderly people and people living with various forms of disabilities including mental illness. They are likely to have great difficulty in finding housing with adequate support systems attached. The MSD website makes it clear that HNZ tenants who refuse to accept accommodation that they consider suitable will be given a 90 Day.

Melissa Wishart wrote in an article in the Wanganui Chronicle on 9th June entitled, 'Mum furious at HNZ policy'. An epileptic sole parent with three young children with health problems, was referred to HNZ for housing assessment by Work & Income. She expected to be assessed for a state housing waiting list, but had to double up with another family when she was sent to search for rental housing – a failed exercise. Eventually she was housed by HNZ but was shocked to find them publically stating that there was no demand for and no HNZ housing shortage in Wanganui. This and many other stories mean advocates need to monitor the new system very carefully.

Meanwhile, big changes are happening for another group of elderly who need affordable rental accommodation. They are fast becoming an invisible group in the plans of developers including in Special Housing Areas. At the same time Retirement 'Villages' are changing fast.

Some who no longer offer rental accommodation are ceasing to claim they are 'inclusive'. Increasingly Retirement Villages are building License to Occupy Apartments to make up for perceived inadequate government subsidy levels for Rest Home, Hospital and Dementia Care Units.

So the options are closing off for the elderly who would have been happy to live in rental accommodation in Villages, and those who need to move out because License to Occupy

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trilateral_Commission.