



# Social Justice STOCKTAKE



## About the Stocktake

Attributable To General Manager, Policy & Advocacy, Policy Research & Social Justice, Jennifer Kirkaldy

### Why the Stocktake and why now?

The Stocktake is about getting a picture of the social injustices that are weighing on people in their local communities. Addressing hardship in our country can often be best done at a local level and driven by the community – this project is about empowering people to take action in their communities.

The Stocktake has been prepared ahead of the Federal election to help the community and candidates alike have a conversation about social justice. Candidates seeking election are seeking to represent a local community. We hope the Stocktake will be a useful tool for them in learning what the people they seek to represent care about in their own communities.

Politicians often talk about what they think Australians care about during an election. We wanted to get a picture of what social justice issues people are seeing and want addressed so that we are all on the same page about what needs to be done.

### What is The Salvation Army hoping to achieve by doing this project?

The Stocktake has several goals but first and foremost it is designed to help people reflect on social justice and take action on the injustice and hardship they see. Secondly, we are releasing it to coincide with the election of the 47<sup>th</sup> Parliament of Australia to help empower candidates and voters to have a conversation about social justice. The third main objective of this project is to inform how The Salvation Army focuses its services around social justice, social policy and advocacy to ensure we are being led by the communities we serve.

### Who participated in the survey and is it representative?

The respondents to the Social Justice Stocktake survey were members of the general public sourced through a market research and data insights company (PureProfile) and through an open access survey online. There were more than 15,500 respondents across every Federal electorate and across every age range from 18 years and above to ensure the results are representative of Australia as a whole.

### How and when did The Salvation Army contact the participants?

The Salvation Army engaged a well-respected market research and data insights company, PureProfile, to ensure a representative set of responses. The Survey was also available openly online over July and August 2021 and was promoted through social media.



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## How do you believe COVID lockdown restrictions, which were in place for some participants at the time of being surveyed, affected the outcomes?

It does not appear that lockdown restrictions in and of themselves had a huge impact on the results as the results were strikingly consistent across the country irrespective of whether an electorate was in lockdown at the time of the survey.

COVID-19 was more generally a contributing factor to mental health, and the most commonly identified social injustice or hardship in Australia. Mental health was in the five most prevalent issues in every electorate in Australia except the NT (where it was sixth). We need to acknowledge that although the pandemic has affected us all differently, it has been hard on all of us. Even if we weren't personally affected by lockdowns or border closures, we can't help but feel for the hardship of others who were.

## How did you decide what issues were of importance to the Stocktake? Was anything left out?

We drew our list of social justice issues directly from the observations of Salvos who are helping people either in our services or in the community. The initial list was very long so we consolidated issues into broader categories to make it more manageable.

## Why should Australians care about the results?

Our experience is that Australians care deeply about social justice. We all use different words for it – a fair go, equality, equity – but the idea that there should be fairness in our society is entrenched in the idea of being Australian. These results will hopefully help Australians reflect on social justice in their local area and take action.

## How do you see this evidence contributing to the national discourse (especially the coming election)?

In Australia we don't have one election to choose our Prime Minister, we have 159 elections to choose senators for each of the eight states and territories and representatives for each of the 151 electorates in the House of Representatives. Our democracy is deliberately local, yet we often don't get local information to support our decision and our candidates often talk about national party lines instead of local issues. We hope this will be a useful source of local information and an empowering way to talk about social justice in our own communities.

## Beyond the election, how will The Salvation Army use this research?

This research will help guide The Salvation Army's social justice services and our areas of focus, especially at a local level. This research will also help us engage on local issues with members of parliament at both Federal and State/Territory levels.

## Do you envisage another stocktake next year or next election?

We will do a thorough evaluation of the project late in 2022 and if this research adds value to the public conversation, we will look into repeating it before the next Federal election.