



What would a fairer New Zealand look like?

In 1993 church leaders united to produce a statement calling for a fairer society. They drew attention to what's fair because of a deep concern across denominations about increased poverty and social distress following cuts to welfare benefits in April 1991. These principles of fairness were re-affirmed in 2011. Twenty-one years on there remains a deep concern about levels of poverty and social inequality in our communities. The theme of this report is barriers to a fairer New Zealand. It uses government data and community information to illustrate how the materially poor in our communities have been faring in the year to December 2013.

Fair employment opportunities: More investment in Māori and Pasifika needed to improve employment rate

For this quarter we hear about an improving economy; the official unemployment rate is 6.0%, an annual drop of 0.8%, and the number of people employed increased 66,000 (up 3.0%) to 2,297,000. We also hear about less trumpeted official statistics that show Māori unemployment rate for this quarter is down by 1.2%, but the rate remains concerning sitting at 12.9%. Similarly, the Pasifika unemployment rate is down 0.4% over the year to December 2013, but again the rate remains a staggering 15.2%.

We have seen an increased requirement for clients to be seeking work, even when this is not really a suitable option for them (i.e. mental health etc). We've also see the financial impact of needing to fund transport to attend training etc, having flow-on negative consequences. Clients having WINZ payments suspended, affecting their ability to pay rent, leading to homelessness. **Presbyterian Support**

Feedback from our members reveals another New Zealand where people are genuinely struggling to afford basics necessities, who continue to need food parcels and budgeting advice, and who make trade-offs between goods and services most of us take for granted (buying nutritious

food, seeing the doctor and dentist and picking up prescriptions), often so they can afford rent and power. In this New Zealand, household incomes are genuinely insufficient to pay for a basic standard of living, let alone provide for a buffer for life's emergencies. State benefits and low wage, often temporary employment, comprise these household incomes.

An area not captured in official data on employment/unemployment rates for this quarter is the 'churn effect', where people are caught between the status of beneficiary to temporary employee and back again. With little if any financial gain over time, and no investment in their skills, this group is caught in a cycle of low paid, poor quality work and unemployment. The quality of work opportunities matter to people who are already marginalised and impoverished.

Fair employment, education and training for youth: More investment in Māori and Pasifika youth to enter employment, education and training

The story for this quarter is also about fair opportunities for youth to enter employment, education and training. We see the trumpeted official statistic for Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEET) has declined to 11.3%, 'the lowest youth NEET rate

Social justice is:

- Fairness in our dealings with other people
- Fairness in the way responsibilities are shared
- Fairness in the distribution of income, wealth and power in our society
- Fairness in the social, economic and political structures we have created
- Fairness in the operation of those structures so that they enable all citizens to be active and productive participants in the life of society.

'Making Choices: Social Justice for Our Times', Church Leaders, 1993

since the December 2008 quarter' [HLFS]. We also see another set of NEET statistics for tangata whenua and Pasifika, which show their NEET rate remains off the scale in terms of fair access to employment, education

Young people aged 17 and some at 18 years seem to be a stress point – they are no longer children or able to be looked after by CYF in cases of family breakdowns, but are unable to access services for adults, such as residential alcohol and drug treatment centres, sign tenancy agreements, or state housing. It is also a transition point for the justice system where they can be in both adult court and youth justice which have a big difference in how they operate. **Salvation Army**

and training: 17.1% (Māori males), 27.6% (Māori females), 12.8% (Pasifika males) and 26.4% (Pasifika females). And it is these less palatable statistics that support what our social services providers are seeing in their communities: an increasing number of young people needing counselling services, far more visible signs of youth homelessness and youth justice. We also hear about Taylor Fry's *Actuarial Valuation of the Benefit System* and their view 'The younger the client is when first entering the system, the higher the liability will be at any particular age'. If we take the Taylor Fry report and consider it against official statistics for NEET, we might reasonably conclude that without increased investment in young Māori and Pasifika youth NEET, this demographic will have greatest risk of limited potential, limited contribution to family/whānau/fono development, and limited contribution to local community and societal well-being.

Fair dealings for single carers with complex needs: More investment needed to support single carers into work

The story for this quarter is also about a labour force participation rate up 0.7%, reflecting in part a 'large fall in the number of people at home looking after children' [HLFS]. The people at home in these statistics are largely women, and the assumption is 'getting into work' is the panacea for all single carers with dependants to transcend poverty. Feedback from our members for this quarter tells a story of single carers with low skills and low wages struggling to fulfil new work obligations. This strug-

There are many childcare services in New Zealand with spaces for children – the big question is do they offer flexible hours, e.g. early evenings for families to have safe secure childcare? Families are often faced with using babysitters, which can be problematic, or relying on the older children to watch the younger ones while parents work... [Also difficult is] finding suitable employment with hours that accommodate the children's needs. **Salvation Army**

Parents are going to work however some jobs do not guarantee regular hours, meaning that the family may not receive a regular income. **Monte Cecilia Housing Trust**

gle is around finding employment sufficiently flexible to enable primary carers to look after children during the school holidays and when they are sick. Finding suitable, safe and affordable childcare facilities in lower socioeconomic environment, where corporates don't enter because profit margins are too low.

For most of these single carers the rewards from low skilled, low paid work barely pay the 'hidden' costs of going to work: transport, suitable clothing and child care. The type and quality of the work matters to single carers if they are to fulfil their primary responsibilities to provide a safe and nurturing environment for their children. Work that negates this responsibility, risks exacerbating the vulnerability of an already disadvantaged group of children. These are high stakes.

Fair housing: More capital investment needed to increase social housing infrastructure

The story for this quarter is also about fair access to quality, affordable and safe housing. Through our Salvation Army partners we see an increase in vulnerable homeless youth sleeping rough, couch surfing and staying in unsafe situations. Our service providers report high rents pushing people to sleep in cars and in overcrowded houses, and insufficient

numbers of Housing New Zealand Stock, long waiting lists and the impact of this on emergency housing. New data on housing through the 2013 census on housing is also part of the story for this quarter. Home ownership continues to drop (64.8% down from 66.9% in 2006), the new trend is renting and that what New Zealander's describe as a home has degraded with home mobile dwellings, improvised dwellings and shelters doubling since 2001.

Each week we get at least five serious inquiries regarding housing. People speak of being charged rents that they cannot afford and of having to stay in sub-standard homes as they can't find good, affordable housing. People are desperate and are sleeping in cars or in overcrowded conditions. They often do not have the energy or mental capacity to bring about good changes. **Christchurch City Mission**

We are aware of more homeless youth, many who are sleeping rough, couch surfing or staying in unsafe situations. This is a hard number to count given that it is an area where young people have slipped between the cracks. However, often with older people who are still struggling with homelessness, there is a history of starting young in this area. **Salvation Army**

Adults may prioritise treatment for children and not seek treatment for themselves. The barriers are transport/cost/education/information about services. **Monte Cecilia Housing Trust**

We have had several clients in need of dental care and they have not been able to afford it. We had one client who had tried to extract their tooth themselves as they could not afford to go to the dentist. We had instances where clients have arrived for their counselling session in such pain that we have had to send them home. **Catholic Social Services**

The barriers to work for some are insurmountable, particularly those solo parents with few skills who are often worse off in low paid jobs where the cost of travel, suitable clothes and childcare outweigh the benefit of paid work when they have the added worry of childcare in school holidays and when the child is sick. **Presbyterian Support**

Fair access to life's necessities: Higher household incomes needed

Finally for this quarter life's necessities have gotten more expensive. The Consumers Price Index is up and all key necessities have price increases: rentals for housing (↑2.1%), electricity (↑3.0%), transport (↑0.6%) pharmaceuticals (↑9.8%), medical

People still need help despite the news that the financial resources of our communities are stabilising and/or looking better. Any unexpected cost forces people to seek help, despite the best budgeting skills. Demand on families for money for school activities, faced with back-to-school costs, such as books and uniforms, places pressure on an already stretched budget. Then add to that a power bill higher than expected, medical costs or car repairs not expected and often the only way to manage that is to seek help for food. **Salvation Army**

services (↑2.2%) and the food price index for December 2013 reports a 1.5% increase. Our service providers report housing, budgeting and food parcel services are stretched, families are becoming more stressed and welfare reforms are requiring more advocacy work to assist families with new obligations so their benefits payments are not cut. We hear about adults prioritising treatment for children over themselves, dental care left untreated and of one client who was so desperate they tried to extract their own tooth. For this quarter we also see some state support for our most vulnerable citizens is on the decline: special benefits (↓18.5%), and benefit advances for electricity and gas (↓8.9%).

In conclusion, the story for this quarter indicates we have a long way

He must be inspired by the lowly, concrete and faithful service which marked Saint Joseph and, like him, he must open his arms to protect all of God's people and embrace with tender affection the whole of humanity, especially the poorest, the weakest, the least important, those whom Matthew lists in the final judgment on love: the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison (cf. Matthew 25:31-46). Only those who serve with love are able to protect.

Pope Francis, Inaugural homily, March 2013, on exercising the power of service

to go to capture the church leaders' 1993 vision of a fairer society, but this vision remains an opportunity for those who truly want a fairer New Zealand.



Closer Together Whakatata Mai is an NZCCSS programme to build public knowledge about the effects of high income inequality on New Zealand. In early May we are relaunching our website: www.closetogether.org.nz

Meantime, for ideas and discussion about New Zealand's income inequality problem and what we can do about it, join the conversation at facebook.com/whakatatamai

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

Supporting data

The big picture: what the economists are saying

Readily available official data paint a glossy picture of New Zealand. The reverse is true for data that might present a grimmer picture.

The official word is the New Zealand economy is showing signs of strong recovery. The gross domestic product (GDP) for the year ending December 2013 was up 2.5%, and some economists forecast economic growth will increase further, with some suggesting a ‘rock star’ performance in 2014 (see [Statistics NZ](#), NZIER Consensus Forecasts for December 2013, and [HSBC chief economist for Australia and New Zealand Paul Bloxham](#)). This optimism is supported in official statistics set out in the [Household Labour Force Survey](#) (December quarter) and the associated [Quarterly Labour Market Report](#) (February 2014):

- **Employment** increased by 66,000 between December 2012 and December 2013, bringing the number of people employed to 2,297,000.

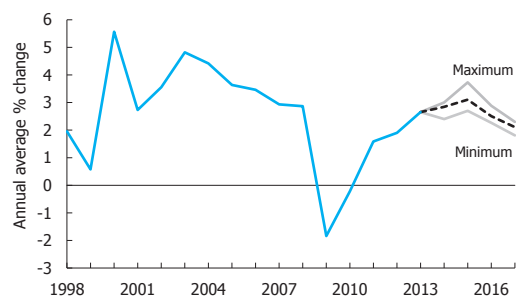
- **Unemployment** fell by 14,000 (8.9%) over the year to December 2013.
- **Full-time and part-time** employment both increased over the year to December 2013 — full-time employment increased 58,000 (↑3.4%) and part-time employment increased 14,000 (↑2.8%).
- **Labour force participation** is also on the up, increasing by 0.7% over the year, the largest increase since early 2011.
- **The employment rate for Auckland** increased to 64.8% from December 2012 to December 2013, which we are told is the ‘highest employment rate since the December 2008 quarter’ (up from 63% in December 2012).
- **The Canterbury labour market** over the year increased by 19,200 (5.9%) and unemployment has fallen by 4,700 (27.6%). The unemployment rate for Canterbury is recorded as 3.4% and again we are told ‘the lowest since the September 2008 quarterly’ [HLFS].

Where should job-seekers live?

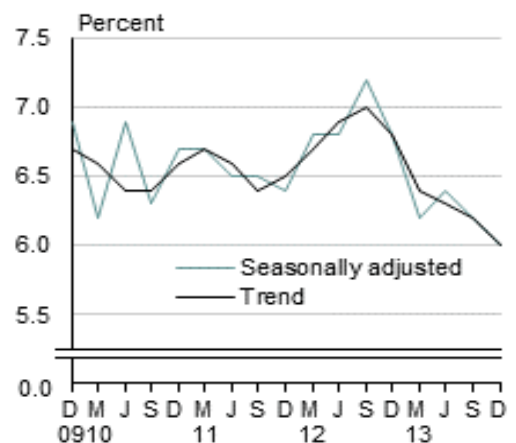
The employment rate (total employed as a proportion of the working-age population) was 64.7% in December 2013, up 1.1% from December 2012.

Across the regions, employment rates remain highest in Southland (69.5%), Canterbury (69.1%) and Wellington (69.0%). In contrast, Northland has the lowest employment rate (55.4%), followed by Bay of Plenty (59.4%) and Manawatu-Wanganui (60.6%) [QLMR, February 2014].

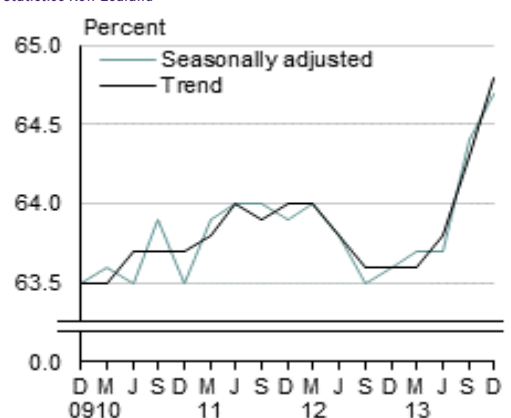
Real GDP growth.
Statistics New Zealand, NZIER



Unemployment rate (quarterly)
Statistics New Zealand



Employment rate (quarterly)
Statistics New Zealand



The big picture: what the economists are saying	4
Welfare changes: investment approach to work	5
NEET youth: a tale of two New Zealands	5
Employment rates: the great ethnicity divide	7
Affording the basics	7
Fair housing	9
Fairer health	10
Improving the well-being of vulnerable children	11

Welfare changes: investment approach to work

Single carers in low skilled and low paid work face particular barriers to full participation in society, and without more investment, these barriers create inequality traps that persist across generations.

The official picture: labour force participation up, carers at home down

The story for this quarter is also about an increased labour force participation rate up 0.7%, reflecting in part a 'large fall in the number of people at home looking after children' [HLFS: Dec

2013]. The people at home in these statistics are largely women, and the assumption is 'getting into work' is the panacea for all single carers with dependants to transcend poverty.

This change in the labour force participation rate is likely to reflect new work obligations for sole parents, which require sole parents to be ready for work and available for part time work when their youngest child turns 14 (see *Vulnerability Report* issue 14, appendix 4).

Impacts of work obligations on single carers starting to show in communities

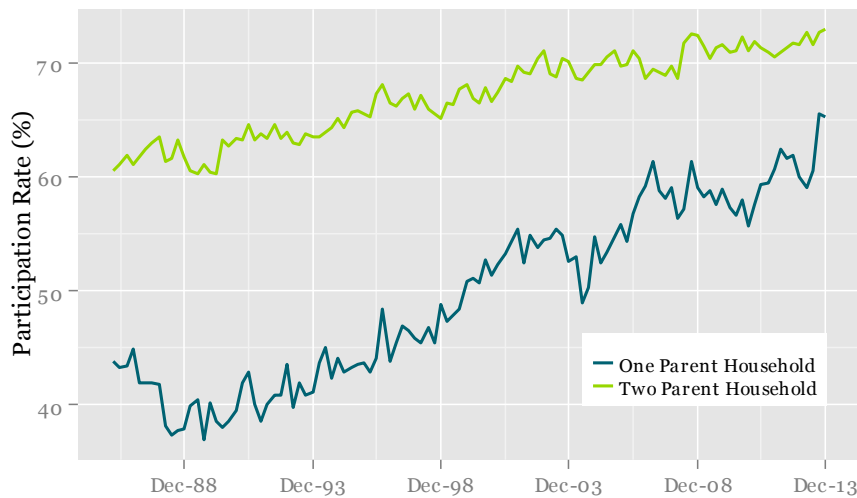
Feedback from our social service members is that 'getting into work' is not necessarily the panacea for all single carers with dependants. It is not a one size fits all solution. Situations

People still need help despite the news that the financial resources of our communities are stabilising and/or looking better. Any unexpected cost forces people to seek help, despite the best budgeting skills. Demand on families for money for school activities, faced with back to school costs such as books and uniforms places pressure on an already stretched budget. Then add to that a power bill higher than expected, medical costs or car repairs not expected and often the only way to manage that is to seek help for food. **Salvation Army**

vary across this demographic. And for those single carers struggling with complex needs, new work obligations can exacerbate family distress, leading to more hardship and not less. These carers often work in low skilled, low paid, and temporary jobs, which do not cover the hidden cost of going work (transport, suitable clothing and childcare). Other re-occurring themes from members concern the difficulty in finding work with suitable hours and flexibility to meet parenting responsibilities, along with a shortage of safe, affordable childcare options in lower socioeconomic areas.

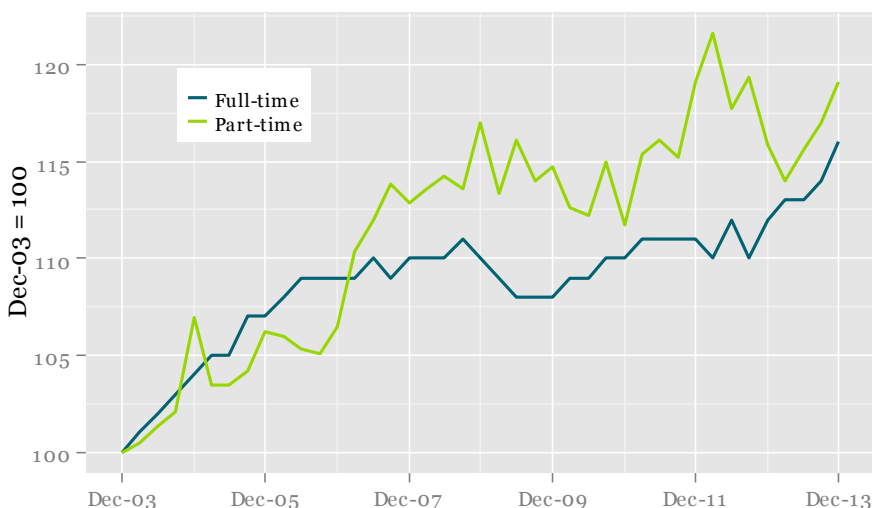
Labour force participation rates for mothers with dependant children by household type (not seasonally adjusted).

Quarterly Labour Market Report, February 2014, MBIE



Full-time and part-time employment index.

Quarterly Labour Market Report, February 2014, MBIE



NEET youth: a tale of two New Zealand

The visibility of inequality is at its starkest when a generation of Māori and Pasifika youth do not have fair access to the dignity of work, training or education.

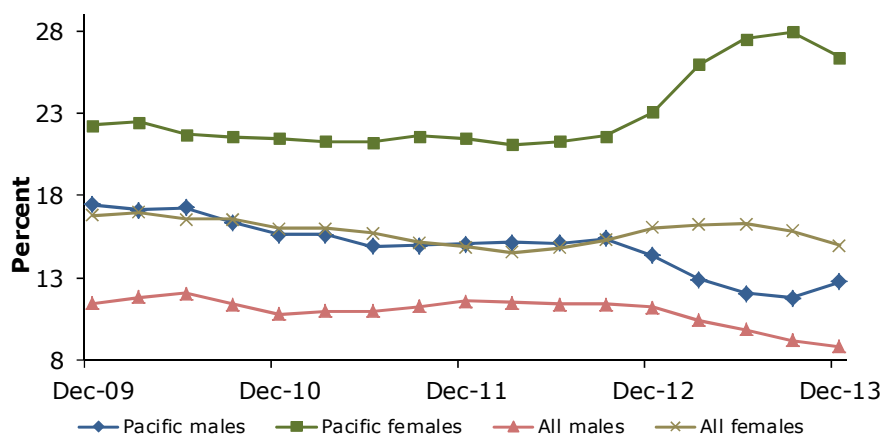
The official word

The NEET rate for youth aged 15 to 24 years has declined to 11.3%, which is 'the lowest youth NEET rate since the December 2008 quarter' (down 2.6% since December 2012). [HLFS, Dec 2013]

The official statistics from MBIE paint an encouraging picture of vulnerable youth. However, these same statistics broken down by population group add a new dimension that might not otherwise be seen. There are signs of some progress across youth, but when compared to all NEET males (8.8%)

NEET rates, 2009–13.

Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment



and all NEET females (15%) these gains are few. In the year to December 2013, among 15 to 24 year olds:

- Māori males: 17.1% (↑0.2%)
- Māori females: 27.6% (↓0.6%)
- Pasifika males: 12.8% (↓1.6%)
- Pasifika females: 26.4% (↑3.3%).

Taylor Fry's *Actuarial Valuation of the Benefit System* (page 62) talks about the age of entry into the benefit system having a far more significant impact on lifetime liability than the age of clients at the valuation date. The valuation looked at 'the age of entry into the welfare system for clients aged 35–39' at the date of the valuation, and the 'contribution to lifetime liability of those same clients'. The report suggests there is a greater risk of high welfare liability the younger the client is when they first enter the welfare system. If we take the Taylor Fry report and consider it against official statistics for NEET, we might conclude that without increased investment in young Māori and Pasifika youth NEET, this demographic will have the greatest risk of limited potential, limited contribution to family/whānau/fono development, and limited contribution to local community and societal well-being.

What our members are seeing

A spotlight on vulnerable youth and homelessness from the Salvation Army:

- 'We are aware of more homeless youth, many who are sleeping rough, couch surfing or staying

in unsafe situations. This is a hard number to count given that it is an area where young people have slipped between the cracks. However, often with older people who are still struggling with homelessness, there is a history of starting young in this area. Homelessness isn't often an issue itself; rather it is a symptom of wider issues that needs to be overcome. Alcohol and Drug use, criminal behaviour, family breakdown, mental health, lack of support people, and leaving state care are all significant reasons why a young person may require help with accommodation.

The young people we are seeing have a combination of all or most of the above. There is influx of young people aged 17 years, who

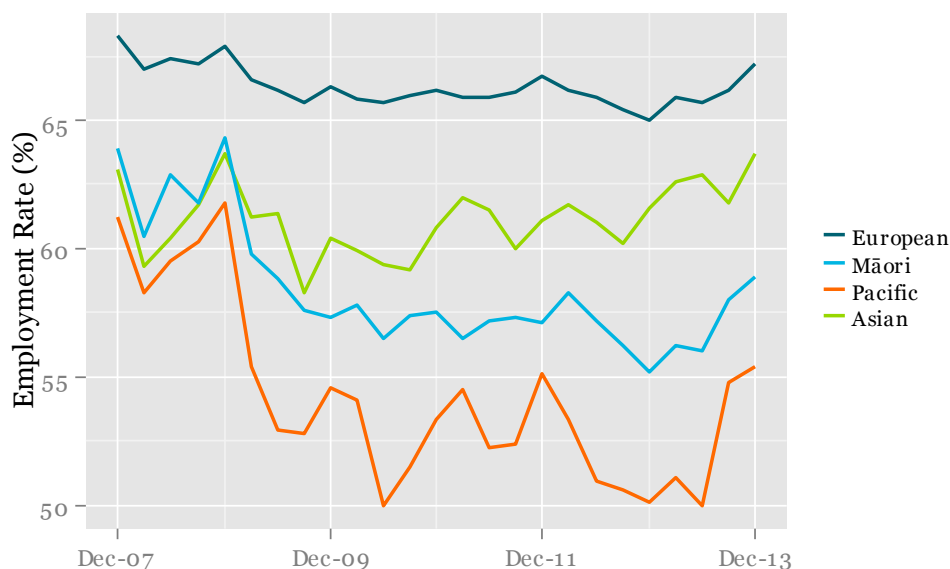
have been placed on remand within the justice system. These youth cannot stay in general population of the prison, and can't access any safe places to go (boarding houses generally don't take those under 18, and therefore have no bail address.'

What challenges are youth facing?

- 'We have seen an increase in the number of young adults accessing our counselling services. The issues they represent with are often around anxiety, relationships and some instances work related.' *Catholic Social Services*
- 'The lack of jobs and training are concerning to youth along with limited options especially in crisis times such as family breakdown, homelessness, justice issues.' *Salvation Army*
- 'Student loans and debt incurred while studying is having some effect on wanting to go to tertiary study but limited job options may mean this is the option chosen.' *Salvation Army*
- 'Access to social housing and the ability to live independently and interdependently is impacting on the young people especially when they have be missing skills and knowledge that make living in the world possible.' *Salvation Army*
- 'Youth are affected by transience and unstable housing.' *Monte Cecilia Housing Trust*

Employment rate by ethnicity (not seasonally adjusted).

Quarterly Labour Market Report, February 2014, MBIE



Employment rates: the great ethnicity divide

Inequality perpetuates itself over time, impacting on economic, health, social, educational opportunities that continue across generations.

The December 2013 Household Labour Force Survey reports that labour market outcomes have improved for 'all ethnic groups' over the year:

- European ↑ 2.2% to 67.2%
- Māori ↑ 3.7% to 58.9%
- Pasifika ↑ 5.4% to 55.4%

For the same period, the unemployment rates for Europeans fell 0.9% to 4.6%. Māori and Pasifika also had lower unemployment rates than a year ago, although these were not 'statistically significant movements'.

Data requested from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment help to make sense of what's going on with Māori and Pasifika labour market outcomes.

Māori labour market

In the year to December 2013:

- The unemployment rate for Māori was 12.9%, down 1.2 % since December 2012 but 4.7% higher than five years ago.
- 257,100 (↑ 2.4%) Māori were employed, up from 251,000 in December 2012.
- Over the last five years, the employment rate has dropped 5.1% from 62.4% to 57.3%. 'The rate is below that for the total population, which is 64.1% in December 2013.'
- The leading industries employing Māori were manufacturing (34,400) and wholesale & retail (32,700).

Pasifika labour market

In the year to December 2013:

- The unemployment rate for Pasifika was 15.2%, down 0.4% since December 2012, but 7.8% higher than five years ago.

- 100,800 (↓ 1.8%) Pasifika were employed, down from 102,600 in December 2012.
- Over the last five years, the employment rate decreased 7.2% from 60% to 52.9%. 'The rate is below that for the total population, which is 64.1% in December 2013.'

This additional information suggests that Māori and Pasifika are showing signs of improving outcomes but the employment remain significantly lower when compared to their European peers.

Affording the basics

A healthy standard of living enables all citizens to fully participate in society and to flourish.

The official word

The Consumers Price Index increased 1.6% from the December 2012 quarter to the December 2013 quarter. Half of this annual increase (CPI) came from higher prices for housing and household utilities (up 3.2%).

Annual price increases include:

- The purchase of newly built houses (↑ 4.7%)
- Rentals (↑ 2.1%)
- Electricity (↑ 3.0%)
- Transport (↑ 0.6%)
- Pharmaceutical products (↑ 9.8%), reflecting a rise in prescription charges
- Medical services (↑ 2.2%) [Statistics New Zealand]

Food security

The Food Price Index for December 2013 shows a 1.5% increase in food prices, driven by higher dairy prices:

- Fresh milk (↑ 9.4%)
- Cheese (↑ 7.7%)
- Yoghurt (↑ 10%)
- Butter (↑ 17%)

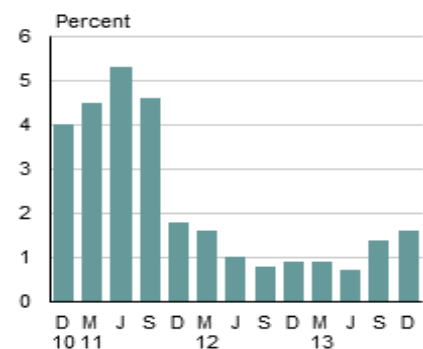
Other food prices down:

- Fruit (↓ 3.1%)
- Vegetables (↓ 1.3%)

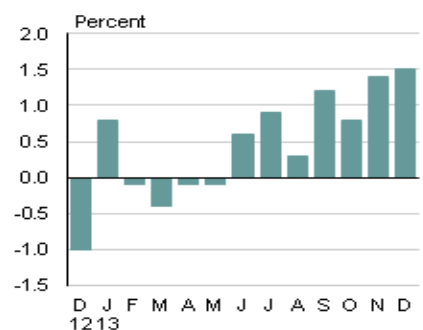
What our members are seeing

- 'Budgeting referrals seen for Dec 2013 quarter 261, vs last year equivalent 229 (14% increase).' *Presbyterian Support*
- 'Total Money Management clients supported Dec 2013 quarter 256, vs last year equivalent 241 (6.2% increase)' *Presbyterian Support*
- 'Our workers place high value on educational opportunities for clients in order to help them manage. Budgeting, life skills groups and planning for events such as Christmas are high on our activities that help clients.' *Salvation Army*
- '38% of budgeting clients in Dec quarter 2013 were Maori.' *Presbyterian Support*
- 'Continue to experience some really tragic cases of individuals facing real hardships.' *Presbyterian Support*
- 'Once again the demand is constant (food parcels) and we are seeing about 530 clients a month.' *Christchurch City Mission*
- '576 emergency food parcels distributed by food bank in Dec 13 quarter, in line with last year.' *Presbyterian Support*

Consumers Price Index (annual change).
Statistics New Zealand



Food Price Index (annual change).
Statistics New Zealand



- ‘The demand is constant but there is no dramatic increase at this time.’ *Christchurch City Mission*
- ‘To the year ended 31.12.13 we distributed 55,975 food parcels to 28,408 families/individuals. We also distributed 13,587 Christmas hampers in Dec 2013. This number is stable since the previous year but comes through an intense development in budgeting and social work services to get a family off dependency for food to stability in their ability to cope. However, we still have demand far above pre-recession level.’ *Christchurch City Mission*
- ‘There seems to have been a settling time with our clients. However, we have done lots of education about welfare reform changes, to help our clients understand the changes and what it means for them and how they can respond appropriately so that people do not find themselves with benefit sanctions.’ *Salvation Army*
- ‘Those that are serious about this engage well. Serious debt levels are intense and require lots of work to help sort the issues. We have stabilised the demand for budgeting services because we are at maximum capacity – we can only take as many clients as the personnel is available. However, clients debt levels has meant a

Hardship figures.
Ministry of Social Development

	Special Needs Grants (for food)	Benefit advances for electricity and gas	Special Benefit	Temporary Additional Support
December 2012	88,847	7,937	6,356	55,088
December 2013	90,373	7,228	5,178	56,716
Annual change	↑1.7%	↓8.9%	↓18.5%	↑2.9%

longer engagement time with budgeting services to increase a client’s ability to manage well.’ *Salvation Army*

Affording life’s necessities may have become more difficult this quarter, but some state support for our most vulnerable citizens is on the decline: special benefit (↓18.5%), temporary additional support (↑2.9%), special needs grant for food (↑1.7%) and benefit advances for electricity and gas (↓8.9%).

Hardship grants down, disconnections up

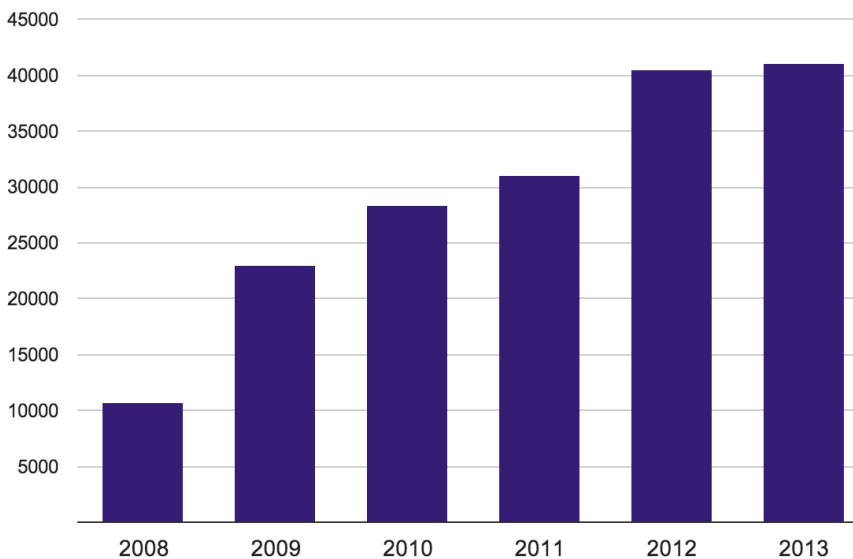
- ‘Although the criteria for WINZ hardship grants in relation to electricity payments hasn’t changed at all, the numbers have fallen, and that tends to indicate that there’s something else going on here different than just a simple hardship issue.’ *MP Simon Bridges*
- ‘Hardship grants might be falling because struggling families had used up their allocation. However,

there could be another reason disconnections were going up while fewer people are getting hardship grants; people earning over a certain amount were not eligible for the grant, so it might mean more middle income families were having their power cut, Ms Fox said. She also said power companies appeared to have followed the guidelines for medically dependent consumers but the guidelines for consumers facing hardship did not work as well. *Federation of Family Budgeting Services chief executive Raewyn Fox* (See [Radio NZ](#))

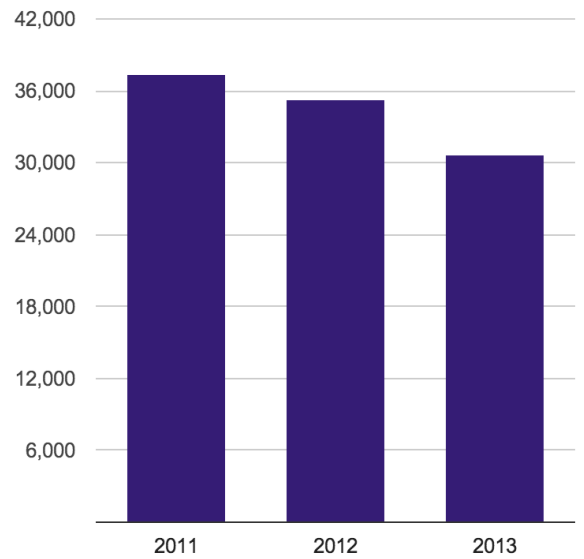
What our members are seeing

Christchurch City Mission:

- There are more grandparents caring for children
- Substandard housing
- Stress of daily living
- Rent and power costs out of control
- The pressure and stress of increased rents, having to shift house, housing being sold and new landlords evicting them.



Power disconnections — up 281% over the past six years.
The Electricity Authority



Hardship assistance grants paid for electricity/gas — down 17.9% over the past three years.
Ministry of Social Development

Salvation Army:

- Budgeting – this still sits at about 3 weeks wait especially in our bigger Centres in high need areas. Although the initial increase for budgeting services from Work and Income requiring budgeting sheets for clients has evened out, there is still high demand for budget appointments.
- The nature of the client base mostly remains the same but increasing in single people needing assistance.
- Our stats show a stable response to demand but increased need within the people presenting often involving more in depth work with complex situations.

Presbyterian Support:

- Noticing increase in spectrum of clients seen i.e. professionals on good salaries as well as Job Seekers receiving \$206/wk. Increasing number of budgeting clients being in work is seeing an increasing requirement to have appointments after 5 pm.

Fair housing

Fair access to housing affordable, quality housing is integral to health and well-being

The official word

The Kiwi dream of home ownership is fading. Some quick housing facts from the [2013 Census](#):

- **Low home ownership continues** – 64.8% of households owned their home or held it in a family trust in 2013, down from 66.9% in 2006.
- **Increase in households who don't own their own** – 35.2% of households did not own their own home, up from 33.1% in 2006.
- Gisborne (40.8%) and Auckland (38.5%) were the regions with the highest percentage of households who did not own their home.
- Home ownership is highest for European (56.8%) and Asian (34.8%), compared to Maori (28.2%) and Pasifika (18.5%).

The new Kiwi trend is renting:

- 453,135 households rented their home up from 388,275 in 2006.
- Households who rented their homes were most likely to be one-family households (63.3%) or one person households (23.5%)
- The majority (83.7% or 355,554) of households who rented were renting from the private sector, up from 81.8% in 2006 and 78.4% in 2001.

What Kiwis describe as a 'home' has degraded: 0.7% of occupied private dwellings for which the type was known (10,782) were mobile dwellings, improvised dwellings or shelters, or private dwellings in motor camps. The number of occupied dwellings of these types has more than doubled since 2001.

Still low levels of social housing

As at January 2014, the numbers of people on the [Housing New Zealand waiting list](#) were:

- 1,522 on Priority A waiting list, up 31.1% over the year.
- 2,672 on Priority B waiting list, up 36.9% over the year.

Our members report:

- 'Many families are placed with our transitional housing services through referrals from Government agencies e.g. CYF. The family is then part of the programme and works to increase their stability through education and life skills programmes. The big problem is getting them into the community in housing that is affordable and safe and HNZ spaces are very limited.' *Salvation Army*
- 'Families in extreme situations may not be housed by HNZ due to lack of stock and high occupancy. HNZ Mangerestates that houses are 99.5% full and that there is no availability. Imminent change including the transfer of needs assessment from HNZ to MSD may impact on our ability to keep families moving to sustainable housing.' *Monte Cecilia Housing Trust*

- 'There is an increased percentage of Maori using our (housing) service in 2013/2014.' *Monte Cecilia Housing Trust*

Private rental sector remains unchecked

- 'We are seeing more working families on a low income are not able to sustain private sector rentals.' *Monte Cecilia Trust*
- 'High % of income is being used for rent. Landlords are requiring high amounts for bonds – at times more than is legally permitted.' *Monte Cecilia Trust*
- 'High rents a continuing challenge – very real affordability issues – 3 bedroom house with garage housing 22 people.' *Presbyterian Support*
- 'We have a mixed range of stories – some good, some bad. However, the big issue is the housing being suitable, of good standard, warm and dry and not overcrowded. Depending on the part of the country, the rents are high and unsustainable for many – they get buy on limited disposable income and renting is one of the biggest reasons for need food bank support.' *Salvation Army*.
- 'Insurance companies pay rent for people while their homes are being repaired and his has driven up the

Annual change in rents.

Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

January 2014	Average rent	Annual change
National	\$374	↑ 4.0%
Auckland	\$453	↑ 3.0%
Greater Christchurch	\$413	↑ 10.6%
Wellington	\$395	↑ 2.0%

House values.

Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

October 2013 to December 2014	Average value	Annual change
National	\$466,022	↑ 9.7%
Auckland	\$693,549	↑ 15.3%
Christchurch	\$455,264	↑ 12.3%
Wellington	\$451,200	↑ 3.0%

cost of rentals. There are expensive homes available for rent but our people cannot afford these places. Reasonable, safe homes in good condition are very difficult to find. People are stressed at leaving their communities to find homes in other areas of the city.' *Christchurch City Mission*

- 'Social work services have seen an increase in sole fathers struggling to maintain their family stability – evictions from private rentals are impacting on family well-being and difficulty in obtaining HNZ homes impacts. Depending on the area, some private landlords are accommodating and work with families to maintain housing, others act quickly as allows to evict people.' *Salvation Army*

What our members are seeing

Not all housing is equal is the message from our social service providers for this quarter. We hear about a New Zealand where for many a fair start begins in a home that is a garage, a car, a tent, an overcrowded family home, or a substandard private rental. This quarter we see that finding a safe, affordable and quality rental remain a deep concern to vulnerable groups wanting to provide the best for their families.

- 'Of most concern to families is the lack of sustainable consistent safe housing.' *Monte Cecilia Housing*
- 'Each week we get at least 5 serious inquiries regarding housing. People speak of being charged rents that they cannot afford and of having to

stay in sub-standard homes as they can't find good, affordable housing. People are desperate and are sleeping in cars or in overcrowded conditions. They often do not have the energy or mental capacity to bring about good changes.' *Christchurch City Mission*

- 'The demand (emergency accommodation) is constant. Many people have given up any hope of finding anything better. The people we deal with cannot afford the market rentals.' *Christchurch City Mission*
- 'People have been with family since the earthquake but this is wearing thin and often the relation is asked to leave. They often have nowhere to go.' *Christchurch City Mission*
- 'Insurance companies pay rent for people while their homes are being repaired and this has driven up the cost of rentals. There are expensive homes available for rent but our people cannot afford these places. Reasonable, safe homes in good condition are very difficult to find.' *Christchurch City Mission*
- 'We housed a record number of families in 2013, however we were unable to assist many other high need families. As the transfer of needs assessments to MSD takes effect on 14/4/2014 there is potential for significant client disruption and impact on ability to deliver services (and in some cases meet service contract volumes). Also clear that there is no government policy on emergency housing.' *Service provider, Auckland region*

Fairer health

Fair access to health services is integral to the health and well-being of all New Zealanders.

Health inequalities result from structural inequities. People with higher socioeconomic positions have better health.

There is vast array of medical data that supports the view that social and economic factors have a fundamental impact on health outcomes. Fair access to health services is integral to the health and well-being of all New Zealanders. For this quarter however we see not all New Zealanders experience fair health. Accessing health and dental care remain a real concern for some of our most vulnerable groups, with the cost of accessing medical services, including oral care, a consistent theme.

Our members report:

- 'Adults may prioritise treatment for children and not seek treatment for themselves. The barriers are transport, cost, education and information about services.' *Monte Cecilia Housing Trust*
- 'Transport and prescriptions costs are a barrier, with prescription subsidies being exhausted leaving clients unable to afford medicines.' *Presbyterian Support*
- 'Over the reporting period we have had several clients in need of dental care and they have not been able to afford it. We had one client who had tried to extract their tooth themselves as they could not afford to go to the dentist. We had instances where clients have arrived for their counselling session in such pain that we have had to send them home.' *Catholic Social Services*
- 'We are talking with the charity hospital here. Medical bills are always a problem and families do not go the doctor as early as they should.' *Christchurch City Mission*
- 'Free doctors in areas are making a great difference for our families. The big problem in some areas is picking up the prescription due to costs.' *Salvation Army*

Our free e-newsletter **Policy Watch** will keep you up to date on the latest social services news, research reports and policy developments. Email admin@nzccss.org.nz to subscribe.



New Zealand Council of
Christian Social Services

Improving the well-being of vulnerable children

Improving outcomes for vulnerable children is a key government priority and is the primary policy intent of the Vulnerable Children's Bill. For the December quarter it is too early to capture information from our providers on how these policy initiatives are playing out in vulnerable communities. However, NZCCSS will be looking to identify indicators (quantitative and narrative) to gain insight into the effectiveness of this legislation, and into its impact on communities and social service providers.

From a social services provider who asked to remain anonymous: 'The nature of the client base is changing with respect to the need to engage more meaningfully with clients, where research is telling us that people who have positive experiences of receiving services has to do with the respect they were shown by those providing them – some government programmes and funders are still talking about outcome focus work in relation to "hard to reach clients" – that language on its own is value laden and unhelpful when looking at innovative ways to encourage clients to elicit the support they need. Best practice associated with working with vulnerable children and their families is about providing rigorous screening of a child's need – we have had some experiences where referrals to statutory agencies have

Number of Care and Protection (C&P) Notifications and FARs. CYF

Quarter	C&P notifications	C&P FARs	C&PFARs with ethnicity Maori
Oct–Dec 2012	39,367	15,647	7,477
Oct–Dec 2013	38,483	14,045	6,350
Annual	↓ 2.2%	↓ 10.2%	↓ 15.1%

C&P notifications: The numbers in the tables do not represent the number of distinct clients. Some clients may have multiple notifications during the period.

Ethnicity: Please note that clients may have multiple ethnicities. Although Child, Youth and Family captures all ethnicities for a client we only report on the primary ethnicity as selected by the client and their family. Clients and their family are not always consistent in the primary ethnicity that they select. An ethnicity is not always recorded.

The numbers provided for the previous years included all output classes including CP and YJ. This includes only C&P output class which we use for all external reports.

Number of benefit dependent children nationally by benefit group as at the end of September 2013 and December 2013 excluding OB UCB clients. CYF

Benefit group	Sep-13	Dec-13
Emergency Benefit	1,634	1,539
Emergency Maintenance Allowance	2,910	2,759
Job Seeker Student Hardship	12	2,455
Job Seeker related	37,218	37,010
New Zealand Superannuation and Veteran's Pension	387	380
Sole Parent Support	149,276	145,710
Supported Living Payments related	18,772	19,007
Youth Payment and Young Parent Payment	1,414	1,277
Total	211,623	210,137

been overlooked because the threshold applied in respect of level of risk is too high, and, where there is inclination using current assessment practices to find reason not to become involved with a family as opposed to looking for opportunity to find ways or alternatives to support them.'

Number of children and young people in out of home care and protection placements (CIC). CYF

As at	CIC	Maori CIC
31 Dec 2012	3,783	1,996
31 Dec 2013	3,949	2,152
Annual change	↑ 4.4%	↑ 7.8%

ISSN 2382-0144

© 2014

The Vulnerability Report is published by the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services. While every effort has been made to accurately collect and interpret statistics and data provided in this report, it is recommended readers check original data sources where possible.

New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services is the umbrella organisation of the churches' social service agencies in Aotearoa. Our members are Anglican Care Network, Baptist Churches of Aotearoa New Zealand, Catholic Social Services, Presbyterian Support New Zealand, the Methodist Church and the Salvation Army.

If you are involved in a social service agency and would like to contribute to future issues, please contact us:

New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services
Box 12-090, Thorndon
Wellington 6144

Phone: 04 473 2627
Email: sonia.scott@nzccss.org.nz