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# WHANAKE



Whanake: The Pacific Journal of  
Community Development

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# About

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*Whanake: The Pacific Journal of Community Development* is a bi-annual ejournal for practitioners and academics who love community development. The journal mission is to serve as a crucible of democracy, where people come together to share their dreams and plan their common futures. It has refereed papers of 3000-6000 words, reviews, practice notes from the field, and opinion pieces. The journal provides space for posing questions, documenting emerging trends in research and practice, and sharing case studies and biographies.

Community development journals exist in the UK, USA and Australia. We see this as a journal for Aotearoa New Zealand and the wider Pacific. As such it reflects cultural diversity and is about the WE, not the I.

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# Editorial

## *The year of many changes*

Dear readers, welcome to this edition of *Whanake*. The year 2019 has seen many changes.

Our venerable founding editor, Gavin Rennie, has retired from this post and his long career in community-development education. The Community Development Society honoured Gavin in the US with a lifetime achievement award in 2017. His encyclopaedic knowledge of community development and his many personal friendships with its champions and practitioners have been an invaluable asset without which I doubt this journal would ever have launched back in 2015.

In 2019 a mighty totara fell in the forest. I was saddened by the passing, early in the year, of Professor Ian Shirley. Ian was the first teacher of community development in the Bachelor of Social Work programme at Massey University. I was privileged to be amongst his first students and through his writing, his endless enthusiastic support of development initiatives, and his regular newsletters while at AUT, we were able to maintain our friendship. Late in 2018 I had the enormous privilege of a two-and-a-half-hour interview with Ian, accompanied by Gavin Rennie, our then editor, and my enthusiastic Ngāpuhi intern Jason Matia. We were again indebted to the redoubtable Sarah Nichols, who transcribed our tapes and my jottings to provide a historical record which we will draw from for a future issue of this journal. Our friend, the community-development aficionado and poet Reverend Mua Strickson-Pua, has penned a poem in Ian's memory. Later in the year, we marked the passing of the garrulous and completely lovable Dr Wendy Craig. Wendy was the first academic to publish a volume on community development in New Zealand, and she went on to write a thesis on the role of women in the community, which is highly regarded today. Her colleague and friend Professor Robyn Munford of Massey University spoke warmly at her wake of a woman with boundless enthusiasm and a rare talent to engage the dispossessed. For myself, I was saved by Wendy and her family in my final year of studies, when I became chronically ill, and they took me into their house and nursed me back to health. I deeply admired Wendy's practice and maintained a friendship with her up until her death. She still features in my community-development teaching with one of her great lessons to me, which I call Craig's theory: "If you are fun to be with there will always be people with you!" Wendy will be sorely missed, and a special paper is being commissioned on her life's work for a future edition of this journal.

In this issue, we are honoured to have a contribution from Dr Hoa Nyguen from Unitec. Hoa is a prolific scholar and has on this occasion collaborated with the wonderful Charlie Moore, of whom it might reasonably be said: "He had a life sentence in the community and voluntary sector." Charlie will

be known by many readers throughout New Zealand for his leadership in the community employment group and latterly at Community Waitakere, having served as both Co-chair and Chief Executive at various points. Hoa and Charlie examine the case for policy activism directed by the community sector itself, in West Auckland.

In a further contribution, David Kenkel leads a team to revisit their study on the gentrification of a West Auckland suburb. This work was initially published by ePress at Unitec as a report, and has been updated following a series of focus groups which further informed the authors' position. David is a regular publisher of radical critiques of social and community work, and has a long track record of service and a governance role in community organisations in West Auckland.

We also revisit the fortunes of the Waiheke Waste Resources Trust on Waiheke Island in its journey towards a sustainable food system.

Our old friend David Haigh graces us again with two contributions, proving that retirement is no obstacle to productivity. David was the leader of community development in the former Auckland Regional Council. I first met him in 1980, when he was persuaded to be my first community-development supervisor. David has a keen sense of contemporary social policy and history. He has prepared a report for the advocacy group Auckland Action Against Poverty, who have featured in this journal previously, on the language of poverty and how it frames the response. With a historical lens, he revisits the Depression-era initiatives in the tiny hamlet of Kurow, from which he draws lessons on community response to market failure.

John Stansfield



Wendy in the garden. Photo: Alan S. Craig

# Manuia le malaga Dr Ian Shirley



Linda responds positively but we are going to Ian's house the Shirley family before she could finish. Why didn't you say so marching off to get her favourite dress with that smile of approval and humming her favourite song fa'afetai lava thank you Ian Shirley our beloved Professor Ian Shirley.

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tatou katoa, greetings greetings greetings to us all – the speaker and those being spoken to, three or more people. I am the Reverend Mua Strickson-Pua a Presbyterian Pasifikan Community Development Praxis Non-Stipendiary shared Ministry practitioner with my beloved Linda Strickson-Pua for over 30 years Tautua serving Tangata Whenua, Tagata Pasifika, Ngāti Pākehā and Taiwi communities. It is our privilege our honour and blessing on this occasion to publicly express we are also 'Ian's students' but before I can perform our duties as the Pasifikan Aiga Whānau of our humble gathering to honour this intellectual academic champion of the family of humanity Ngāti HumanKind, I make no apologies that in our Fa'asāmoa praxis I must also acknowledge our beloved Tūpuna Tupuga ancestor lecturers mentors practitioners Mervyn Hancock and Ephira Garrett Te Ati Ata of our Massey University memories, stories and now shared histories. Professor Ian Shirley made an impact and contribution in our Moana, Te Moana Nui-a-kiwa, our South Pacific, Oceania hence on behalf of your Aiga Whānau we represent by greeting: [1] Cook Islands Kia orana, [2] Fiji Ni sa bula, [3] Niue Fakaalofa lahi atu, [4] Papua New Guinea Gudi/Hai, [5] Sāmoa Talofa lava, [6] Tokelau Fakafeiloaki, [7] Tonga Malo e lelei, [8] Tuvalu Fakatalofa atu, and [9] Vanuatu Halo your Pasifika side does not forget and we are proud, blessed honoured to also be called Ian's students now contributing to our peoples our nations and the global village of islands in the vast ocean of our shared humanity of Fa'atuatua Hope for all thus being Aiga Whānau agents of social change and social transformation for all.

Just a few stories about Ian for in our Fa'a Pasifika our Pasifikan way our stories are the spiritual, cultural and political way we honour we celebrate and venerate Professor Ian Shirley Ora, Ola, life to Te Mate, Malu, death. It is 1978 my first foray to Massey University Palmerston North so excited but also so scared of the unknown. At Auckland airport I am deeply reflective and appreciative of the uncles, aunts and cousins Aiga who have assembled to farewell me. Dad turns around don't forget to say hello to my friend Ian Shirley and send him our Alofa. I am shocked you know Ian Shirley but already the final departure calls ringing in my ears and my tears flow freely away from the gaze of beloved Whānau. At Massey for meet the staff and students a Palagi man approaches me are you Mua Pua? I replied yes Talofa lava I am Ian Shirley I know your dad Sofi Pua through the Labour Party a good man me I am shocked Ian knows our Dad for Sāmoans this is a good sign doing Whakapapa Gafa making

Ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele.  
The stones and the earth weep.  
Applied to the death of a beloved Sāmoan chief.

(Alaga'upu fa'asāmoa Sāmoan proverb)

Intelligent people are always ready to learn.  
Their ears are open for knowledge.

(Proverbs 18:15, *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation version)

Time travel with me please back to 1985 Palmerston North Massey University fourth-year Bachelor of Social Work class tradition of the final meal at the Shirley family homestead. We were in a unique position of being a married couple of Ngāti Pākehā and Ngāti Hāmoa with our seven-year-old daughter Emma-Jane affectionately known as Ejay under tow. Ejay confronts us with I am not happy going out. Mum

a new Pasifika student feel welcomed being Aiga Whānau family fa'afetai lava. The best geeky brainy Professor Ian Shirley story come mythology was we were always in awe of his academic tenacity to intensity accepting nothing but our best because as students we were aware this scholar walked the talk plus privately we wished we were that good. So already his intellectual dynamism was both challenging, intimidating and inspiring. In the library we would research Ian's latest assignment complaining about a critique that we could understand and could stand by for our developing world view and praxis. Then that studious student retells that mythology handed down from student after student that Ian Shirley was on a prestigious Paris France research trip he never ever visited Paris he lived in the library. He could look outside the window onto gay Paris but no Ian Shirley was on a mission being that scholar being immersed with that data that knowledge to make a difference. As I listened imaging Paris me Ngāti Hāmoa had Palmerston North summer time and that horrible Manawatu silage smell oh well back to the books to reality Fa'amalo Dr Ian Shirley.

Its 3am on Waiheke Island Auckland Tāmaki Makaurau Aukalani Aotearoa in our humble Whare Fale home our Mokopuna Cheden Sofi (17yrs) Papa Mua go to bed its very late I reply its very early oh Papa. I opened with our daughter Ejay 1985 we close with Ejay 2016 the New Zealand award-winning Hair stylist who happens to be our beloved Ian Shirley's hair person crack up huh? We are having dinner discussing the forthcoming elections. She begins to walk us through one of the social issues that affect and discriminate against Māori, Woman, and low-income peoples. Linda and I are pleasantly surprised and proud. She smiles I like the way Ian walks us through with understanding but empowered with knowledge he is a good man I have always liked Matua Ian Shirley. With that I fare well a beloved Teacher, Lecturer. Mentor a colleague a friend Malaga journey. You are now a beloved Tupuna Tupuga ancestor fa'afetai lava Professor Ian Shirley Atua has blessed you richly. Wisdom, justice and peace for all....

Ngā manaaki manuia fa'amalo

Reverend Mua and Linda Strickson-Pua

Strategies to establish Social Policy  
Units (SPUs) within community-based  
organisations

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# Strategies to establish Social Policy Units (SPUs) within community-based organisations

HOA THI NGUYEN AND CHARLIE MOORE

## Abstract

Community organisations hold huge knowledge about the needs as well as the dynamics of different communities. However, they often struggle to provide input and contribute this knowledge into the policy decision-making process. This study was a collaborative effort to bring community organisations together to brainstorm about strategies to establish Social Policy Units (SPUs) within local community organisations. Findings suggested that the SPU would be a great way to enhance their policy capability, making policies more relevant and equitable for different communities. However, the main challenge remained funding and this required greater collaboration among community organisations as well as change in the way funding was allocated to community organisations.

## Introduction

Given the increasing diversity of the population in Aotearoa New Zealand, community-based organisations play a pivotal role in shaping policies and strategies that contribute to equity and equality for communities and groups across New Zealand. In addition, strategies that incorporate local inputs often have a higher level of community uptake (Casswell, 2001). However, community organisations are not regularly consulted during the process of making policies and strategies. On the other hand, community organisations

who are currently 'surviving' in a context of ever-diminishing resources are struggling to raise their voices and to have those voices heard. This paper presents some strategies for Community Waitakere to establish a Social Policy Unit (SPU) which will serve as a voice for local people. This will also help enhance their capacity in affecting policy changes. These strategies are a result of focus-group discussions and several interviews with social practitioners and managers of non-profit organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand. These strategies can also be helpful for other community organisations who would like to do similar things.

Community Waitakere originated from the West Auckland District Council of Social Services (WADCOS), and is a community organisation supporting the West Auckland community since 1983. Its mission is to empower local residents and strengthen community organisations. Specifically, it strives to:

- connect community organisations and build their capability
- strengthen and grow a sense of identity in [their] communities
- enable meaningful participation
- activate ideas and aspirations
- help communities take action for themselves

(Community Waitakere, 2016)

## Policy advocacy among community organisations worldwide

Policy advocacy is often considered one of the essential activities among non-profit and community organisations worldwide (Jenkins, 1987; Rees, 1999). However, the extent to which they do advocacy differs among organisations and depends on the political environment in the country within which they operate. For example, Salamon and Geller (2008) surveyed 872 non-profit organisations in the United States and found that almost three quarters of the surveyed organisations carried out some kind of advocacy activities in the past year. However, few resources were allocated to doing advocacy. Eighty-five percent of the surveyed organisations reported spending less than 2% of their budget on advocacy activities. Most of these organisations frequently chose activities that demanded few resources, such as signing letters to policy makers to support or oppose a proposed legislation.

In Australia, Onyx et al. (2010) interviewed 24 organisations in the community services and environmental fields to explore their advocacy activities and tactics. The study found that 98% of interviewed organisations employed some kind of institutional advocacy actions such as participating in government-sponsored consultation, preparing submissions, or contacting appointed officials; 69% conducted some kind of background research; 67% attended and co-organised conferences and workshops, and supported other advocacy projects. Only about one third of the organisations organised protest rallies or direct action, or prepared and printed materials for or against a particular issue. A few organisations (13%) encouraged people to vote for or

against a political party/candidate/particular issue in an election.

In New Zealand, Elliott and Haigh (2012) did a similar study to that of Onyx et al. (2010), with 11 non-profit organisations, and found that all organisations carried out institutional advocacy such as preparing submissions, communicating with appointed officials and participating in sponsored consultation. Only a few organisations participated in radical actions such as organising or promoting a demonstration/rally (22%), or encouraged people to vote for or against a particular political party in an election (11%). The popular methods to express opinions were through media interviews, or in print media as letters to the editor or opinion pieces.

### Factors that influence an organisation's political activities

The decision on whether to do advocacy, and which strategies to employ, depends on a lot of factors. For instance, organisational size and age were found to be positively correlated with involvement in advocacy (Salamon & Geller, 2008; Schmid, Bar, & Nirel, 2008). Schmid et al. (2008) conducted a survey with a random sample of 96 non-profit organisations in Israel and found a positive correlation between the number of volunteers an organisation has and its political influence. The larger the number of volunteers, the more political influence.

Another controversial factor that influences an organisation's participation in advocacy is funding from local authorities. Schmid et al.'s 2008 survey of Israeli organisations found that funding from local authorities had a negative correlation with the organisation's level of advocacy. However, Salamon and Geller's 2008 survey of organisations in the United States revealed the opposite – that receipt of public funding is one of the factors leading to the involvement of non-profit organisations in advocacy activities. The literature seems to predominantly agree that dependency on government funding limits the scope and intensity of advocacy activities that non-profit organisations can undertake, because they don't want to upset their funders (D'Aunno, Sutton, & Price, 1991; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Tolbert & Zucker, 1996). For instance, non-profits in Australia are heavily funded by the government and they often choose non-radical advocacy activities. They try to influence policies by making friends and building relationships with government officials rather than "throwing chicken's blood at them" (Onyx et al., 2010, p. 52). Similar examples were found in New Zealand, where non-profit organisations had to take a softer advocacy approach due to the nature of their partnerships with the government through contracting or co-delivery of services (Acosta, 2012; Elliott & Haigh, 2012).

This is also congruent with the resource dependency theory and neo-institutional theory. The resource dependency theory originated by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) explained an organisation's behaviour based on relationships with other organisations and its dependence on external resources. It hypothesised that organisations depended on other organisations and the external environment for their survival, which created intra-organisational power. This power then affected the organisational behaviour.

In terms of political action, Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) argued that because organisations had limited ability in controlling larger social systems like the government, they sought other means to reduce this uncertainty and control the interdependence. Political action was one way for the organisations to influence government policies to create a more favourable environment for themselves. In practice, as shown by the above-mentioned studies, it seems that the dependence on government resources not only influences an organisation's motivation to participate in political action but also what kind of actions they are going to take so that the 'created environment' could be beneficial for both parties.

### Effective strategies in influencing policies

Scholars of non-profit advocacy often categorise advocacy tactics into two main types: insider and outsider strategies (Fyall & McGuire, 2015; Gormley & Cymrot, 2006; Onyx et al., 2010). Insider strategies refer to tactics used by non-profits in working 'inside' the system to influence policies from within. These often include building relationships and strengthening their networks with policymakers and government authorities to increase access to legislators; participating in government-sponsored consultation/advisory processes; producing submissions; direct lobbying. Outsider strategies are more aggressive and do not require direct meetings with policymakers. They often includes tactics such as demonstration/protest, grassroots mobilisation, and raising public awareness (Fyall & McGuire, 2015; Onyx et al., 2010). Insider strategies often involve only experts and professionals, whereas outsider strategies often require mobilisation of service recipients and volunteers (Donaldson, 2008).

The debate about which strategy is more effective is still very controversial, as this depends on many factors. Some studies found that a combination of both insider and outsider strategies is most effective. For instance, Schmid et al. (2008) analysed a sample of 294 organisations, and found that activities that cause pressure on decision makers, such as lobbying parliament and disseminating information, appeared to be the most effective strategies to influence policies. Fyall and McGuire (2015) interviewed 21 professionals who were or have been executive directors of advocacy organisations in the United States, and suggested that a balance between insider and outsider strategies brought the best outcomes. Employing only one of these strategies was proven to be insufficient in influencing policies. Outsider strategies are effective in raising awareness and helping people understand why a particular issue is important; however, it takes inside knowledge about the system to figure out how to change it. Once the issue is raised and has attracted attention, relationship building with policymakers and government staff is the best way to promote change from within.

Given the limitation of advocacy activities due to funding, some organisations have turned to coalitions as an alternative to enhance and maintain their influence. Coalition here could be understood as a policy network of relevant stakeholders who share common interests in influencing

a policy, a programme, or a problem (Kickert, Klijn, & Koppenjan, 1997). Bass et al. (2007) found that coalitions could result in greater political activities for involved non-profits. Fyall and McGuire (2015) interviewed professionals of organisations who participated in one or more coalitions, and also found that coalition allowed members to have a stronger voice to critique the policies of their funders without fear of losing funding. A coalition also convened resources and expertise needed for both insider and outsider strategies. As stated above, the combination of both these strategies led to the best results.

In New Zealand, joining networks and alliances, and working collectively also seemed to be popular choices for non-profit organisations (Elliott & Haigh, 2012). This is considered an effective strategy not only because of the fear of funding cuts in response to opposition but also because of limited access to government ministers. Participants in Elliott and Haigh's 2012 study also stated that government ministers preferred to meet with organisations collectively and did not often meet with individual interest groups.

## Methodology

### STUDY DESIGN

This study utilised a qualitative approach in which case studies, individual interviews, and a focus group were used to explore answers to the following research question: What are the best strategies to establish and sustain a Social Policy Unit for a small community organisation? In addition, it embraced the principles of a community-based participatory approach (CBPR), which is participatory, collaborative, engaging, and empowers participants throughout the process (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008). Community Waitakere initiated the topic and then collaborated with the researcher throughout the project, including developing research questions, collecting data, analysing data and providing feedback for the report.

Individual interviews were conducted with the heads of three organisations which have different models of SPU and have successfully maintained them over the years. The aim of the interviews was to understand how these organisations were able to establish their SPUs and maintain them over time. The focus group was comprised of practitioners, community law office staff and community workers, to explore the best model for Community Waitakere to establish their own SPU and how they would do it.

### STUDY PROCEDURES

First, in-depth interviews were conducted with three organisations to explore how these organisations have successfully established their SPUs. The purpose was to learn from each organisation their SPU's structure and activities, how they fund and sustain their SPU and what impacts they have had so far. All questions were open-ended, and arranged by these three categories. Since funding is often the most challenging task for an organisation when establishing a new unit, separate interviews were implemented with Bishop's Action Foundation and JR McKenzie to get their opinions about the feasibility and the practicality from a funder perspective. Additional information

about the organisations was collected via their websites.

The focus group was organised in three rounds, with different activities and discussion modes, each round lasting about 45 minutes. Before the discussion, the researchers shared a summary of findings from the individual interviews conducted previously, and participants had some time to ask questions and comment on the findings. Then, participants were asked to think about the strategies that could help community organisations (in this case we focused on Community Waitakere in West Auckland) establish their SPUs. The first round focused on the potential benefits of having the SPU, the impact evaluation mechanism, and key topics or activities for the SPU in the beginning. The second round focused on the structure, organisation and staffing of the SPU, and the third round focused on the funding and strategies for sustainability. The researcher and the community organisation's manager co-facilitated the group discussion.

#### SAMPLE

For the multiple case studies, three organisations were purposely selected: The Salvation Army, New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services, and Economic and Social Research Aotearoa (ESRA), who have all successfully established and managed a Social Policy Unit (or similar) within their organisations.

The Salvation Army is an international charity and an "evangelical branch of the Christian church" (Salvation Army, n.d., para. 2). It has operated in New Zealand since 1883, with the mission of "caring for people, transforming lives and reforming society through God in Christ by the Holy Spirit's power" (Salvation Army, n.d., para. 4). Through its staff and volunteers, it provides a wide range of social and church-based services, including budgeting, food and clothing assistance, life-skills programmes and other consultation services (Salvation Army, n.d.).

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) represents six church networks (Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist and Salvation Army). Collectively these include 213 provider networks located throughout New Zealand. The provider networks deliver a wide range of services including "child and family services, services for older people, food bank and emergency services, housing, budgeting, disability, addictions, community development and employment services" (NZCCSS, n.d., para. 2). The NZCSS seeks to represent the interests of its members at a national level, and to give them access to information and opportunities to network. In addition, its role is to "develop, critique and advocate for policies that will assist poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society" (NZCCSS, n.d., para. 5).

Economic and Social Research Aotearoa (ESRA) is a left-leaning think tank established in 2015 in Auckland, New Zealand. Its main aims are to "carry out research, debate, advocacy and education which serves the interest of social, economic, ecological and Tiriti justice" (ESRA, n.d., para. 24). Its main activity is research, conducted by its researchers and a large number of skilled volunteers. Other activities include organising workshops, conferences and public meetings, and producing public comments.

The focus group included 11 people who are social practitioners and

community workers, working in social service agencies in Auckland. These are the people who are working and managing at the grassroots level, but are also active in advocacy and have a good understanding of Community Waitakere.

#### DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative analysis methods were used to discover themes, patterns and underlying meanings. Two stages of analysis were implemented: within-case analysis and cross-case analysis. For the within-case analysis, all data of each organisation (their mission, programmes, structure, history, interview data) were compiled, to review as separate cases to understand the context of each organisation. Then, cross-case analysis (i.e., across organisations and across data from the focus group) was carried out to look for patterns and themes in the responses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Since this is also a CBPR study, the analysis also happened throughout the data collection process. After the in-depth interviews were conducted, a preliminary analysis was carried out to make plans, as well as to feed into the focus group discussion.

## Findings

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SOCIAL POLICY UNIT (SPU)

Findings from the focus group and in-depth interviews conveyed some of the key impacts and benefits of having an SPU. First, it would give the community organisations a stronger voice in law reform and policy development. The SPU would provide solid research-based evidence for their policy recommendations that is independent of political viewpoints. Interviews with managers of key organisations who already had some sort of SPU in place revealed that the SPU allowed them to explain why things happen, and then influence policies that target long-term solutions and early prevention rather than just responding to contemporary issues in a practical way. For example, one of the main programmes of the Salvation Army is to provide short-term transitional housing services for individuals and families. This is a very practical programme, aiming to meet people's basic needs. However, with the research capacity of the SPU, they were able to better understand the wider housing issues and influence housing policies more effectively, providing better consultation and gradually gaining credibility with government. They are now regularly engaged in active discussions with government on social housing and related issues.

Second, an SPU would be a place to hold local and grassroots knowledge. The community organisations hold knowledge about local context and how services work at the grassroots level, which would be a huge asset in policy recommendations. The participants believed that one of the biggest values of the community-based SPU was that it ensured the actual life experiences and voices of local people were heard.

Third, an SPU would help translate policies and inform the community. The SPU could translate complicated policies into lay terms, making them easier for the community to understand. It could also analyse the policies' impacts on the local community. Once the community was better informed,

their interest in and awareness of policies would be stronger, leading to increased political engagement. This could then create a shift in thinking, and then actions, in the community. The translation and analysis of policies might not only help individuals in the community, but also benefit local agencies, helping inform their work and services.

## Activities and structure

### ACTIVITIES

The focus group and interviews revealed three essential components for the SPU activities: policy advocacy, communication and research. In terms of advocacy, participants suggested that the SPU should focus on influencing local and regional policies that impact individuals and communities on a day-to-day level. The SPU should also support grassroots organisations and local agencies to make submissions and influence policies. The three case-study organisations reported making a number of submissions to various parliamentary committees every year. The key benefits of making submissions were seen as building credibility and visibility, and establishing relationships. However, the organisations advised caution about spending too much time on preparing submissions, because they were unsure of their effectiveness. Other advocacy activities include presentations, speeches and organising workshops. Connections and relationships were emphasised as key factors. Participants suggested that the most effective way to influence policies is through networks and relationships. Once an organisation has established credibility and relationships, it is much easier to effectively influence policy through formal and informal consultation processes.

In terms of communication, the main purposes were to inform and educate communities about new policies. A key activity in this area was policy translation and analysis. Since policies were often complicated and not easy to understand, the SPU could simplify these and analyse how they could affect individuals and families in the community, and the implications of national policies at a community level. The organisations that had established SPUs saw communication as a key part of what they do. They published policy reports that translated and analysed new or updated policies. These policy reports were often time responsive and had strong emphasis on the applicability and implications for practice.

Regarding research, both the focus group and the interviews suggested that an SPU might not be able to conduct big projects; however, small-scale research which focused on local perspectives would be desirable. Both the focus group and the interviews revealed that although research was expensive and time consuming, its results were essential to feed into the advocacy activities. In addition, given the current situation where local voices were often unheard, it is important for a community-based SPU to raise this local voice and perspective.

There were different opinions regarding taking on research and policy contract work. The Salvation Army believed that "it would be a distraction, result in conflict of interests, and would not generate sufficient surplus income



to be worthwhile." NZCCSS was not opposed to taking on contract work and said that contract work could bring in extra money to feed their core work. In fact, they did take some on themselves. However, their advice was to be clear about the purpose of the research and separate the contract work from their core work; and to be careful in choosing which contract work to take on so that they did not conflict their own voices.

Some current issues that the three agencies in the case study were working on included elder care, children and families, poverty and exclusion, housing, employment, the youth justice system, crime and safety, and inequality. These issues are likely to remain hot topics in the next two years. The roundtable participants suggested that Community Waitakere's proposed SPU could start with employment and housing issues, as those are the critical items for West Auckland at the moment.

## STRUCTURE

The structure of the established SPUs in the case-study organisations revealed modest units which were often comprised of one to three staff. For instance, the NZCCSS has three people: one executive, one policy adviser and one administrator. The Salvation Army has three analysts; it is a big organisation with relatively extensive resources and networks, and the SPU is just one of its units. The NZCCS is much smaller and is effectively an umbrella entity supported by a substantial network of Christian social-service organisations. In both organisations, the SPU was established because the leadership team believed that it was important, and they allocated a part of their organisation's income to the SPU. ESRA is a different model, with limited resources. It has only one paid staff member, and relies on a network of volunteers to conduct research to feed into the advocacy work. They also partner with academics at different universities in New Zealand in implementing research.

The roundtable participants spent a lot of time discussing what would be the best structure for a West Auckland SPU, given the organisation's context and limited resources. The participants suggested a collaboration model would be a good fit for this purpose. It could have a steering committee and reference groups, which could be built based both on issues (topics of interest) and functionalities. The SPU should have broad aims and topics of interest to draw in a range of organisations to join the reference groups. The reference groups would be the content experts, and the steering committee would take care of the oversight and agenda setting. A reference group could also be an advocacy or communication group who could help promote a certain issue; these could be groups of volunteers or existing networks (see Figure 1).

The steering committee would be a governance group, in charge of the oversight, setting the agenda, etc. Since this is a collaboration structure, the SPU would undertake the actual work and the coordination of activities. In this case, the SPU would need two or more staff with capability in policy advocacy, research and communication skills. The steering committee would set the agenda, then the SPU would mobilise resources from the reference groups to achieve it. Which agencies or organisations to include in the reference groups would depend on the aims and objectives that the steering committee set. The items in Figure 1 are simply examples.



Figure 1. Possible structure for the collaboration model.

For instance, if the SPU would like to influence policies on a housing issue, it could work with non-profits that provide transitional or emergency shelters in West Auckland to collect information about the current state of housing and homelessness in the area, and some of the special issues that the West Auckland community is facing, and get recommendations on what would be the best solutions given the local context and demographic. The SPU would then get this information to feed into its submissions to the relevant parliamentary committee. It could also use the communication network to raise awareness about some of the unique challenges for West Auckland in terms of housing, and get more attention from the government. The SPU could also translate updated policies in housing and pass this information to the community through its communication network.

## Funding

Funding and sustainability appeared to be the most challenging issue for all organisations. The unit at the Salvation Army was fortunate enough to have support from its parent organisation, which allocated about \$1 million a year for its activities. The unit therefore did not need to seek additional funding and was able to keep its independent position. The unit at NZCCSS also received its main source of funding from its own council, but it also sought additional funding by doing contract work. ESRA got its funding solely from donations, which was challenging to its sustainability.

For small community organisations, the participants in the study suggested keeping diverse sources of funding which could include donations, foundation grants, etc. Government funding could still be an option, but the SPU would need to be careful in selecting which topics to apply for, to avoid conflicts of interest or conflicting its own voice. Some potential foundations to apply to for grants include: Todd, Tindall, JR McKenzie, Foundation North, The Trusts Community Foundation, Action Station and the Health Research Council.

To set up the unit and get it started, study participants suggested calling for contributions from organisations in the reference groups (in the coalition model above). Since the nature of the coalition model is mutual benefit, in which the member organisations could benefit from the SPU by having it doing the policy advocacy they want and receiving policy advice, the member organisations could contribute a small amount of money annually to help fund the unit. For example, if the SPU could get 20 organisations to join the coalition, each organisation could contribute \$1000 per year for the first three years. This could then be used as start-up money to set up the unit, as well as to implement some of the first activities. Early successes were considered crucial to attract donations and foundation grants. If the unit could show its successes, it would be more likely to generate more support. Therefore, it is vital to be strategic in choosing the first few activities; these should be meaningful, but relatively quick and certain to achieve.

## Discussion and recommendations

The participants had no doubt of the value of an SPU to Community Waitakere. It would act as a hub for small social-service agencies to raise their voices safely without fear of losing funding. It could also be a cost-saving method for small social-service agencies who do not have much budget for advocacy. As evidenced in several studies, this collaboration structure, like coalition, is an effective way for non-profits to organise their advocacy activities (Elliott & Haigh, 2012; Fyall & McGuire, 2015) The collaboration structure not only helps involved non-profits to save costs, but it also allows the SPU to achieve more while spending less. The collaboration with reference groups would also help avoid repetition of work already done by other local organisations, and would utilise experts in the community while strengthening their voices at the same time. However, the key challenge would be the coordination and collaboration to ensure fluidity and time responsiveness. One way to tackle this would be to have a clear description of roles and responsibilities for both the steering committee and the reference groups, and a mandated responsibility to complete the work on time. Attracting the relevant reference groups would also be a challenge for the SPU. To overcome this, the SPU would need to be strategic in setting up its agenda so that it could align with other agencies' interests, ensuring that the work would bring mutual benefits. It would be important to get the interested agencies together and identify shared values, so that everyone felt included.

Regarding the SPU activities, the participants suggested three key

aspects, including research, advocacy and communication and translation of policies. Research would always be a challenge given the limited budget and funding. On the other hand, doing contracted research could lead to some additional income, but the topics might represent a compromise with the contracting agencies' agendas. One way to tackle this challenge would be to collaborate with non-profits that focus on doing research in New Zealand, such as ESRA, then combine their findings with some data collected locally in West Auckland or available from organisations in the reference groups. This would save time as well as cost.

The findings of the study suggested building relationships and connection with policymakers were the most important things for effective advocacy. This is congruent with results from the study by Fyall and McGuire (2015), in which strengthening relationships with government authorities was found to be the best way to promote change from within. A combination of both insider and outsider strategies was also emphasised as the most effective way to do advocacy (Fyall & McGuire, 2015; Schmid et al., 2008). Therefore, together with building relationships with policymakers and participating in policy consultation, the SPU could raise local residents' awareness and knowledge about policies that affect them, mobilising involvement from the grassroots. Translating complicated policies into simple terms and communicating them to local residents would come in handy for this strategy. In addition, the SPU could incorporate online technology into their daily work to save costs and promote efficiency. Given the collaboration structure of this SPU, coordination would be a complicated and time-consuming task. Using technology such as online communication, creating an online network and using the Cloud to share and store materials, for example, might help.

## Conclusion

The need for more grassroots-level policy advocacy activities is paramount. It does not only make policies more relevant and equitable for people but also helps people understand policies better. However, the biggest challenge remains funding. It will require greater collaboration from community organisations to make this happen. A change in government funding policy is also needed to help community organisations collaborate instead of competing for funding. Further research in evaluating the effectiveness of implemented strategies or implementation of the above recommendations would be valuable to SPUs.

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Change and development in Glen Eden 2017:  
Report to Waitakere Ranges Local Board

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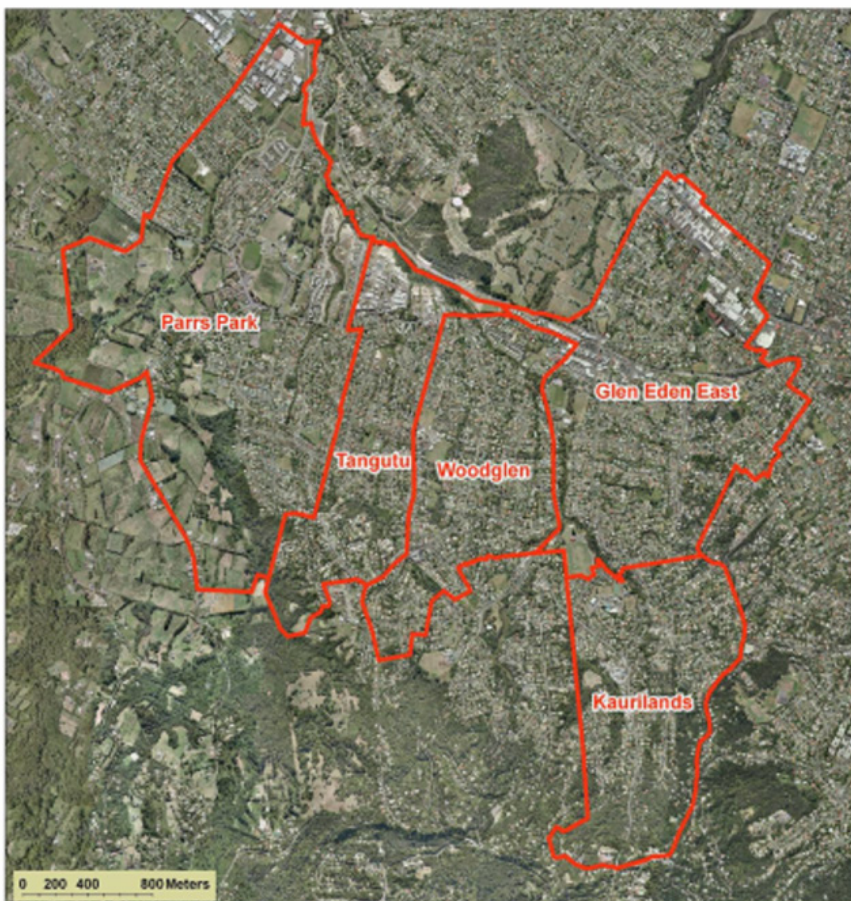
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# Change and development in Glen Eden 2017

## Report to Waitakere Ranges Local Board

DAVID HAIGH, DAVID KENKEL AND KATE DOSWELL <sup>1</sup>



Source: Google maps.

1

This paper has been expanded from the report previously published by ePress on 13.11.2017 at <https://www.unitec.ac.nz/epress/index.php/change-and-development-in-glen-eden-2017/>



## Abstract

This is a report on change and development issues facing Glen Eden. The Waitakere Ranges Local Board commissioned staff of the Social Practice Department of Unitec to carry out a two-stage report. The first stage was a literature search looking at material specific to Glen Eden as well as more theoretical information about development and growth. This second and final stage includes interviews carried out with key stakeholders in Glen Eden.

This report makes a number of suggestions to the Waitakere Ranges Local Board relating to redevelopment of the Glen Eden town centre, design and urban policies concerning future intensification of Glen Eden, and greater emphasis on strategies to deal with such matters as safety, cycleways and pedestrian amenity.

In making recommendations about growth and change there is an ever-present challenge: to ensure that all citizens, young old, new or long-term, Māori, Pākehā and people of many cultural backgrounds, feel they are not ignored but are included in the cultural and political life of Glen Eden and its surrounding areas.

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TABLE 1: GLEN EDEN – BRIEF SNAPSHOTS OF WHERE WE ARE NOW

|   | <i>Parrs Park West</i> | <i>Parrs Park</i> | <i>Tangatu</i> | <i>Woodglen</i> | <i>Glen Eden East</i> | <i>Kaurilands</i> | <i>Henderson – Massey</i> | <i>Whau</i>   | <i>Waitakere Ranges</i> | <i>Auckland Council</i> |
|---|------------------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Deprivation Index                         | 9                      | 9                 | 7              | 7               | 8                     | 3                 | Not available             | Not available | Not available           | Not available           |
| Household median Income                   | \$58,800               | \$66,900          | \$68,000       | \$67,400        | \$58,500              | \$88,500          | \$66,900                  | \$63,900      | \$79,700                | \$76,900                |
| Total population                          | 2139                   | 1362              | 3138           | 4569            | 7008                  | 3162              | 107,685                   | 72,594        | 48,396                  | 1,415,550               |
| Stated numbers born in New Zealand        | 1194                   | 696               | 1995           | 2919            | 3981                  | 2241              | Not available             | Not available | 31,902                  | Not available           |
| Stated numbers born overseas              | 735                    | 525               | 948            | 1362            | 2355                  | 798               | Not available             | Not available | 13,287                  | Not available           |
| <i>Stated Ethnicity %</i>                 |                        |                   |                |                 |                       |                   |                           |               |                         |                         |
| Māori %                                   | 16.7                   | 17.2              | 14.3           | 14.7            | 12.1                  | 8.9               | 15.9                      | 9.4           | 11                      | 10.7                    |
| European %                                | 40.7                   | 37.9              | 61.2           | 65.2            | 59.6                  | 86.9              | 55.8                      | 45.0          | 78.8                    | 59.310.7                |
| Pasifika %                                | 34.7                   | 34.8              | 21.0           | 20.2            | 17.5                  | 6.1               | 19.5                      | 18.4          | 10.6                    | 14.6                    |
| Asian %                                   | 21.5                   | 21                | 16.5           | 15.2            | 22.5                  | 8.8               | 21.8                      | 35.4          | 9.5                     | 23.1                    |
| Middle Eastern/ Latin American/ African % | 3.3                    | 7.5               | 3.1            | 2               | 1.8                   | 1.1               | 2.1                       | 2.5           | 1.9                     | 1.9                     |
| Other %                                   | 1.1                    | 0.7               | 1.0            | 1.7             | 1.1                   | 0.9               | 1.1                       | 0.9           | 1.2                     | 1.2                     |
| Number of households                      | 633                    | 387               | 1026           | 1536            | 2511                  | 1080              | Not available             | Not available | 16,623                  | Not available           |
| <i>Household &amp; Employment %</i>       |                        |                   |                |                 |                       |                   |                           |               |                         |                         |
| Number of private rentals                 | 186                    | 105               | 252            | 414             | 684                   | 213               | Not available             | Not available | 4,146                   | Not available           |
| Number of HNZ rentals                     | 63                     | 69                | 36             | 63              | 78                    | 12                | Not available             | Not available | Not available           | Not available           |
| Home ownership %                          | 43.9 %                 | 41.5 %            | 58.4 %         | 55.00 %         | 49.9 %                | 60.3 %            | 61.3%                     | 59.9%         | Not available           | Not available           |
| Median weekly rent 2013                   | \$350                  | \$310             | \$330          | \$320           | \$300                 | \$360             | Not available             | Not available | 73.3 %                  | 61.50%                  |
| Unemployment rate %                       | 13.6                   | 16.3              | 9.7            | 9.0             | 9.4                   | 6.0               | 9.7                       | 9.9           | 7                       | 8.1                     |

Source: Stats NZ, 2017

TABLE 2: DECILE RATINGS FOR GLEN EDEN SCHOOLS

| <i>School</i>            | <i>2014</i> | <i>2015</i> |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Glen Eden Intermediate   | 8           | 7           |
| Glen Eden School         | 4           | 3           |
| Konini School (Auckland) | 6           | 5           |
| Prospect School          | 3           | 2           |
| Kaurilands School        | 8           | 8           |

### Glen Eden – brief snapshots of where we are now

Glen Eden has demographics that differ significantly from the rest of the Waitakere Ranges Local Board areas. It is not as European and incomes are lower. Like the rest of Auckland, it is an expensive place to live. The average sale price for a house (three bedroom) in Glen Eden December 2017 was \$714,180. The average weekly rental was \$479. These figures have changed since the same date the previous year, with average Glen Eden sale prices in December 2016 being \$710,901 and rentals \$454 per week. In 2015 The average sale price for a house (three bedroom) in Glen Eden December was \$648,401. The average weekly rental was \$430 (Barfoot & Thompson, 2015, 2016, 2017). It goes without saying that average incomes have not risen to the same extent as house prices over the past few years.

Moving west to east across the five Census Area Units (CAUs) included in this study, the trend is for the most western CAUs to have the highest deprivation indexes and the largest numbers of Māori, Pasifika, Asian and MELAA peoples. These are also areas where more people are reliant on renting and fewer people own their own homes.

Between 32% and 37% of people in Glen Eden identify as born outside New Zealand compared to an Auckland average of 39.1%.

Kaurilands CAU is an anomaly in having such a large percentage of Europeans, a deprivation rate of only 3 and household incomes higher than average for the overall local board area. While much of the Kaurilands CAU does not fall within Glen Eden's footprint as a suburb it is intimately connected with Glen Eden, thought of as part of Glen Eden by some long-term locals and provides a useful contrast to the other CAUs.

The decile ratings for Glen Eden schools in Table 2 show a wide range, from decile 8 down to decile 2 for the most deprived.

The following map shows Housing New Zealand units. The largest clusters are in the Parrs Park CAU.



## Broader background – Auckland growth

Glen Eden is strategically located between two larger metropolitan centres, New Lynn and Henderson, in West Auckland. It has good access to public transport by bus and rail. It is an area planned for urban development including population growth, urban growth and intensification. A key issue relates to the provision of urban amenity to keep up with population growth. The Auckland Region is undergoing a population rise of considerable proportions as noted by Stats NZ:

The Auckland region is projected to account for three-fifths of New Zealand's population growth between 2013 and 2043, with an increase of 740,000 from just under 1.5 million to 2.2 million (medium projection). Auckland's population is estimated to have surpassed 1.5 million in the year ended June 2014, and is projected to reach 2 million by 2033. In 2028, Auckland would be home to 37 percent of New Zealand's population, compared with 34 percent in 2013. By 2043, the population of Auckland could make up 40 percent of New Zealand's population. (2015, p. 5)

Crothers (2015) notes that a major proportion of growth is due to migration, and the government has a high migration policy. Crothers says:

Net migration does make a significant contribution to Auckland's population growth. New immigrants and New Zealanders returning from overseas add directly to Auckland's population. The medium projection assumes average net migration of 16,000 a year during 2014–18, and

8,000 a year thereafter. As most of these migrants are aged 15–39 years, they may also contribute births to Auckland’s population growth. (p. 22)

At the same time, it is noted in the Auckland Council report, *Auckland Profile* (2013), that the population of Auckland is ageing. Hence, we can forecast for the foreseeable future increased population growth, continued ethnic diversity and a steady ageing of the population.

Auckland’s urban areas are experiencing pressures such as rapid urban growth and intensification. These issues are all interconnected with gentrification, the provision of adequate urban amenity and affordable housing. What follows will attempt to unravel these issues and try to show a way forward.

## Existing plans for Glen Eden

Some existing documents will have important consequences for Glen Eden:

1. *The Auckland Unitary Plan*. This formally approved plan for the region includes opportunities for greater intensification of an area surrounding and within the Glen Eden town centre. This plan includes provision for medium-density townhouses and apartments. When completed, this increased level of intensification will result in more people living and working in the central area of Glen Eden.
2. Glen Eden town centre plans. Two documents have been prepared:
  - 2.1 *Glen Eden: Urban Design Framework*. (Lunday, 2010). Waitakere City Council.
  - 2.2 *Glen Eden Town Centre Implementation Plan* (2013). Waitakere Ranges Local Board.

The plans have key suggestions for revitalising the town centre:

1. Upgrade the intersection of Oates and Glendale Roads.
2. Improved general and interpretive signs.
3. Glenmall Place streetscape upgrade including Market Square (lighting, footpaths, street trees and area for market and events).
4. West Coast Road streetscape upgrade.
5. Arts and sculpture strategy.
6. Laneways upgrade.
7. Glenmall Plaza: seating, shade and play area.
8. Promotion and marketing strategy/budget.

These concepts should become part of a strategy for the town centre along with budgets and timelines. Additional ideas from key stakeholders for the town centre upgrade are included on page 37 and pages 41 to 45 of this report.

## Urban development

The policy shift towards greater urban intensification has been influenced by research carried out by Newman and Kenworthy (1989). They demonstrated the link between low urban density and high fuel use. They showed a positive link between reduced car dependence as a result of greater urban intensification and sustainability, including health benefits.

Allen (2015) points out that, "Auckland...has enacted an urban growth management strategy premised on the concepts: 'liveability' and a 'quality compact city'" (p. 86). She goes on to argue that, "...a key element in the transition to more urbanised environments is related to the extent to which urban amenities have a role in resident perceptions of quality of urban life" (p. 87). Urban amenities include public transport, schools, professional services (doctors, dentists), council amenities like parks, recreational facilities and libraries, and private sector amenities such as retailing, cafés and other services. This has become especially important for the increasing numbers of 'work-at-homers' who may deal with feelings of isolation by accessing local amenities such as cafés, print centre and local gyms.

These points are well made. It is important to reflect on the serious mistakes that were made during the rapid regional growth in the 1960s and 1970s, when isolated suburbs were created in South and West Auckland. These suburbs were established without important infrastructure and services, and resulted in major social problems such as social isolation, mental-health issues and the lack of any social, transport, professional, retail or recreational opportunities and services. (See reports: *Social Services in West Auckland* [1976] and *Social Planning for New Communities* [1975]).

Allen carried out a study that involved 57 interviewees from the Auckland communities of Takapuna, Te Atatu Peninsula, Kingsland and Botany Downs. Around 80% of respondents mentioned that proximity to urban amenity was a factor in making their housing choice. Most were happy with low-to-medium-density housing. She concludes that, "...the majority of those interviewed would trade-off standalone living for low-rise apartments or terraced house living...if urban amenities were integrated into their neighbourhoods in line with the increasing number of residents" (p. 97).

This position is supported by a 2015 study carried out by the Auckland Council (*The Housing We'd Choose*). "A key finding from this research is that Aucklanders desire a greater volume and choice of accommodation options. A significant proportion of respondents chose more intensive forms of housing, and they were prepared to trade-off location and dwelling type ahead of dwelling size, as the price increased" (p. 49). Faced with financial constraints, 48% said they would choose something other than detached housing (Auckland Council, 2015a).

Based on available research on the issue of intensification, Syme, McGregor and Mead came to some useful conclusions:

While acknowledging that social issues are a result of a complex mix of social, economic, cultural and political factors, available research would suggest that social problems are likely to be minimised if intensive housing is:

- Well designed in terms of internal and external living spaces.
- Well located in terms of being accessible to a range of services and activities.
- Meets the needs of a diverse range of households in terms of income and demographics, that is, it is not associated with one particular group in society. (2005, p. 2)

They also point to two important benefits coming from local surveys about intensification. They conclude that intensified housing provides opportunities for affordable housing and reduced travel costs (2005). Turner (2010) would also add a further benefit: a reduction in energy use of around 20% through improved solar orientation and insulation. Terraced housing is eminently suitable for such gains through compact site planning.

Mead and McGregor, in a 2007 report to the Auckland Regional Council, pointed out that "...the intensive housing segment of the market has grown rapidly over the 10 years to 2006..." (p. 1) and represents 35% of the urban housing market within the region. They argued that, "The benefits of living in and owning intensive housing versus other housing forms needs to be defined." They went on to point out, in much the same way that Allen argued, that, "real gains will only come from substantially upgrading the environment within selected areas" (p. 3).

However, the Auckland Council's 2015 study showed that West Auckland, in comparison with the total regional urban areas, is lacking in housing variety. The report shows the following comparisons (p. 44):

#### PRESENT HOUSING STOCK AS A PERCENTAGE.

|                      | <i>Stand-alone</i> | <i>Units, including terraced housing</i> | <i>Apartments</i> |
|----------------------|--------------------|--|-------------------|
| West Auckland        | 85                 | 13                                       | 1                 |
| Regional urban areas | 76                 | 20                                       | 4                 |

The *Auckland Unitary Plan* has zoned major parts of Glen Eden for medium-density housing including terraced housing and apartments. This is likely, over time, to correct the imbalance and provide greater choice for people. A key danger is that this private housing will be unaffordable for working people. Policies requiring or encouraging developers to provide a percentage of affordable houses may mitigate this potential problem, an issue that will be discussed further in this report.

## Urban design

In Mboup's report on *Streets as Public Spaces and Drivers of Urban Prosperity* (2013) he suggests that streets should be more than just places for vehicles to move. He calls for:

...more sustainable urban development, such as promoting mixed land use, supporting more compact development and transport options beyond the automobile. Among the avenues proposed are promoting environmentally friendly public transport and designing streets in a way that pedestrians and cyclists have equal share of streets. (p. vii)

In the classic study of urban life by Jane Jacobs (1961), she supports the need for an upgraded environment and suggests that this can often be achieved by widening footpaths, which can then be used by people for a variety of uses (trees, music, art, seating, cafés), and especially by children and young people for play and meeting friends. More people on the streets means there is a greater level of informal surveillance and this leads to improved safety. She goes on to point out that we must be careful not to suppose that good housing and services are all that is needed to solve social problems. She says, "...there is no direct, simple relationship between good housing and good behavior" (p. 122).

Jane Jacobs argued that density cannot be based on abstractions but rather it should be based on specific circumstances, situations and locations. She did, however, include four conditions to generate exuberant diversity (p. 164):

1. A district should service more than one primary function. This will ensure the presence of people on the streets who have different purposes and schedules.
2. Most blocks must be short with opportunities for people to turn corners.
3. Buildings should be a mixture of age and conditions so that they vary in their economic yield.
4. There should be a sufficient density of people, especially those who live there.

In a later section to this report there is debate on child-friendly cities and age-friendly cities. Both these concepts could inform policy on urban development and design.

## Affordable housing

The Auckland Unitary Plan Independent Hearings Panel reporting to Auckland Council on the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan (PAUP) recommended removing any specific policy on affordable housing from the plan. It did not



consider the Resource Management Act gives council the authority to act in a redistributive manner. It states, "The Panel also notes the Plan on its own is not able to deliver affordable housing" (2016, p. 58). The role of the plan, in relation to affordable housing, is to enable housing supply and housing choice. In effect this means that the plan will focus on the zoning of land for a variety of housing types to meet the demands of the market. Unless council plans to become an active player in the supply of affordable housing, it and the local boards can only encourage the market to supply affordable housing through offering suitable incentives. With the change of government in 2017, opportunities may occur in the future for local authorities to be more involved in the provision of affordable housing such as pensioner housing, social housing in conjunction with community organisations, and private or rental affordable housing. It will be important to monitor government policy changes and act accordingly.

Glen Eden is one of the many suburbs of Auckland where, post the late 1950s, the building of new houses for young families was stimulated by demand-side approaches. Typically, these involved incentives such as cheap government loans for new houses and the option of capitalising the family benefit. Parrs Park CAU (and the astrologically named streets in particular) was a place where many young families in the mid-1970s attained the kiwi dream of home ownership by using incentives such as cheap loan options and capitalised family benefits to invest in group housing schemes undertaken by companies such as Neil Housing.

Many of the houses were relatively small compared to average house size today. They were built quickly, simply and cheaply and were seen as ideal for young, new home owners (C. Moore, personal communication, December 12, 2016). Perhaps ironically, it is just these very streets that now have high levels of private rentals. It seems those enabled by demand-side approaches to get a start on the property ladder have now moved on to better things, leaving the area a magnet for small-scale investors in rental housing.

Social housing can be broadly defined as the provision of housing by non-profit organisations, agencies or branches of local or central government, for those in social and/or economic need. Social housing (or community housing, as it is sometimes called) is also sometimes seen as a way to address the inequalities in housing that occur when housing is left solely in the hands of the market.

In New Zealand, organisations can register as Community Housing Providers and become eligible to receive the accommodation supplement when they provide rental housing for tenants that meet certain criteria. In general, organisations that become Community Housing Providers source their own funding to acquire properties rather than receive direct grants from central or local government. A welcome change is the recent announcement of \$24.4 million to be allocated to Community Housing Providers in the Auckland region.

With the change of government in 2017, and with it a greater commitment towards the goal of affordable housing, there may be opportunities for local authorities and local boards to become involved in the supply of affordable housing, including housing for the elderly.

The ten largest Auckland Community Housing Providers are as follows:

- Accessible Properties Ltd
- Airedale Property Trust/Lifewise
- Auckland Community Housing Trust
- Bays Community Housing Trust
- COURT Community Housing
- Habitat for Humanity (Auckland)
- Keys Social Housing
- Monte Cecilia Housing Trust
- New Zealand Housing Foundation
- The Salvation Army
- Vision West Community Trust

(Auckland Community Housing Providers Network, 2016)

To mention just two examples:

*Vision West Community Trust* is involved in the proposed high-rise residential development on the site close to Glen Eden Railway station.

*Bays Community Housing Trust* is a good example of an Auckland initiative that seeks to both secure housing for the vulnerable in our communities and also weave the kinds of strong neighbourhood relationships that create belonging and community.

It is important to note that both of these agencies take an active role in undertaking community engagement. It is not enough to simply provide support solely for the clients of their service. To make social housing successful it is essential to bring local communities on board. There is a strong role for local boards in assisting this process.

As the 2014 research of Lisa Woolley (CEO of Vision West) makes clear providing social housing without social support is ineffective. Tenants struggling with multiple social issues need assistance to manage these and it is also critical that local communities are engaged in ways that enable support of social housing initiatives rather than feeling threatened by them. Supportive facilities and a community-development approach are critical factors in ensuring the success of social-housing ventures.

One of the key informants informally approached in developing this piece made the comment that social housing is always politically unpopular until the social issues that accompany it emerge, then it becomes popular to deal with it. If social housing is to be part of the mix that allows Glen Eden to retain its current diversity, then it will require the kind of commitment from the local board and other agencies that acknowledges successes will always be accompanied by challenges.

## Employment opportunities

There are few employment opportunities in Glen Eden and its surrounding area. Out of an employed population in the WRLB area of around 32,000, only 5000 of these people work in the district. Most of these jobs are in the service sector. In addition, the number of businesses is also low, with only 5500. This deficit in the employment ratio for West Auckland has been known for many years. The consequence of this deficit is high levels of commuting by public transport or private vehicle to other parts of Auckland for work.

This is an issue for West Auckland as a whole, and coordinated action is needed to advocate to Auckland Council and Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development to promote employment in the West. In addition, it is also important to protect existing businesses such as those small-scale, light-industrial businesses along West Coast Road. They are important in providing local employment.

The WRLB could also investigate opportunities for increasing the availability of small commercial spaces for enterprises including the creative arts. The provision of such spaces is a reasonably common activity for local authorities in a number of overseas countries. Wellington City Council has a strategy of encouraging access for artists to underused commercial spaces.

## Gentrification

Gentrification is deeply rooted in social dynamics and economic trends. Its signs, effects and trajectories are to a large degree determined by its local context; the physical and the social characteristics of the neighbourhoods in question, the positions and the goals of the actors, the dominant functions of the city, the nature of economic restructuring and local government policy. The study of the city should pay heed to this complexity.... In the end, the 'why' of gentrification is less important than the 'how' and the repercussions of the process. (van Weesep, 1994, p. 80)

Gentrification can be defined as the replacement or displacement of working people on low incomes from a geographic area by more-affluent people moving into the area. A typical scenario is where property values rise and those on lower incomes are unable to afford the increasing rents or to purchase a house, which is likely to be beyond their means.

Auckland saw this happen in the 1970s and 80s in areas like Ponsonby, Freemans Bay, Parnell and Grafton, when it became attractive for people to move from the suburbs into the city fringe to reduce transport costs and utilise the major facilities such as two universities, CBD services and Auckland Hospital. The purchase and refurbishment of low-cost housing (previously often rental properties) became part of this process. The 1990s saw this process linked to the neoliberal emphasis on markets and the contemporary role that property plays in wealth creation. It was during this period that

Auckland's inner city saw "...unprecedented residential development centred on apartments and terraced/town house developments" (Murphy, 2008, p. 2522).

Clark (2005) argues that "Gentrification cannot be eradicated in capitalist societies, but it can be curtailed and the playing field can be changed such that when gentrification does take place it involves replacement rather than displacement..." (p. 28). The secret, he argues, is compromise between various stakeholders.

Levy, Comey and Padilla (2006) suggest that there are three types of strategies to reduce gentrification-related displacement:

- Affordable housing production. This requires land available at an affordable price and suitably zoned.
- Affordable housing retention. This requires current residents to remain in their houses at affordable rents. It might also give preference to existing tenants if policies are introduced to privatise state housing.
- Asset building. This involves increasing individuals' assets so that they have increased means to enter the housing market.

They also note four lessons from studies of city gentrification that are important "...regardless of city size, housing market strength or stage of gentrification" (p. 593). These are:

1. The availability of land. This might involve land banking early for future housing developments.
2. Local government involvement to include policies to proactively support affordable housing, neighbourhood revitalisation and the provision of facilities and services.
3. Community involvement in providing advice on local plans, housing needs and housing pressure points.
4. Economic development. The promotion of the local economy, support for local businesses and buying local are some of the strategies they suggest.

Two other issues relating to Glen Eden that need to be considered are:

- Infill housing.
- The prospect of the sale and privatisation of existing state houses that are pepper-potted within the existing single-dwelling zone.

The first issue may lead to public disquiet as new forms of more intensified housing develop and the nature of the community changes. The second could lead to the displacement of state-house tenants. The large redevelopment of Glen Innes, for example, has been called a state-led gentrification process (Cole, 2015) and has resulted in strong opposition from a local community group – the Tāmaki Housing Group. Such a redevelopment is unlikely to occur in Glen Eden due to a different scale of state housing. However, any move to

privatise Glen Eden state houses will have an impact on existing state tenants. This is a particular risk for the high deprivation areas of Glen Eden such as the Parrs Park area, where Housing New Zealand currently provides 26.7% of the rental accommodation. This is the highest rate of any area in West Auckland and leaves the Parrs Park population uniquely vulnerable to swings in housing policy.

Given the pressures on the housing market due to a high immigration policy and the inadequate supply of affordable housing in Auckland, a consequence would seem to be continued gentrification. In relation to Glen Eden, this might take the form of middle-income families and individuals purchasing existing single dwellings, similar people purchasing new terraced housing units and apartments (for rent or occupation), and the displacement of state tenants if state houses in Glen Eden are sold through the open market rather than to social-housing providers.

## Perceptions of safety

A 2017 West Auckland report on safety (Moore, Bridgman, Moore, & Grey) shows that this is a public concern. This is in contrast to the recent fall in levels of crime committed in West Auckland. Particular groups see themselves as being vulnerable, e.g. young people, women, Māori, Pasifika people and Asians. For example, the report confirms "...women feeling less confident about answering their front door, walking alone in the street after nightfall, letting their children walk without an adult to the local park, and traffic safety" (p. 30).

The report makes reference to the Stoks Limited 2014 study (commissioned by Auckland Council) on safety issues in the wider Henderson area, and notes some important observations that would make a positive contribution to perceptions of safety. These observations are applicable to other areas:

1. Community engagement processes that increase social connections at the local level.
2. Particular initiatives to link people across different cultures.
3. A wider debate within communities about providing more positive messages on the strengths of communities rather than those arising from the media and social media.
4. Initiatives that encourage public participation in the prioritisation of spending at the local level.
5. Investment in environmental initiatives that provide "...attractive, well-lit, well-resourced and accessible public/community centres, streets, parks, footpaths and cycleways, and other spaces that local people and visitors feel comfortable using" (p. 36).

The report goes on to stress the importance of community development:

It is the neighbourhood measures (saying hello to your neighbours, breaking down the cultural barriers, having community events and community BBQs, having a say in neighbourhood developments, keeping an eye out for each other and the children of the community) which do increase people's sense of control and engagement. (p. 34)

## Urban development charter: Child-friendly and age-friendly policies

A basic premise and a recurring theme within the literature is that child-friendly communities are sustainable communities and that one cannot be separated from the other. (Woolcock & Steele, 2008, p. 5)

Auckland Council has a strategy that promotes Auckland as a child-friendly city. The 2014 strategy (*I Am Auckland – Children and Young People's Strategic Action Plan*) sets out seven principles:

1. I have a voice. I am valued and take part.
2. I am important. I belong. I am cared for and feel safe.
3. I am happy, healthy and thriving.
4. I have the same chances to do well and to try.
5. I can get around to be connected to people.
6. Auckland is my playground.
7. Rangatahi tu rangatira. All rangatahi will thrive.

There is an expectation within the plan that local boards, through their annual plans, will implement actions to put children and young people first (p. 14).

The Woolcock and Steele report (p. 6) suggests the following policies for ensuring a local authority is friendly towards children:

1. Increase the ability of children to make choices and independently access a diverse range of community services and activities.
2. Enhance the capacity for children to engage in play and develop competence in their local community environment.
3. Ensure the rights of children to be safe and healthy within community public places.
4. Increase the ability of children to feel secure and connected within their

physical and social environments.

5. Create spaces that offer children a sense of welcome, belonging and support.
6. Increase opportunities for children to access green, natural areas for play and relaxation.

In addition, the report noted some key concepts:

*Key Concept 1 – Agency*

“Children spoke of wanting to make choices and have some control over their own lives within age-appropriate boundaries” (p. 8).

*Key Concept 2 – Safety and feeling secure*

They “...craved safe spaces that allowed them to participate in activities” (p. 8).

*Key Concept 3 – Positive sense of self*

This involves a positive sense of being valued and respected.

- Other concepts:
- Activities for fun and competence
- Spaces for children
- Access to activities
- Child-friendly environments
- Natural places in which to explore
- A desire to exercise, keep fit and healthy

Much of the literature on child-friendly and age-friendly communities makes the perhaps unsurprising point that if the built environment works well for children and the elderly it generally works well for everybody. Communities where design encourages people to engage with each other have the sense of safety that ‘informal surveillance’ informed design creates; communities where people are able to access services and recreation space without a car; and where people have easy and safe access to nature are both good places for everybody to live and more environmentally sustainable.

The population of Auckland is steadily ageing. Auckland Council reports (2015b) that in the Waitakere Ranges Local Board area there are 4500 people aged 65 years and over, which is 9.4% of the population. The report also notes, “The proportion that had lived in their current dwelling for 30 years or longer was particularly high in the Waitakere Ranges Local Board area (38.1%)...” (p. 6).

The World Health Organisation (WHO) (2007) has published a guide for developing age-friendly cities. It includes advice on:

- Outdoor spaces and buildings

- Transportation
- Housing
- Respect and social inclusion
- Social participation
- Communication and information
- Civic participation and employment
- Community support and health services

It is also worth noting that many older people do not have access to the internet. In a study by Koopman-Boyden, Cameron, Davey and Richardson (2014), they found that 39% of people aged between 65 and 74 years had no access to the internet. For people aged 75 and over, 68% did not have access to the internet. This compares to an average of 90% access to the internet for all younger age groups. There are a number of important benefits to internet access, such as social connectedness, loneliness reduction and greater independence in accessing information and contacting friends and family. Koopman-Boyden et al. state, "Non-internet use did...contribute to feelings of being stigmatised and being side-lined because of others' assumptions about universal use of the medium" (p. vi).

The literature on child- and age-friendly cities, along with the aspirations of Auckland Council, may be very useful for the future development of Glen Eden simply because they provide sets of easily accessible and practical benchmarks against which proposed development may be measured.

The Council of Europe adopted the *European Urban Charter* (1992), which establishes principles for:

- Transport and mobility
- Environment and nature in towns
- The physical form of cities
- The urban architectural heritage
- Housing
- Urban security and crime prevention
- Disadvantaged and disabled persons in towns
- Sport and leisure in urban areas
- Culture in towns
- Multicultural integration in towns
- Health in towns
- Citizen participation, urban management and urban planning
- Economic development in cities

Based on the above and the conclusions to this report, a draft charter for Glen Eden has been produced (see Appendix).



## Key stakeholder analysis

In 2017, 15 stakeholders were interviewed based on suggestions from staff of the WRLB. Those interviewed were asked a set of open-ended questions and the interviews were recorded. The recordings were transcribed, allowing the identification of key themes. These themes have been considered according to common views of the interviewees. The eight key themes are as follows:

- Intensification
- Urban design
- Transport and traffic
- Upgrade of the town centre
- Facilities and services
- Safety
- Social issues and community development

### INTENSIFICATION

In general, participants were not opposed to greater intensification in and around the town centre. One person said: “I think intensification is just starting. ...I deliver flyers to households and what you notice now is far more infill housing down the backs of properties than when we first came here. Absolutely doubled, but now we are starting to see the changes of like apartments arriving, which is going to change us again.”

Most participants (12) did express concerns about the implications of intensification. One commented, “I want to see some plans that people have well thought out the social impact of those on the people that are going to be living there....”

The issues around intensification are summed up below:

1. That social and physical infrastructure should keep up with any population growth. This would include such facilities as local green space, community facilities, schools, as well as well-designed public spaces.
2. Almost all suggested that good urban design should be a key requirement of any intensification of the area. Some wanted more public input into such matters. Mention was made about using the Auckland Council design guidelines and the Auckland Urban Design Panel to ensure that the proposed buildings met modern standards.
3. There was concern expressed by many (14) about the proposed ten-storey apartment blocks alongside the rail station. In particular, there was concern expressed about the number of one-bedroomed apartments in the design. In reality this means there will be few children within the blocks. Some suggested that the WRLB should negotiate with the developer to seek changes to a mixed form of development with one and two bedrooms.

## URBAN DESIGN

There was support for improved urban design and mention again was made to utilise the design guidelines mentioned above. Two areas were of concern: the town centre and the proposed ten-storey apartment blocks alongside the rail station. The issue of the town centre is covered in the next sub-heading. One comment about the ten-storey buildings is noted below:

“The location of the ten-storey building is already congested. We are already having huge amounts of floods because our infrastructure can’t cope and now we are going to have ten-storey apartments using the same infrastructure.”

The increase in density due to infill housing in the suburban areas of Glen Eden was also seen as a positive. One commented that, “The suburban areas are not as run-down as they were and I think that is something to do with gentrification and it seems to have a bit of a ripple effect.”

## GLEN EDEN TOWN CENTRE

The need for an upgrade of the town centre was a subject raised by all participants. They were concerned about access, design, safety and facilities with the town centre and the need for a complete upgrade. A number of comments highlight concerns:

“I think the WINZ office, the liquor store and the TAB should move away from the town centre because from the WINZ office you get a lot of people that come out of the meetings quite annoyed and the liquor store is bang across from it. And the TAB is adjacent to the liquor store. So you have a triangle of negativity that tends to carry through the day and night.”

“You know how some communities have a very obvious central focus point like, for example, New Lynn.”

“I would love us to have like LynnMall or West City with our own movie theatre, that would be a dream.”

“I say most women like me would not be shopping here for clothing. We don’t have furniture shops. We used to have shoe shops.”

“I think the shopping centre is an abomination.”

“I think you can tell a bit about a community by the number of two-dollar shops and bakeries, and they are all down there.”

Participants (5) noted the difficulty for pedestrians, e.g. parents with pushchairs, and older people. Also noted was the lack of children’s play area and equipment. A number (9) have noted safety concerns, especially at night-time. Safety issues are dealt with in more detail in the next sub-section. A number of female participants (8) said they would not go to the town centre at night. Some commented on aggressive beggars and rough sleepers affecting

the image of the area. In summary, they wanted to see the town centre upgraded in the following ways:

1. Greater levels of pedestrianisation
2. Restrictions on angle parking
3. Provision of children's play area and equipment
4. Provision of quiet seating facilities with green spaces
5. Separate parking area
6. Improved lighting

A number of participants said they wanted the WRLB to plan for some sort of social centre in or near the town centre that might cater for young people as a drop-in centre, and a place where older people might meet. Also mentioned by some was the concept of space for a regular farmers' market.

Some (5) recognised that there is an issue of trying to cater for car parking as well as the provision of public space. One said, "Parking is very tight. There is angle parking both sides and with the big SUVs you've got today, if you get through Glen Eden safely you are doing well, you are doing very well."

Another commented that the town-centre plan provides guidance on this. Mention was made of previous plans to revitalise the town centre. One commented, "When we were still under Waitakere City Council, there was a project to revitalise Glen Eden town centre and they had some good ideas."

#### SAFETY

Safety was mentioned by many of the participants (12). The following concerns were raised:

1. Safety issues in the town centre at night, which has been dealt with above.
2. Traffic safety. It was suggested there needs to be a careful evaluation of traffic safety along key points and corridors in the Glen Eden roading system. Of particular concern for those who cycle is the lack of cycleway facilities. One commented, "It is absolutely not safe for cyclists. There is no biking path around Glen Eden. It starts to get safer from Sunnyvale then it goes into Henderson and it is a lot safer."
3. Safety of patrons using the train service. Two argued that there are too many bad incidents on the Western Line. One said, "But it is not unusual and you do hear about situations all the time where the trains are not safe."
4. There is a perception of safety concerns by people using the rail Park and Ride area, especially at night-time. They have suggested better lighting. The following is from a regular user: "The Park and Ride area is safe in the daytime. The moment darkness starts to prevail, it gets a

little bit scary walking alone to your car.”

5. Many expressed concern at the rail, road and pedestrian crossing by the rail station. It was suggested this would worsen due to increased population, increased car use and the site of the proposed ten-storey apartment blocks. They suggested a complete safety audit of this crossing. One comment sums up the feeling: “The two ten-storey buildings that are going here, apparently the effects on this intersection are going to be less than minor but the intersection is a nightmare now without this building.”
6. Practically all stakeholders (11) mentioned the need for a greater police presence in Glen Eden. Comment was made that the community constable only spends six hours per week in Glen Eden.

However, one participant observed a good feeling of safety in Glen Eden’s suburban areas. He noted that children can walk around the suburb safely. He said, “The good thing about where I live is that I have seen children as young as five and seven, walking alone to the dairy.”

#### FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Participants were generally appreciative of the many facilities and services in Glen Eden. Many mentioned the excellent library service and Parris Park. Some comments were as follows:

“Parris Park does have a pool. It has the walk, perimeter almost 2k, which is beautiful. Many people love it. It’s got a kiddies’ playground, it’s got the playground where you can play cricket, football or rugby.”

“Parris Park is beautiful. They have done a really nice children’s area. I take my grandchildren there and there’s always people playing sports on those fields.”

“I love what they have done with Parris Park, love the slide and our kids talk about it.”

“The library created a focal point and uplifted the feeling of the area.”

“I would say that they are predominantly Māori and Pacific Island people using the library computers.”

There were also useful suggestions from participants for improved facilities:

- Greater use and publicity for the public use of Waikumete Cemetery. One said, “I would like to see the public using Waikumete Cemetery as a park because you have got flora and fauna there. Beautiful wildflowers, wild orchids and little bats.”
- The use of the Glen Eden Playhouse for cinema shows.
- The provision of public facilities and open space within the town centre. This has been dealt with in the subsection on the Glen Eden town centre.

## SOCIAL ISSUES

Participants raised a number of social concerns including:

- Homelessness. Participants tended to take a non-judgemental position and noted that these people are in need of assistance. One said that facilities are needed for the homeless with “hot showers, that can have lockers, access to healthcare, then homelessness doesn’t need to be something that sits in one area and just gets moved on...”
- Aggressive begging. A number (five) noted the increase in people begging. In particular, they disliked any aggressive begging. One said, “Beggars are often aggressive.”
- Multicultural Glen Eden. Participants welcomed the new multi-culturalism of the area. A number (six) suggested that multi-culturalism could be celebrated by holding cultural events, including food festivals.
- Inequality. A number (eight) recognised the problem of inequality. One said, “There is a bigger gap between the haves and have-nots, so there is more poverty within families. There are more families in crisis.”
- Community development. A number (six) mentioned the need for the WRLB to support the community, through general support and funding. Examples of how the WRLB could foster community development are included in the conclusions and recommendations. When asked if people of Glen Eden mixed socially, the answer was often in the negative. One summed up the views: “The people tend to be very wary of each other.”
- Public participation and engagement. Comments relating to this were as follows: “Engagement is what you need. You need a community...It worries me seeing older people sitting in their homes lonely.”

## TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

Issues tended to focus on parking, the needs of pedestrians and cyclists (also mentioned in subsection [d] on the topic of safety). One said, “I don’t think traffic is a problem in Glen Eden in the way that it is in New Lynn, which is a nightmare.” In relation to cycling and the needs of pedestrians, another said, “I would like to see our cycleways and the pedestrian routes strengthened and connected to the town centre better.” A further comment was: “It is difficult to get around Glen Eden if you are a pedestrian.”

## Conclusions

These conclusions are based on research (literature search, and interviews with key stakeholders) and have the aims of mitigating negative consequences of change and development with a backdrop of social justice, community engagement and sustainability of our natural and physical environment.

### URBAN DESIGN

The local board should champion good urban design in all new significant development. In particular, urban intensification in and around the Glen Eden town centre should be subject to careful urban-design scrutiny. This report advocates use of the Auckland Council design guidelines as well as principles within the child- and age-friendly city concepts.

### GLEN EDEN TOWN CENTRE

Redesign of the town centre should be on the local board's agenda as a matter of priority.

### STRENGTHENING ALLIANCES

Social-housing providers need the support of local authorities. Support can involve direct funding, but just as usefully it could involve working collaboratively from a shared vision for Glen Eden. There are opportunities for powerful synergies if the capacity of the local board to engage with local communities is added to the targeted work of social-housing providers.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

This could be conceived of as operating in two distinct stages.

*First:* a broad consultation with the community with the aim of developing a charter (see Appendix) for how change should proceed in Glen Eden. Possibly this could be expanded across all three local boards in the west to lend a regional flavour to the charter. Specific groups that should not be excluded are children, older people and mana whenua.

*Second:* local board support and guidance of longer-term community development approaches to supporting Glen Eden as a place of diverse neighbourhoods. This would be done best in partnership with community groups, some of which exist now, and possibly with new groups whose development could be supported by the board.

### LOBBYING FOR CHANGE

There are a number of areas of policy where a local board might advocate. These include:

- Improvements in terms of social housing provision and affordable housing.
- Provision of levies from unearned property values due to policy changes such as new zoning of land.

- Safety concerns, whether these are due to traffic, transport, social or crime concerns.
- Government (and its agencies) policy or legislation that has a negative impact on its area. For example, any decision to privatise Housing New Zealand properties should not be carried out until all the consequences are understood. Such a process should involve the local board.
- Policies arising from Auckland Council and its council-controlled organisations (CCOs) that are likely to negatively affect the area.

#### CREATING A CHARTER OR SET OF PRINCIPLES FOR GUIDING CHANGE IN GLEN EDEN

As briefly discussed, the principles of child-friendly and age-friendly cities give some hint of what sorts of principles such a charter might include. Done well, a charter would be multi-dimensional in being both socially aspirational in terms of how Glen Eden peoples would relate to each other and eminently practical in drawing on what is known about how design can work to create safer, sustainable, diverse and inclusive communities. Such a charter could provide both a moral reference point in examining proposed developments and a practical set of criteria against which proposals could be checked.

In our opinion, developing a charter should be carried out in partnership with the community. Using community-development principles of allowing process to dictate outcome rather than using process to validate a predetermined goal would (in our opinion) lead to a robust conclusion with stronger buy-in from multiple local stakeholders.

While charters (or sets of principles) have no legal weight, they can, if utilised sensibly, create considerable leverage for change. The sorts of leverage envisaged include the simple ones of creating a rallying point around which diverse existing groups can organise and an invitational device for inducting new groups. See the Appendix below for a draft Glen Eden charter.

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## APPENDIX

**Draft charter for Glen Eden: Waitakere Ranges Local Board (WRLB)**

*Mission:* A sustainable Glen Eden that moves confidently to the future.

*Challenges:* Glen Eden will face a number of challenges including managing greater levels of urban intensification and upgrading of the town centre.

*Infrastructure:*

1. The WRLB will encourage public transport, walking and cycling.
2. Improvements to traffic safety will be ensured.
3. A review will be carried out of Glen Eden's infrastructure requirements as a result of planned intensification (e.g., water, sewage and storm water).

*Urban design*

1. The impacts of greater intensification can be mitigated through good design that includes the use of noise-reduction materials, energy saving through having a northerly aspect, passive surveillance of common and public areas, and privacy.
2. Promote a variety of affordable housing, including single dwellings, apartments and townhouses, that meets a required standard of construction.
3. Intensification will also require consideration of access to services, both public and private.
4. In the upgrade of the Glen Eden town centre, consideration will be given to greater levels of pedestrianisation, improved access for older people and people with disabilities, new parking arrangements, public spaces that can be used for community events, facilities for children and indoor facilities for public gatherings.
5. Protect the physical form of Glen Eden that has heritage or historic values.
6. Promote good design of all modern buildings.
7. Glen Eden town centre will be designed to ensure that it meets the needs of people with disabilities.

*Social*

1. The WRLB will encourage good relationships with government agencies, Auckland Council organisations, civil society organisations and the private sector.
2. The WRLB will promote public consultation in Glen Eden on policies, plans and programmes.
3. The social sector will be promoted through a community development process of community engagement, social capital and through the provision of financial and other support.
4. Social facilities will be established to meet the needs of a growing and changing population due to intensification and in-migration.
5. The WRLB will support efforts by social agencies to deal with social issues such as homelessness and begging.
6. The WRLB supports the concept of child-friendly cities and age-friendly cities in relation to Glen Eden.
7. The WRLB supports use of the principles of "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design" (CPTED) advocated in the Auckland Council Design Manual.
8. The WRLB will discourage forms of gentrification that displace existing residents. This might include advocacy to retain existing social housing in public and community ownership, and encouraging developers to incorporate social housing within their housing developments.

*Cultural*

1. The WRLB will liaise with tangata whenua concerning issues of relevance to them. This will include supporting capacity-building of Māori organisations that provide housing, educational and social services; rangatahi development; supporting employment and enterprise development; and integrating Māori space and cultural expressions into place-making.
2. The WRLB recognises the important work of the Hoani Waititi Marae and Te Whānau o Waipareira Trust.
3. The WRLB will protect the important cultural heritage within the district.
4. Recognising the multicultural population of Glen Eden, cultural events will be promoted and supported.
5. The WRLB will encourage greater public use of the Glen Eden Playhouse Theatre.

*Economic*

1. The WRLB recognises the important economic and employment contribution of small businesses in the district.
2. The WRLB will liaise with retailers in the upgrade of the town centre and support initiatives that reduce risks from petty crime and promote public safety.

*Environmental*

1. Green spaces will be provided within the upgrade of the town centre.
2. The WRLB recognises the contribution that green space/trees make towards mental health and wellbeing.
3. The WRLB will ensure there are adequate green spaces to cater for any population increases.
4. Existing natural areas will be enhanced and protected.

The rise and fall and rise again of an environmental social enterprise. (With apologies to the makers of *The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin*, one of my favourite British comedy series)

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# The rise and fall and rise again of an environmental social enterprise. (With apologies to the makers of The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin, one of my favourite British comedy series)

JOHN STANSFIELD

Ki te kahore he whakakitenga ka ngaro te iwi  
*Without foresight or vision the people will be lost*

In this paper I update earlier work on the case study in social enterprise in waste and recycling, using a community-development methodology. The case study follows, as the title might suggest, the rise of a thriving community enterprise, its demise and period in the wilderness, and its rise again. The study draws on personal experience as an activist insider and islander; the records of our social enterprise and the extensive public record in the community media; the tireless support of fellow directors in the new social enterprise Island Waste Collective, and of Denise Roche, former Green Party MP with responsibility for the waste portfolio and current member of the ministerial Waste Advisory Board.

Rachel Carson's seminal work *Silent Spring* (1962) was a clarion call to environmental concern which drew a sharp focus to the poisoning of the planet. Today's environmentalism poses a powerful critique and, in the contemporary lens of sustainable development, addresses social and economic as well as environmental concerns. The separation of people from planet as a locus of concern has not served either well. Nor are the realms mutually antagonistic or exclusive (Bradshaw & Winn, 2000). The bringing together of these two themes is evident from the time of the Brundtland Commission (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987) and after that through the major international governance conferences and resolutions such as Agenda 21 (United Nations Sustainable Development, 1992) and the Kyoto Protocol (UNFCCC, 1997). This case study describes

how an enterprising community achieved social, economic and environmental goals, while building their community capacity and having much fun in the process. The crushing of the enterprise is briefly discussed, and tribute is paid to the spirit of the community which spawned the enterprise. The imminent rise, Phoenix-like, of a new community enterprise from the ashes of the old is predicted.

## Context

Waiheke Island (pop. 10,000) is the jewel in the crown of the Hauraki Gulf, and is just 35 minutes by fast boat from Auckland, New Zealand's largest city. The community, in common with other islands, has a strong sense of place or what we now call "islandness" (Conkling, 2007). This is more colourfully put by the late, great Joe Waite, islander, raconteur, poet, entrepreneur and sometime local-body politician:

"The true mark of a Waihekean, son, is the ability to start an argument all by yourself in an empty room!"

Until 1989, the Waiheke County Council governed the island locally. To the chagrin of islanders, the County Council was then amalgamated with Auckland City Council. The first thing the good burghers of Waiheke could tangibly see changing was the loss of their fledgling recycling scheme. The tip, or transfer station, a popular scavenging point, was declared off-limits to the public, and ever-increasing volumes of perfectly reusable material were consigned to landfill. The loss of control of the waste facility became emblematic of a more significant feeling of disquiet about the loss of sovereignty, and was probably elevated to a higher position in islanders' minds because of this symbolic status.

Waihekeans, in common with many island communities, are sensitive to loss of sovereignty (Prescott, 2003), and were demanding a bit more say over the place in which they live. This desire for self-determination is a recurrent theme throughout the island's history, and many of the problems experienced in government relations can be sheeted home to this value. This disenfranchisement makes for fertile ground for community development and the forging of collective identity (Dalby & McKenzie, 2005).

## Organising and learning

With the City Council now in charge, the recycling scheme was abandoned. The islanders' renowned talent for protest was exercised colourfully, then seemingly, publicly at least, died away and the community began to organise. Informally a group formed to pursue the community's interest in sustainable waste management. The Waiheke Waste Resources Trust (WRT) was later incorporated and thrives 22 years on as Auckland's premier sustainability

organisation and, somewhat ironically, the most valued community partnership for the council.

The first thing the WRT did was recognise a need to learn a great deal more about waste, waste economies, and waste in the environment. They developed a wānanga, or study group, and got together every few weeks to share research and learnings. Convivial meetings always centred around a shared 'pot-luck' meal, reinforcing local community-development lore and our first community-development principle for this case study:

*"The community sector marches on its stomach."*

The meetings were also useful opportunities to recognise expertise and try out working with each other. The organisation had high ambitions and would need a seasoned crew.

During this period, the WRT was informed by meetings with:

- Other communities and organisations concerned about waste, through exchange and field trips
- Community waste operations such as the Kaitaia Community Business and Environment Centre, CBEC
- Community waste campaigners from as far afield as Scotland and Wales
- Dr Google and social-media groups

## Consolidating learning and building constituency

Over about 18 months, the trust gave itself a masters-level education in sustainable waste-management (Seadon, 2010) and developed its fundamental principles and strategies for the road ahead. Central to this was the development of a community consensus on a 'Waiheke way' in which Waiheke could manage the waste stream and use the enterprise to provide sustainable jobs, an improved environment, and investment in waste reduction through innovation and public education.

Building that consensus involved a range of creative strategies to inform and engage community members (Eichler, 2007). In this case these included extensive use of visiting local groups, holding a stall at the local markets, feeding local media, and events and stunts, such as the 'shopping-trolley dolly' entry in the local Santa parade (see link below) to draw attention to the issue of waste and an island approach. These strategies speak to the second principle of Waiheke community development. This was first coined by the late Dr Wendy Craig who, although she was not of our community, would have felt right at home:

*"If you are fun to be with, there will always be people with you."*

The first lucky break was the adoption of a new law which required local councils to consult with communities in developing local waste-management plans. In its usual fashion, council arranged for a couple of consultants to



talk to the community of Waiheke at a public meeting. A process that had been budgeted to take two hours then ensued over the following six weeks. The well-informed and articulate advocates of the WRT were successful in advocating for a radical waste plan which strongly reflected the community consensus developed over the previous 18 months. This plan was adopted by council and formed the basis for new tenders in waste contracting for Waiheke. The strategy was to set the bar for environmental performance high, so that groups with strong environmental credentials could compete with the waste Moghuls. And compete we surely did.

## **An enterprise of our own**

In 2000 the WRT began meeting with the Kaitaia community enterprise CBEC to plan a joint bid for the waste contract. The WRT partner had significant knowledge of the challenges of island logistics, the fragile roading system and precarious infrastructure. As well as strong support from the local community, CBEC had several years' experience both contracting with council, and delivering curbside waste collection and recycling. (This experience of partnering proved to be invaluable in 2018 and 2019 when we began to craft our approach to retake the contracts for waste.) The parties came together incorporated as Clean Stream Waiheke Ltd (CSWL), and developed the successful bid for the contract. The company was incorporated in May 2001 and commenced operations on July 1, 2001.

The day before operations were due to commence, with all the contracts having been executed, the directors were aghast to find the council was requiring a further \$100,000 bond. This late demand was in addition to the bank and personal guarantees which had already been supplied. The company had never operated and had very modest capital. Seeing no other options, the directors, all volunteers, took personal loans against their homes, and in one case against his parents' home, to ensure the operation could start on time.

Commencing operations was a terrifically exciting time, with a very steep learning curve for all those involved. The company commenced operations with an experienced community waste-operator managing operations, and a board with both commercial and community-development experience. The first big surprise was how jubilant the community were at having regained control of their waste stream. The second was how little council understood the operation. For example, the council had been relying upon the previous operator to faithfully record the tonnage of green waste converted to mulch and compost. This compost had been sold at the gate and, as the transactions were primarily cash and there was no audit process, there may have been some under-reporting. Council estimated processing and sales to be up to 200 tonnes per annum. As the company began to keep more careful records, the amount of green waste processed was found to be over 800 tonnes in the first year, rising in year six to over 2000 tonnes.

As soon as operations commenced, the company (CSWL) started to get real and reliable data on waste volumes. In the first year, refuse volumes dropped by 250 tonnes, recycling was up by 530 tonnes, and all this looked

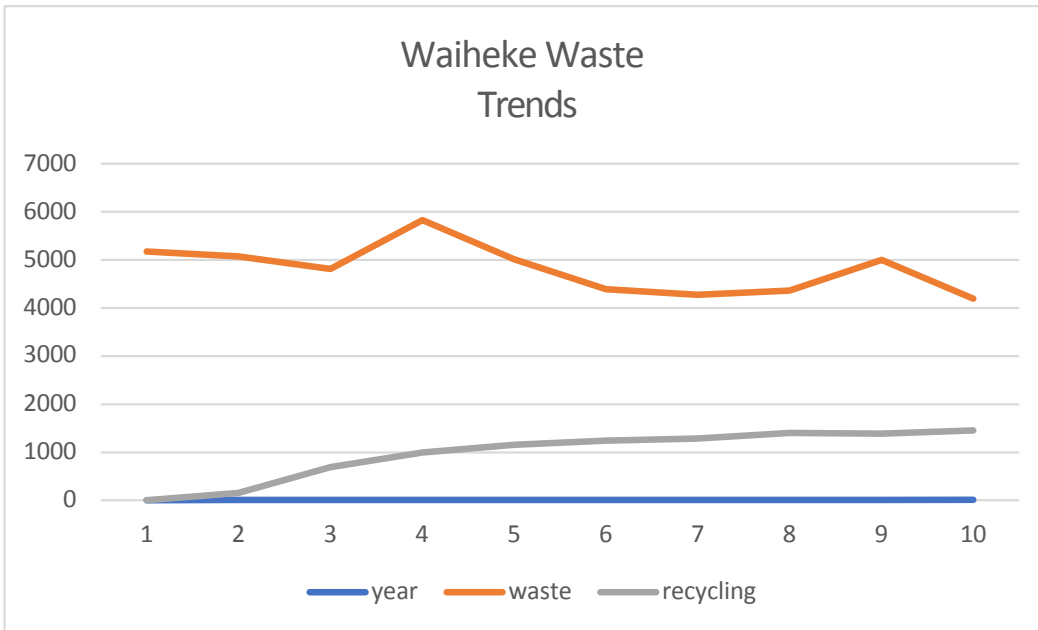
like good news. However, combined weights were increasing and, with the construction boom and growing local industry, an impending rubbish explosion loomed. In response, the company, which had been severely undercapitalised and was scrambling to keep on top of unpredicted volumes, invested in its parent organisation, WRT, and developed a waste-education and community-engagement programme. They backed a community-development approach to reduce the problem ahead of an expensive plant to manage it. WRT engaged a pair of local community-development educators to build a volunteer army fit for the task. This time was also a period of reflection and learning for the company and the community. The ability to finally measure the real weights and volumes of waste, recycling and re-use enabled the basis of what was to become a very evidence-based initiative.

The waste-education team had some highly innovative strategies for community engagement and were always challenging the company to innovate further than the waste stream. For example, a successful biodiesel plant was designed and built. The plant, which harvested 25,000 litres of waste cooking oil and converted this to diesel fuel, both eliminated waste and ran the company's trucks and machinery. This was the result of a small piece of research conducted by the waste educators and a successful partnership with The University of Auckland's engineering school: Engineering Projects in Community Service (EPICS).

The education team developed the much-loved annual festival Junk to Funk, which showcased the island's creative talent in producing wearable art from the waste stream. This event involved 1200 people from a population of just 4000 at the time. The team also used opportunistic strategies where existing events, such as the local market and the music festivals, provided an opportunity for community engagement. These events were the forerunners of the Waiheke Sustainability Festival, which most recently saw ten days of sustainability focus and over 50 events, involving many other clubs and environmental organisations.

Another initiative of the team, which is now adopted Auckland-wide, is the zero-waste (Song, Li, & Zeng, 2015) approach to significant community events. From the environmental disaster of previous years, a crowd of 5000 at the Onetangi Beach Races can now produce as little as 20 litres of waste for landfill. Half a dozen community groups staff many waste reduction stalls, with volunteers growing engagement and earning grants for their clubs. The undeniable success of this programme, which vastly outperformed waste-reduction attempts at both commercial and council events, has now seen it become mainstream. In its latter years, the WRT and CSWL were contracted by commercial event organisers, and zero-waste events are now part of the Waiheke way.

Clean Stream Waiheke won awards for innovation both nationally, from the Glass Packaging Forum, and internationally, at the Green Globe Awards. It had an active research-and-development ethos which informed its innovations. In the case of glass, changes in the New Zealand economy meant the glassworks were flooded with clear glass, and the market price plummeted from \$78 a tonne to just \$12 a tonne. Freight costs alone were \$60 a tonne, and it was clear the company would need to develop either a higher-value product from the glass or find ways of using it domestically.



Investigations with the engineering school led us to explore glass-processing options and eventually import specialised machinery from the United States. This plant produced a domestic aggregate at \$35 a tonne with no freight cost (downcycling) and some much higher-value products for export to the mainland (upcycling).

Over the nine years of CSWL's operation, the population of the island grew by 11%, while waste to landfill fell by 20%. This experience prompted us to develop our model of waste management.

## Learnings from the front line of the waste war

### WASTE OPERATIONS ARE A TRANSPORT BUSINESS

Most of the big waste companies have grown out of the transport industry. Conventional waste operations are not transforming waste or influencing in any way how much waste there is, but performing the much simpler task of picking up waste from one place and taking it to another. There is nothing inherently evil about a transport business, but we need to understand the limitations of its worldview. It understands that its job is to put things in trucks and drive them around, and that it makes the most money by driving the most stuff for the longest distance.

The conventional approach then is not a worldview which has any sense of the waste hierarchy (DEFRA, 2011) and the need to reduce waste. Waste education, as it is conducted by the big waste companies, is not sophisticated. The real innovators in the waste sector around the world have been small, committed communities that are values driven. These communities understand that we are on a trajectory of completely unsustainable and unaffordable waste practices. Moreover, they have developed an understanding that creates a community identity, a binding community-

development feature around the values they hold on the actions they take to minimise waste.

A more sophisticated approach to waste begins with the waste hierarchy, and while everybody understands this in theory, it is seldom at the forefront of operational design. While the hierarchy identifies *reduce and reuse* as the highest-order actions, it is *the dispose of and mitigate* which receive all the resources. Unsurprisingly then, waste volumes grow, and little real attention is paid to *reduce and reuse*. One departure from this trend was the adoption in the 2008 Waste Act of a disposal levy, albeit at a very modest \$10 per tonne, to fund the development of alternative strategies based on a circular economy.



## The Waiheke Way

There are some things about Waiheke and transport that are unique. We are a small island surrounded by an expansive piece of sea. Our roading network is narrow, fragile and expensive to maintain. Big trucks might be efficient for carting waste; however, their impact on the quality of life and the fragile roading system must be considered if we are not to externalise costs. Savings by using big trucks accrue to the waste operator, but the burden of road repair costs and decreased quality of life falls on the residents.

## Given the consistent opportunity, people will do the right thing

The community-development approach used by the WRT and Clean Stream, its operating company, emphasises the importance of the relationship with households in the community because no sustainable change can be made without the first work being done at the household level. This is our third community-development principle:

*Trust the people, because only the community can make real and lasting change.*

Sometimes this approach brought WRT into conflict with the council. When it began in 2001, WRT instituted curbside collection of recyclables, and then demanded that recycling bins were placed alongside public litter bins. Council disagreed; they did not use public recycling bins in Auckland until 2008. WRT insisted and went ahead, arguing that you must give the public consistency of opportunity if you are going to make a sustainable long-term change (Halkier, Katz-Gero, Martens, & Hargreaves, 2011). The company advocated that it could not, for instance, train people to do one thing at home and another thing when they were out, because the dissonance this causes has a corrosive effect on a commitment to sustainable waste practices. The company's investment in community engagement and community waste-education built a consistency of approach to the constituency, which enabled real conversations about long-term change. WRT's not-for-profit status and visible investment in its community gave it a legitimacy that private-sector operators and council would struggle to achieve.

## Waste is not an engineering problem, it is a problem of human behaviour

This fundamental principle is a most important lesson because, although the company invested in all kinds of clever engineering innovations, the most significant changes were made at the household level (Tonglet, Phillips, & Bates, 2004). If we cannot make sustainable changes at the household level, we cannot affordably solve the waste problem through engineering. The late George Blanchard, a longtime WRT board member who was himself a senior lecturer in engineering, once told us as a board: "I love machines. I have spent my life around machines, they have been my life work, yet I can tell you, as proficient as I am in the world of machines, there is no machine built which can outperform the human ability to learn and adapt and change processes."

The very best performances internationally, in communities whose demographics and density resemble ours, are systems where the householder is the primary sorter, and the secondary sorting happens at a curbside vehicle. These are very low-tech solutions, but they are enormously flexible. They can, for instance, add a new product to the recycling stream with minimal re-engineering and, with proper measurement and appropriate communications, can build success and share this with the communities

that enable this success. One of the real failures of the typical industrialised system is that it does not report to households or acknowledge their place in the system. Waste reduction is an ideal community-development project because community developers know this communication is their most powerful tool.

### **It's all about the sorting**

In the materials-flow economy, the first thing we do to add value to a commodity is to sort and grade it. I learned this as a very young boy helping on a tomato farm. A case of tomatoes would be worth so many shillings a pound, and my job was to sort these into four grades. The lowest grade struck the rate per pound of the entire case, and every grade higher attracted a premium. It is pretty much the same with rubbish. One of the problems with the commingled collection system is that its outcome is a bigger problem than its inputs. Picture this: we have in one hand an empty egg carton and in the other hand a used sauce bottle. They are already separated, but we now put them into a single receptacle so they can be carted first to the industrialised Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) where a machine separates them, sometimes successfully, one from the other. We have taken what was separate, commingled it, compressed it, carted it, and we are now processing it to re-separate it. That is engineering madness. There are other problems with a centralised commingled system. Principal amongst these is that, to achieve the transport efficiencies required, the commingled recycled material is compacted at a higher than ideal density, and the glass tends to shatter. Glass slivers then contaminate the cardboard and paper, which can then no longer be recycled in New Zealand. Moreover, machinery is not available to sort the small particles of glass into the constituent colours, and the material is unsuitable for remanufacturing. As a result, the once reusable product must be recycled to lowest-value aggregate.

### **The waste hierarchy**

It may be time to revisit the waste hierarchy. A more sophisticated waste-management system must now identify opportunities for upcycling materials as well as downcycling. However, the basic principle of the waste hierarchy is very sound and is mostly ignored. Reduce is at the apex of the hierarchy, followed by reuse, and third is recycling. The point of the hierarchy is that we only recycle materials which we have failed to reduce and failed to reuse. There has been too much celebration about the increased recycling volumes, particularly where the result is degraded materials with limited markets and products are permanently downcycled. The only sustainable long-term solution to reducing Waiheke's waste costs is to reduce Waiheke's waste. The waste operation must be governed by an organisation which is committed to waste

reduction first, reuse second and thirdly to recycling. Given the transport costs islanders face, recycling is appropriate only where it is unfeasible to reduce and reuse. This freight cost creates a tariff barrier which means as freight costs increase, local reuse becomes increasingly attractive.

## The winning formula

Above all, WRT learnt in its island environment, given the transport problems and costs, the rule is:

“We should never move anything away from the island until it is at its highest value, greatest density, and we have extracted from it as much as we can use or earn locally.”

An examination of the domestic refuse found that, after removal of organics and various non-recyclable plastics, multimedia plastics and waste fibre constituted around 60% of the waste stream. Initial research and development with The University of Auckland’s engineering school developed a prototype plastic-fibre composite board made entirely from waste materials. This process was then further refined with a private-sector partner, and an engineered composite board (ECB) was developed. This board can utilise a significant part of the waste stream that is destined for landfill, and can incorporate waste, including hazardous material such as chipped, treated timber, which cannot be burned or buried because of the incorporated toxins. ECB was developed into domestic and building products. Two further university studies refined both the manufacturing process and business plans for the product, and the initiative gained international recognition in the Green Globe awards.

The company, along with the trust, employed up to 26 workers at its peak, including many staff who had suffered from long-term unemployment or irregular work. Intensive training and a ‘skills’-based pay system were introduced, and workers were encouraged up a promotion path and into qualifications. Two positions were created for severely disabled workers, and workflows adjusted to meet their health and rehabilitation needs. The company earned most of its money off-island and spent almost all its money on the island. The manual sorting system was more labour-intensive than the city plant but produced much better-quality and higher-earning recyclables. These better-quality recyclables continued to find markets during the Global Financial Crisis, when poor-quality recyclables from the city’s machine-sorted plant became valueless. Most importantly, jobs were created in a community that needed them. Capital is not always the answer.

The sharing of opportunities has been a deliberate strategy to broaden the WRT base and has resulted in its gradual ascendancy to the most prominent of the island’s NGOs, frequently acting as mentor and umbrella to other organisations. CSWL’s waste project supported community gardens, childcare centres, adult literacy, the schools, local environmental restoration initiatives, our local marae and many other community causes.

## Key outcomes

- Improved training and employment for locals
- Improved environmental outcomes
- Strengthened community organisations
- A strong sense of local ownership, community capability and connectedness
- Strengthened community identity and civic pride

## Nek minnit

In 2009 the WRT lost the contract for rubbish and recycling services to a multinational firm now owned by the investment arm of a Chinese municipality. By 2015 waste to landfill had increased by over 30%, and the support of community organisations had shrunk, as had the workforce. This sponsors a fourth (tounge-in-cheek) community-development principle:

*No good deed goes unpunished.*

The loss of the enterprise was an enormously frustrating and challenging time for the community, occurring, as it did, at the very time government was once again changing the structure of local government and moving the seat of power even further from local communities. Waiheke, as a tiny community of then 8000 people within the 1.4 million people covered by the new council, was often seen as a noisy irritant. However, democracy is something that island communities do very well and when the Royal Commission into the governance of Auckland sought submissions from those that hoped to govern it was shocked to find that 28% of all submissions came from the 0.58% of the population who inhabited the Hauraki Gulf islands.

What followed was ten years in the wilderness; despite some reasonably impressive protest events and the capturing of hearts and minds via both conventional and social media, the islanders were ignored, and the contract awarded offshore. The impact on the organisations and the political infrastructure was devastating. Our one reliable income stream was lost and relationships with a brand-new Auckland Council were at an all-time low. Gradually organisations and leaderships recovered and began to regroup after what had been a crushing defeat. We began to plot our eventual return, gathering under yet another Waiheke waste community-development principle:

*We will need to grab all the rubbish for the poor before the rich find out how valuable it is!*

Having lost access to the waste stream, we were forced to look more broadly at sustainability issues. The board of the WRT rewrote its constitution to



focus on the emerging global understandings around sustainability that eventually coalesced into the 2030 Agenda and the United Nations' 17 goals for sustainable development. Meanwhile, at the council level, a new waste team was beginning to understand that it had successfully killed off the most successful venture in waste reduction in the region. Tentative meetings were held, olive branches extended and some tiny contracts in community engagement around waste policy were awarded to the WRT. No such delicate dances of negotiation are without dead rats to swallow. At one stage the council insisted that they wanted to invest "to build the capacity" of the WRT so that it might at some future point have some small role in managing the waste on our island. This, we should understand, was being made as a genuine offer but by people who had never themselves managed a waste enterprise.

Over time the relationship began to improve, and new opportunities arose. Some of these sorely tested the relationships of the WRT with a wide range of community groups, when council officials began to pick the winners and attempt to instruct WRT about whom it should best work with.

A tortuously slow community consultation produced a very sound report in favour of a community resource-recovery park, and there was almost a riot when the council blithely ignored the report and recommended its own position, which it had developed years earlier. It recommended a small-scale community recycling facility with possibly as many as two jobs where once 26 had been employed.

On a more positive note, we were pleased to find the relationships that we had built in research and development continued. In particular The University of Auckland engineering school continued to partner with us to test new ideas on sustainability, such as the tidal power study and the community energy grid, and also revisited some of our earlier projects such as the engineered composite-board project, which underwent further testing and which the university's engineering students generously designed to go to scale.

Finally, in 2019 the council called for proposals for a new contract to manage the island's waste and recycling for the coming ten years. As I write, a collaboration of islanders, council officials and a council-owned business are within striking distance of finalising a contract which would return to the island a community resource-recovery park. In July 2020, this facility will open, utilising the operating principles developed under the CSWL operation. The new venture enjoys enormous community support as a result of almost 30 years of community-development work on waste in this community.

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## Community development and social enterprise resources

## Organisation

<http://www.wrt.org.nz/>

## Engagement

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDT3FsZIKkl>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TyY7Ko5SZaQ>

## Innovation

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5HUAJDT\\_Yyc&t=89s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5HUAJDT_Yyc&t=89s)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_hzlNKFrww4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_hzlNKFrww4)  
[http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=10464715](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10464715)

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Language and myths  
of poverty

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# Language and myths of poverty

DAVID HAIGH  
2019

"Poverty strikes dead the very souls of all who come within sight, sound or smell of it."

G.B. Shaw, *Major Barbara*

## Abstract

This paper explores the popular and political myths and language used about poverty and those who are poor. These are viewed through three historical periods: the Victorian era, the period of the 1930s great depression and the contemporary world since neoliberalism took hold in the 1980s. Each period has its own language about those in poverty. The Victorians imposed a harsh system comprising transportation of poor petty criminals to the British colonies, and incarceration in workhouses for others. Writers and researchers such as George Bernard Shaw and Charles Booth deplored the cruelty of the workhouse system. The experiences of the unemployed during the depression were highlighted by Tony Simpson, and through articles and letters to the editor in local New Zealand newspapers. Contemporary thinkers such as Jonathan Boston and Susan St John continue to expose the myths of poverty and point to policies for a more benevolent system.

In 1729, Jonathan Swift wrote a satirical pamphlet with suggestions on how to deal with Irish poverty. In *A Modest Proposal* (which was anything but modest) he proposed that selling Irish babies to the rich as a source of food could solve the Irish poverty problem. This approach, he said, would solve both poverty and over-population problems. It would also reduce the number of papists (Catholics) and create jobs for butchers. It would have other spin-off benefits such as reducing wife beating because pregnant Irish women would now have a commodity value.

Swift, who was shocked by extreme forms of poverty in Dublin, was attacking the colonial English landlords in Ireland, who had stolen practically all Irish land. It was a satire of English exploitation of the Irish, and using cannibalism was the ultimate mark of savagery. By lampooning the rich, he forced people to see the terrible conditions of the Irish. In their own way, present-day writers exploring the cruelty of poverty policies follow in the tradition of Jonathan Swift.

Over the years, a lack of concern for the poor has been evident. Britain found it convenient to transport criminals to its colonies: America, the Caribbean and Australia. Between 1788 and 1868, 165,000 convicted men, women and children were transported to Australia. Records were not kept for those sent to America and the Caribbean. Many of those transported were poor petty criminals. Crimes of theft were often minor (e.g., stealing one shilling, stealing lead, iron or copper, stealing letters or stealing fish from a river), all usually done to alleviate the effects of poverty. But penalties were severe. People were exiled from their own country and family, and, in effect, became slaves for the duration of their sentence, usually between three and 14 years in Australia (Maxwell-Stewart, 2010).

The injustice is summed up in this anonymous convict poem:

The law locks up the man or woman  
Who steals the goose from the common  
But leaves the greater villain loose  
Who steals the common from the goose.

A review of recent letters to the editor of *The New Zealand Herald* reveals people continue to have Victorian views about the causes of poverty. Here are some examples:

"I implore Sir Michael Cullen and his tax group to be mindful of the famous quote by Sir Winston Churchill: 'You do not make the poorer richer by making the richer poorer'." (February 14, 2018)

"It is hard to feel sympathy when we are constantly confronted with stories like that of...and her SIX children. When parents finally realise families of this size are unsustainable we will see real improvements in the poverty statistics." (March 10, 2018)

"New Zealand could be socially, economically and environmentally intelligent if it tackled the housing and poverty crises by implementing a blanket two-child policy." (February 10, 2018)

"...we could be brave enough to address the real problem, which comes generally from parents giving birth to children they cannot afford to have."  
(February 3, 2018)

"The Government needs to make a gutsy call, be creative and bring in a regime which says, 'Become financially responsible, become accountable or be left behind'. I wonder if they have the vision and gumption."  
(February 2, 2018)

"Money given to the low-income breeders will never get to the children; in most cases, it will end up in the pokies and on cigarettes. Food vouchers are the only solution." (December 23, 2017)

"Jacinda Ardern is incredibly proud of her new package for families. She is incredibly naïve to think the money will not go on smoking, drugs, and gambling." (December 16, 2017)

"There are parents in every case, it is their absolute responsibility to feed and clothe their children.... A hard line should be drawn to bring these people into the real world they brought their children into." (November 27, 2018)

It can be deduced that this sample of correspondents has two key views on poverty. The first that poverty is caused by having too many children, and second that the poor are incompetent or incapable of handling the money they receive for the benefit of their family, with much of it going to gambling and smoking. There were few letters defending the poor. One argued that the real cause of poverty (and crime) was a result of the neoliberal policies in the 1980s and "...ramped up in the 1990s and subsequent inequality has caused catastrophic effects on crime..." (August 23, 2018). Another reminded people to look again at the words of Michael Joseph Savage when he spelled out what 'Applied Christianity' meant. He said, "There is no way of dealing with poverty except by getting to the people who are poorly paid, poorly housed or poorly fed.... The people's wellbeing is the highest law, and so far as this government is concerned, we know no other" (December 26, 2018).

It is also worth noting that during this same period, Keogh (2018) reported on a survey of 610 online interviews (Ipsos Issues Monitor) and found that the two largest concerns for the public were housing and poverty/inequality; two issues that are closely linked. It would seem that (unlike the letter writers) the general public are aware of both of these. However, when it comes to paying taxes to relieve poverty, the public may have other thoughts. In a 2011 paper by Carroll, Caswell, Huakau, Howden-Chapman and Perry, the authors found that respondents in a 2004 survey considered people were poor due to personal deficits, and were opposed to any increased support for the poor. It would seem that attitudes may have changed between 2004 and 2018.

Contemporary political opposition to government assistance to those in most need of aid arises in various forms. Judith Collins (National MP) stated that, "...it's people who don't look after their children, that's the

problem.” She went on to say, “I see a poverty of ideas, a poverty of parental responsibility, a poverty of love, a poverty of caring” (Jones, 2016).

Jamie Whyte (ACT leader) argued that, “There is no poverty in New Zealand. Misery, depravity and hopelessness yes: but no poverty” (Whyte, 2016). Not to be outdone, John Key (then National Prime Minister) argued that the way out of poverty was work, especially for sole parents on benefits. He failed to recognise that many families experiencing poverty were working full time on low wages, and that unpaid work caring for small children is essential work (St. John, 2014). Bill English, then National Minister of Finance, bizarrely stated that local councils caused poverty by regulating the availability of land for housing (Hickey, 2014).

Political commentator Barry Soper (2018) argued against a universal grant of \$60 per week to meet the costs of newborn babies. Without providing any evidence, he said this would result in welfare dependency. He would prefer spending the money on contraceptive advice and educating young parents. He ignores the fact that a family benefit paid to mothers was a norm prior to the neoliberal economic policies of the 1980s. He also fails to mention other universal payments that he may consider do not cause welfare dependency, such as national superannuation paid to everyone aged 65 and over. He also comes up with a regular and unfounded complaint that poverty is caused by the poor having children they cannot afford to raise.

In 1979, National minister George Gair was parodied by poet Whim Wham for stating that the poor lack character and will, and spend their money on gambling and drink. The second and fourth verses of Whim Wham’s poem, ‘A Lesson to the Poor’ (1979, p. 251) state:

They are victims of their own  
Shortcomings, Guru Gair explains.  
It’s not material Things alone –  
They lack the Character, the Brains.  
They’ve only got themselves to thank  
If there’s no Money in the Bank

How comes it, Sir, that Failings which  
Have kept Them ‘relatively Poor’  
Keep others ‘relatively Rich’  
The Affluent drink, they gamble more.  
I know a Few whom I suspect  
Of less than adequate Intellect.

Spicker (2007, pp. 111-117) has analysed the various beliefs on why some people are poor. He came up with six key classes of explanations:

1. The pathological explanation is “The idea that poverty is the fault of the poor themselves.”
2. Familial. This explanation blames people’s genetic or biological makeup and that poverty is transmitted to the next generation. This idea has been largely abandoned.

3. Sub-cultural. This idea arose from the now-discredited concept of family traits proposed by Oscar Lewis. His theory was based on interviews with a few poor Mexican families.
4. Resource-based explanations centre on the idea that there are not enough resources to go around. The central idea of the neo-Malthusian position is that the real problem is over-population.
5. Structural. This is a more sociological explanation that some people are disadvantaged due to class, status and power. In effect, "The game is rigged."
6. Agency. Agencies are to blame because they fail to carry out their welfare responsibilities. However, official organisations cannot be held responsible for the original condition of people's poverty with which they have to deal.

Spicker also notes the negative language used about the poor and poverty. "The welfare state has been increasingly depicted as problematic, leading to supposed 'welfare dependency'" (p. 23). One can also recognise other expressions that stigmatise people, such as 'dole bludger', which defines the character of the person in one epithet, and 'beneficiaries' rather than people in receipt of a benefit. The modern language of poverty is full of metaphors and inuendos, such as 'the work-shy', implying a culture of worklessness. Simpson (1997) explained that in the 1930s, "The vicious rhetoric of 50 years ago has crept back into our vocabularies. The unemployed are unemployable; they are 'bludgers'; they don't want to work. It is all their own fault. Like the Bourbons we have forgotten nothing and learned nothing" (p. 10). Against these expressions is a more positive one used by politicians who stress that the welfare state has to be paid for by 'hard-working families'. This language of multiple metaphors focuses on the adults and their responsibility for the rise of poverty. Obviously children cannot be blamed for being poor, so responsibility must lie within the characters of their parents.

Boston and Chapple (2015) argue that explanations about the causes of poverty should be subject "...to the test of logic and be guided by the best available evidence" (p. 65). They then proceed to analyse popular themes in the discussion of child poverty in New Zealand.

#### CLAIM 1: THERE IS LITTLE OR NO REAL CHILD POVERTY IN NEW ZEALAND.

Boston and Chapple point out that many children in New Zealand experience 'relative' poverty, not the 'abject' poverty of some other countries (p. 69). Relative poverty is measured in terms of household income below 50 or 60% of the average income, as well as material hardship such as poor clothing, shoes, not having other children around the home, or being unable to afford school trips.

#### CLAIM 2: MANY PARENTS ARE LAZY OR IRRESPONSIBLE, OR MISUSE THEIR RESOURCES, AND THUS DESERVE TO BE POOR.

This argument is highlighted by the controversial Al Nisbett cartoon published



in the *Marlborough Express* (Dally, 2013). It shows a very obese Pacific family with a sign pointing to "Free School Meals". The father is saying: "Psst ! ... If we can get away with this, the more cash left for booze, smokes and pokies." Showing how strong negative attitudes are towards those experiencing social trauma, Cullen, in a 1999 thesis, explained that her "...studies revealed how unemployment is predominantly an alienating and socially isolating experience. Common social belief systems within society still stigmatise the unemployed as lazy dole bludgers" (p. iv).

Looking at the argument from a rational viewpoint, Boston and Chapple ask why poverty rates rose so rapidly in the 1990s in New Zealand. A more likely explanation than laziness was a rapid rise in unemployment and 10-30% cuts in benefit rates (p. 75).

#### CLAIM 3: THE REAL PROBLEM IS THAT SOME PEOPLE HAVE TOO MANY CHILDREN.

Nisbett once more attacked the poor for having children. His cartoon shows a drunk couple heading off to bed and leaving behind three small children and a newspaper with the headlines: "Working for Families. \$60 each new child." The husband says "Bedtime luv! Time to try for triplets" (Newshub, 2018). This is an emotive response rather than a rational one. It fails to recognise that the state is powerless to prevent women having children. Forced sterilisation or the removal of children would be impossible. Boston and Chapple ask how we would deal with families having multiple births (p. 84).

#### CLAIM 4: ASSISTING POOR FAMILIES WILL SIMPLY ENCOURAGE THEM TO HAVE MORE CHILDREN.

This argument is opposed to policies like Best Start. Boston and Chapple (p. 88) explain that financial policies to control or stimulate more children are ineffective.

#### CLAIM 5: THE REAL PROBLEM IS POOR PARENTING.

Poor parenting can be found in both poor and wealthy families, and both may spend their money unwisely (pp. 91-2). All families want to live in healthy homes.

#### CLAIM 6: WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT CHILD POVERTY.

Experience of such policies as Working for Families demonstrates that government interventions can have a positive effect on poverty levels.

#### CLAIM 7: WE CAN'T AFFORD TO REDUCE CHILD POVERTY.

The affordability argument is a political one involving choices about which issue takes priority for resources. Neglect of the issue of child poverty has resulted in higher costs, e.g., imprisonment rates, health problems and educational underachievement.

#### CLAIM 8: REDUCING OR EVEN ELIMINATING CHILD POVERTY IS RELATIVELY EASY.

While increased household income will assist in reducing poverty, there are often political limits to social assistance.

CLAIM 9: MERELY INCREASING THE INCOMES OF POOR FAMILIES WILL NOT SOLVE CHILD POVERTY.

Once again, there are political constraints to social assistance. It should be recognised that emphasis should also be targeted to affordable housing, free health care and employment training.

There is a remarkable similarity between the nine contemporary claims above and some of those listed by social reformer Charles Booth (1892) as the causes of poverty in late-19th-century London. His personal observations of the causes of poverty were: drink, laziness and large families.

However, Booth also noted more structural and personal-misfortune reasons for pauperism: irregular work for watersiders, low wages, unemployment, mental incapacity, widowhood, sickness, desertion by the husband/father, accidents and old age (pp. 135-149).

For many, poverty meant life inside the workhouse (established under the New Poor Laws of 1834). Booth described workhouses as follows: "The workhouse is at best a dreary residence.... Whilst even if actual tyranny is avoided, it is difficult to prevent harsh callous treatment" (p. 166). In his novel *Oliver Twist*, Charles Dickens was more damning of the workhouse system. He said:

So, they [the Workhouse Board] established the rule, that all poor people should have the alternative (for they would compel nobody, not they), of being starved by a gradual process in the house, or by a quick one out of it. (p. 30)

The workhouse system reinforced Victorian values of social order. This is best described in the hymn 'All Things Bright and Beautiful'. The original third verse (later deleted) stated:

The rich man in his castle,  
The poor man at his gate,  
God made them high and lowly  
And order'd their estate.

In addressing the issue of poverty, it is useful to read or reread the novel *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists* by Robert Tressell, first published in 1914. It is the story of a group of tradesmen renovating a house in Brighton, England. They start debating the causes of poverty and come up with a number of reasons: over-population, drink, laziness, 'new-fangled machinery', working women, too much education that puts foolish ideas into people's heads, and early marriages whereby a man cannot afford to keep his family.

One by one, Owen, one of the tradesmen, takes each argument apart and shows its fallacy. For example, if over-population is the problem then how does one account for Irish poverty at a time when Ireland lost 50% of its population due to famine and migration. In addition, he asks the other workmen, "...what is the cause of lifelong poverty of the majority of those who are not drunkards and who DO work?" (Tressell, p. 29).

Owen then goes on to play a game (The Money Trick) with his fellow workers. Owen pretends for the sake of the game to be a capitalist who owns resources of raw materials, money and machinery. He will invest these resources and set up factories to employ workers who need jobs. To each

worker (the other tradesmen) he says he will pay one pound a week in wages and in exchange they each have to produce goods to the value of three pounds, and this will become the property of Owen. Their wages are spent buying necessities from Owen and so at the end of each week they have nothing, while Owen enriches himself from the workers' labour. After a period, Owen decides to close down the factories due to over-production, making the workers unemployed. The workers object and Owen, being a 'kind-hearted capitalist', gives them one pound in charity, which they immediately spend buying necessities from Owen.

Tressell was ahead of his time. Following the Wall Street Crash of October 20, 1929, the Great Depression of the 1930s struck. In New Zealand, the Unemployment Act required every man of 20 years and over to register and pay a levy of three pence per pound earned, to fund relief work. The impacts on workers and their families were severe:

- Wages fell 30-35% during the depression.
- Public-sector wages were cut by 10% and later by a further 5-12.5%.
- Women workers contributed to the levy fund but were not eligible for relief work.
- In 1932 unemployed riots broke out in Auckland, Dunedin and Wellington.
- By 1933, unemployment levels peaked at around 100,000, 30% of the workforce.
- Old-age and war pensions were cut by 30%. Family allowances were abolished. (Museum of New Zealand, n.d.; Simpson, 1997; Wright, 2009)

At a human level, Simpson (1990) explained that, "They...sold their household goods, and queued for charity handouts. Evictions for non-payment of rent were daily and widespread occurrences" (p. 64). He went on to explain, "Malnutrition among children was widespread; in a 1934 study, seven out of every ten Auckland schoolchildren had a physical defect" (p. 69).

Labour MP Peter Fraser stated in parliament in March, 1932:

It is as if the farmer were struggling in the water and in danger of drowning. Instead of the government throwing him a lifebelt or sending out a boat to rescue him, it has decided to throw in the worker to drown along with him. (Simpson, 1997, p. 14)

A review of articles and letters to the editor of the *New Zealand Herald* (NZH) and *New Zealand Truth* (NZT) newspapers in the 1930s shows that debate was often at a political rather than a personal level where individuals were blamed for their poverty. One person wrote:

...wage tax is a vicious example of the forcible transfer of wealth from one section of the community to another. [Previous writers] all seem to agree that such forms of taxation are on a par with "banditry, piracy and burglary".... (NZH, 1938)

There was also debate on the impact of unemployment on individuals that resulted in "stress and worry, caused by the spectre of want hovering around the door-step" (NZH, 1930). Supporting this was a letter that focused on

the family: "...mothers of to-morrow's citizens should be hastened by worry and want to an early grave and their little ones denied a full and abundant childhood" (NZH, 1930). Further support for this position came from an article in *The Truth*: "Pursued by Wolf and Want". "Hunger and long-endured semi-starvation, disappointment and despair can have a demoralising influence on the human mind..." (NZT, 1930).

Another person argued that the unemployment problem was caused in part by married women continuing to work. The letter stated, "...when a woman is living with her husband who is able to work and has work to do, I certainly think she should stay at home and allow single girls to earn a living" (NZH, 1930).

It was not until the first Labour Government took office in 1935 that major social change occurred. Prime Minister Michael Joseph Savage called his form of the welfare state 'Applied Christianity'. He stated, "I can promise the people of this country that before very long they will have reached a condition of social security unsurpassed in any other country of the world" (Johnston, 2017). The Christianity theme was taken up by representatives in the Legislative Council. Member the Hon Rangi Mawhete stated: "...when Christ himself returns to this earth, He will say, 'Well done, good and faithful people. You have carried out my wishes'" (NZH, 1938). However, the very act that set up the welfare state was forcefully attacked by the National Party opposition. The Hon E. R. Davis said, "...the measure would penalise the thrifty and reward the spendthrift. It would destroy initiative and self reliance and was beyond the capacity of the country" (NZH, 1938).

Those politicians with negative attitudes towards the poor were, by and large, conservatives. Contemporary conservative politicians quoted in this paper include two New Zealand Prime Ministers and various cabinet ministers drawn from the National Party. Labour politicians were, and still are, more focused on improving the wellbeing of people (especially children) living in poverty.

A similar, if more extreme, stance was evident in Victorian England. Lord Melbourne (1751-1818) was Prime Minister when the New Poor Laws (1834) were enacted. This law provided for the funding of workhouses at the lowest possible cost to ratepayers. Melbourne, although belonging to the reforming Whig Party, was no reformer. He was true to the status quo of the aristocratic class of Britain. The key positions of contemporary political parties in New Zealand in relation to poverty fit the classic models of status quo conservatives (National) and social reformers (Labour) whilst being limited by the iron cage of neoliberalism.

Previous generations seemed more adept at challenging the myths and language of poverty. For example, George Bernard Shaw in *Pygmalion* showed that Eliza had nothing to show for all her hard work as a flower seller. But conversely, Professor Higgins transformed her into a lady of leisure and she led a life of luxury. Hard work doesn't necessarily bring riches. Shaw (1906), in the preface to his play *Major Barbara*, stated: "...the greatest of evils and the worst of crimes is poverty...".

A modern equivalent of Shaw is filmmaker Ken Loach. His prize-winning 2016 film *I Daniel Blake* is set in Newcastle in the North East of England and tells the story of Daniel Blake, who falls ill and tries to obtain a benefit. In spite

of having support from his doctor and a specialist, his application is turned down and, as if in a Kafka novel, he tries and fails to appeal the decision. He meets Katie, a single mother, and he assists her to improve her new house, doing simple jobs for her. She is very poor, a state that has been exacerbated by the cutting of her benefit because she was late for an appointment. She has to feed her two children and we witness a most shattering scene when she visits the food bank. Eventually, Katie turns to sex work and Daniel dies of a heart attack.

In relation to the plight of a person like Daniel Blake, Friedrich Engels (1845) argued that when a person inflicts a wound on another resulting in death, it is called manslaughter or murder. But when the politico-economic system inflicts poverty on individuals resulting in illness causing early death, it is "disguised malicious murder" (p. 131).

This paper has explored the myths and language of poverty in three timeframes: the Victorian period of the 19th century, a period of abject poverty for many; the 1930s depression that also resulted in extreme poverty that was relieved by the establishment of the welfare state; and the contemporary period of neoliberalism since the 1980s. Selecting harsh language to describe people can be damaging; language like shirkers, welfare dependents, the work-shy and dole-bludgers. Stigmatising certain groups leads to the proposition that they are in need of special measures, usually harsh treatment, because they are 'the other' and they are not like us.

Perhaps we can use the words of Daniel Blake to remind us of the power of language and of the respect that is due to all persons, in poverty or not.

I am not a client, a customer, nor a service user. I am not a shirker, a scrounger, a beggar nor a thief. I am not a national insurance number, nor a blip on a screen. I paid my dues, never a penny short, and proud to do so. I don't tug the forelock but look my neighbour in the eye. I don't accept or seek charity. My name is Daniel Blake. I am a man not a dog. As such I demand my rights. I demand you treat me with respect. I, Daniel Blake, am a citizen, nothing more, nothing less.  
Thank you.  
(Loach, 2016)

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David Haigh has a long career in community development. He is the former head of CD for the Auckland Regional Authority and has recently retired from Unitec, where he taught in social practice and not-for-profit management. David is active in Auckland Action Against Poverty.

Early welfare in Kurow, New Zealand

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# Early welfare in Kurow, New Zealand

DAVID HAIGH

This story is taken mainly from the booklet *Four Shillings and Threepence* (2008), produced by the Kurow Heritage & Information Centre.

One of New Zealand's first hydroelectric power stations was built on the Waitaki River, which separates Canterbury from Otago. Construction started in 1928 and was completed in 1934, the period of the Great Depression. The project was a type of 'make-work' scheme, and as such there were no machines to dig the site. It was all done by hand, using pick, shovel and wheelbarrow. "More than half-a-million cubic metres of material was excavated manually while steam-powered pumps kept the area dry" (p. 12).

With such a massive development, a new temporary Waitaki Village for workers was created near Kurow. Fifteen hundred workers were involved in the project as well as others (around 350) who were unemployed and looking for work. Up to 2000 workers were housed in huts and the rest in canvas tents. One person stated that, "because it was so cold, the whole family slept in the same bed to stay alive" (p. 15). The unemployed created their own village nearby, built of willow branches and tin cans.

The opening of the village was held on October 27th 1934 and the dignitaries included the Governor General, the Prime Minister and (important for this story) Michael Joseph Savage, Leader of the Labour Opposition. Earlier, Savage had toured the South Island and visited the Waitaki scheme and Kurow. He described it as follows:

...the icy wind from the Alps lanced down from the Waitaki Valley, freezing not only the men slaving with pick and shovel, but also the women and children inadequately clothed in cotton frocks and threadbare jerseys, without stockings or shoes, and housed in tents and makeshift shacks under the willow trees. (p. 16)

The camp was large enough to prompt the establishment of a Benevolent Society called the Waitaki Medical Association. The doctor and dentist, coupled with the Kurow maternity hospital, provided for the medical services of the workforce and their families. The subscription fees were 4s 3d per month. In 1929, Dr David McMillan became the medical officer for the association. Two other newcomers, along with McMillan, became important in the development of welfare services to the workers. They were Arnold Nordmeyer (the Presbyterian church minister for Kurow) and Andrew Davidson, the high-school headmaster. These 'Three Wise Men' had a profound influence. The association also established a health-insurance scheme with a contribution of one shilling per month. This was important in protecting people from accidents, which were common on the construction site. McMillan set up a drop-in centre for travelling swaggers and unemployed men. At the centre they could get a meal and a bed for the night.

Davidson is quoted as saying, "The ideology of the Christian Socialist is set deeper and is more penetrating than of the conventional church attender.... We were fired with a fervent desire to create a new society" (p. 25).

Based on what had been achieved, Dr McMillan presented a report to the New Zealand Labour Party conference in 1934. The system was a template for a New Zealand-wide health service. It was adopted in principle and was published as "A national health service: New Zealand of to-morrow." In 1935, both McMillan and Nordmeyer were elected to the first Labour Government; McMillan became Minister of Health. In 1941, Nordmeyer took over as Minister of Health and had to deal with a belligerent British Medical Association that denied the need for a health service. All three wise men of Kurow were committed to the principles of Christian socialism. Later, Savage proclaimed that his government's commitment to the welfare state was 'applied Christianity'.



Kurow, Otago, including Waitaki River. Ref: WA-41477-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/nz/legalcode>

David Haigh has a long career in community development. He is the former head of CD for the Auckland Regional Authority and has recently retired from Unitec, where he taught in social practice and not-for-profit management. David is active in Auckland Action Against Poverty.

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*Whanake* accepts submissions in the form of papers for peer review, opinion pieces, practice notes from the field, case studies, biographies, articles on emerging trends and research as well as reviews of books, plays, films, poems, songs and contemporary culture with a community development theme.

As an international journal, *Whanake* is using English as a standard language. Submissions will be published primarily in English.

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Up to two pages

Reviews (books, plays, films, poems, songs or contemporary culture):

One page or less

# Call for submissions

*Whanake: The Pacific Journal of Community Development* invites submissions for the November 2020 issue (Volume 6, Issue 2). The deadline for submissions for refereed papers is 1 August 2020.

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