

## Samaritans planning day

### Future thoughts

#### **Introduction**

These are possible predictions not meant as prescriptive but rather to open up our thoughts to what is happening, and what the implications of that for the Samaritans might be. It is meant as a conversation starter.

#### **Work and income**

So far the “paperless office” revolution hasn't delivered equity at work. In fact it has delivered large scale inequity in the distribution of work. Many now work upwards of 60 hours a week in white collar jobs; long term unemployment remains entrenched for those falling into it; and the “gig economy” means others still are working many hours for many employers without the security of previously normal employee benefits.

While those in white collar jobs are happy to work until 70 and increasing retirement age echoes this attitude for physical labour blue collar jobs this may not be possible. Inequality will occur as superannuation is available from 55 and the aged pension from 70. Clearly White collar workers have access to more superannuation usually and the manual workers typically rely more on the age pension.

This inequity in retirement income is also present as our superannuation system exacerbates into retirement any inequities during working age. It is very possible our own workforce will be caught up in this.

Artificial intelligence and the “third industrial revolution” will deliver more uncertainty. In the next ten years however we can be assured that those that are currently doing well are likely to those to continue to do so in the short to medium term. Refinements in artificial intelligence mean that the very generation we are currently pushing into coding and “STEM” subjects will likely not have work within 20 years.

Loss of security in work also leads to the isolation of people from all the benefits of work both tangible; notably superannuation etc, and intangible; dignity, social attachment etc.

#### *Opportunities and implications for Samaritans*

- Volunteers looking for social engagement
- Social enterprise involving long term unemployed.

#### **Greater precarity and less mobility**

With housing unaffordable and work insecure many people are in a more precarious position. This can lead to a greater empathy with our client groups, or a greater need to simply ostracize them.

Previously organisations like the Samaritans have traditionally worked with those in the bottom quintile of income. We believe we are seeing a stickiness in that lowest quintile (i.e. little opportunity to move from it once in it) and increasing precarity for those in the second quintile.

Work such as the Spirit Level by Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson points out that under less equal conditions everyone fares worse. Increased levels of mental illness and unhappiness are noted to coincide with increased levels of inequality.

#### *Opportunities and implications for Samaritans*

- Working with a different client group who may have jobs, mortgages, etc.
- Larger numbers requiring services.

#### **Risk shifting entirely from government/society to individual**

Two symptoms of this, funding models to Nfp organisations and benefits to citizens. This is a fundamental change in the social contract. We still look fondly upon the Harvester judgement of the early 20th century and imagine that that dictates our contract. However lower government benefits to inoculate against unemployment, disability, old age, etc push all responsibility to the individual and allow greater risk taking for employers.

Samaritans is well aware of the implications of the change in funding models in terms of consumer directed care. Other changes that show little sign of abating are contestability, competitive neutrality, etc.

#### *Opportunities and implications for the Samaritans*

- Samaritans as well placed as anyone can be in current NDIS world
- New competitors
- Implications for staffing, how we see and treat staff, potential loss of fringe benefit tax rebate

#### **Public mood**

Much has been made of the various changes around the world that took the middle class commentariat by surprise in the last couple of years. Climate change and growth in population is increasingly being seen to be at a tipping point and politics is losing its grip as where people look for leadership.

This may lead to a greater difference between the main political parties and offer choice but only after politics itself is in the political wilderness for a period.

This growing distrust of politics also expands to other institutions, notably for us the Church. In addition to already declining numbers and the general move away from institutions the Royal Commission will report at the end of this year and how the Anglican Church and other Churches respond will further affect how we are seen. This may lead to outward hostility.

#### *Opportunities and implications for the Samaritans.*

- Increasing population in the region both in urban sprawl (low income and isolated) and those sea/tree changers (potentially self funding and better off) from larger cities notably Sydney.
- Other ways to work with the citizenry and politicians (as an intermediary for example)

## **Healthier Ageing**

It's a great story for many but will lead to a bifurcation in the road to aged care. As most people delay their move into care well into their 9<sup>th</sup> decade, people who have lived with disability, mental illness or homelessness and consequently age prematurely may be locked out of traditional aged care and require a new type of service.

*Opportunities and implications for the Samaritans.*

Operation of aged care for this group would play to Samaritans strengths and mission.

## **Technological developments**

As more information is collected and shared digitally more opportunities open up, however those on the other side of the digital divide are left further behind.

As a service provider technological developments will replace the need for staff involvement in particular tasks, either making staff redundant or freeing them to more person centered interactions.

Technology will also assist or inhibit organisation culture and development as it is used to support staff.