



# Te Utu Tika Hei Oranga I Aotearoa

## Basic Income New Zealand

Newsletter - October 2025

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### What's included in this newsletter:

1. [AGM 2025](#)
2. [AGM 2025 Guest Speaker Dr Ganesh R Ahirao's Speech](#)
3. Guy Standing's [Response](#) to Dr Eric Crympton's [Opinion](#)
4. Guy Standing's [critique](#) of the US income experiment
5. [News and Events](#)
6. [Useful Resources](#)

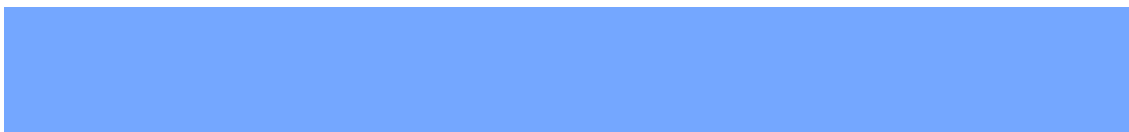
**Kia ora,**

We have changed our website platform from WIX to WordPress and are using Mailchimp to continue with our Newsletters.

Many of us have been watching the decisions of our present Coalition Government with dismay. The recent announcement that young people aged 18 and 19, and if not working, will no longer be eligible for Jobseeker support unless parents earn below \$65,529 per annum is of concern.

Basic Income trials consistently show that with a Basic Income, young people and the unemployed are more likely to find work. In contrast, punitive and paternalistic actions make them less likely to find work. Guy Standing wrote in his book *The Precariat* (2011) that “A good society needs to have people of empathy”. Good government shows empathy and compassion. Rutger Bregman has also said, “Poverty isn't a lack of character; it's a lack of cash.” Instead of the removal of Jobseeker support from 18 and 19-year-olds, Te Utu Hei Tika Oranga i Aotearoa-Basic Income New Zealand would like to see the introduction of a Basic Income. A Basic Income is a payment from the government to all people in society, regardless of their income or work circumstances, to guarantee basic needs like food and shelter as well as to enable individuals to pursue self-improvement and contribute to society.

See the [Useful Resources](#) section for links to two articles of interest discussing this decision of the Government.



# 2025 Te Utu Hei Tika Oranga I Aotearoa- Basic Income New Zealand AGM Napier

## **Election of Officers for 2025/2026**

*Chairperson:* Bella Moke

*Treasurer:* Iain Middleton

*Secretary:* Gaylene Middleton

*Committee:* Karl Matthys, Martin Holmann-Marriott, Gavin Mclean

Andrew Casey and Arbana Levande have stood aside from active committee work due to other commitments. We thank them for their contribution and hope to have them back on our committee at a later time.



## **AGM guest Speaker:**

Dr Ganesh R Ahirao (aka  
Ganesh Nana).

Ganesh on Substack

## Why Budgeting for a country is not like Budgeting for a household

*So often with the Coalition Government, we hear the refrain: a government is like a household, it must balance its spending to match its income, otherwise it will run out of money and leave our children a burden of debt.*

*Dr. Ganesh will discuss and show how these comparisons are false.*

*These thoughts are expanded in Dr. Ganesh's article on the tech platform [Substack](https://ganeshnana.substack.com/p/the-scourge-of-the-clickbait-homily).  
<https://ganeshnana.substack.com/p/the-scourge-of-the-clickbait-homily>  
<https://ganeshnana.substack.com/>*

*Dr. Ganesh has a perspective on economics which is much broader than the commentariat-focused headlines on house prices, interest rates, inflation, or government debt.*

*Dr. Ganesh's perspective is about whakapapa, whenua, and whai hua. and the connections within and between them. And it's about Aotearoa in the 21st century, where the constraints to producing more and more outputs are a lot more real (and increasingly binding) than they were in the past.*

## Ganesh's Journey and Community Input

Ganesh, a first-generation New Zealander, shared his background as an economist, highlighting his experience at BERL (Business and Economic Research Limited) and the Productivity Commission. He emphasised the importance of natural resources, labour, and capital in economics and discussed his current voluntary work with charities focused on equity, food security and health.

## Government's Role in Economic Leadership

Ganesh focused on the role of the government in our economy, drawing on historical and contemporary economic theories, emphasising the importance of setting proactive missions for the government as described by Mariana Mazzucato, using examples like the 1960s moon landing mission. Ganesh argued that the government should play a central role in driving the economy towards goals like decarbonization, rather than waiting for crises to respond. Ganesh criticised the current lack of vision and mission in economic policy, particularly regarding climate change

## Revaluing Unpaid and GDP Metrics

The discussion focused on modern economic thinking, particularly highlighting contributions from women economists like Mariana Mazzucato, Kate Raworth, and Stephanie Kelton, who are pushing for new economic approaches. The conversation explored how unpaid work and contributions to the economy are often undervalued. Ganesh emphasised that all forms of labour, whether paid or unpaid, contribute to societal well-being. He discussed the need to shift away

from GDP-focused measurements to more comprehensive indicators of well-being, suggesting that self-assessed well-being surveys and health literature could provide valuable insights for measuring economic value beyond traditional metrics.

## Sustainable Growth and Economic Transition

Ganesh focused on the challenges and opportunities for transitioning to a more sustainable and inclusive economy, emphasising the need to redefine growth beyond mere economic expansion, suggesting that growth could mean "better" rather than "more." Ganesh highlighted the importance of setting missions for proactive government action and the potential for social enterprise models and alternative governance structures (including, for example, those reflected in Māori Trusts and Incorporations). Ganesh also stressed the urgency of addressing environmental concerns, noting that humanity has already exceeded several planetary boundaries. However, he acknowledged the difficulty of changing the current economic narrative and the resistance from the status quo. Ganesh concluded by suggesting that gradual shifts in thinking and implementation could eventually lead to broader systemic change.

## New Zealand's Social Policy Evolution

Ganesh reflected on the significant social changes in New Zealand over the past 50 years, noting the shift in attitudes towards the Treaty of Waitangi and the National Anthem. Ganesh discussed how major social policies like public healthcare and free education were implemented without formal legislation, often through leadership and public acceptance. Ganesh suggested that while leadership plays a crucial role in driving change, it's not the sole factor, and successful policy changes typically result from a combination of factors, including public support, luck, and historical context.

## Reframing Left-Wing Political Messaging

The discussion focused on political messaging and voter behaviour, with Ganes explaining how right-wing parties have successfully positioned themselves as champions of the working class by opposing government intervention while still relying on government support during crises. Ganesh emphasised that the left needs to develop a more proactive and positive messaging strategy that highlights the benefits of government involvement in areas like public health, education, and safety nets, rather than simply opposing the right's negative messaging. The conversation concluded with a call for courage in speaking out against misinformation and for a more empowering approach to political communication that frames government as a responsible household guardian rather than an oppressive force.

## Government vs Household Financial Powers

The discussion focused on comparing government and household finances, with Ganesh explaining key differences, including the government's power to tax (constrained to a degree by the requirement for voter consent), ability to borrow without security, and influence on the entire economy through its decisions. Ganesh also expanded the concept of debt beyond financial measures to include social, community, and resource debts, particularly highlighting issues with mental health and education.

Jump to the top

## News and Events↓

Our website platform has been changed from WIX to WordPress. Karl Matthys, Iain Middleton and Martin Holmann-Marriott have updated the information that is available on our new website. The link to view our website is:

<https://basicincomenz.net/>

We have an active Facebook page *Basic Income New Zealand*.

<https://www.facebook.com/BasicIncomeNZ> Committee member, Karl Matthys ensures up to date posts concerning issues around Basic Income and Aotearoa New Zealand. Karl also posts international Basic Income news.

## Guy Standing's Response to 2024 Basic Income Opinion Piece by Eric Crampton in The Post



## Guy Standing

*Guy Standing is a British labour economist. He is a professor of development studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and a co-founder of the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN). Standing has written widely in the areas of labour economics, labour market policy, unemployment, labour market flexibility, structural adjustment policies and social protection. He created the term precariat to describe an emerging class of workers who are harmed by low wages and poor job security as a consequence of globalisation. Since the 2011 publication of his book *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, his work has focused on the precariat, unconditional basic income, deliberative democracy, and the commons.*

### Guy Standing's Response

Eric Crampton must have been reading another study from the report he describes in his hostile critique of basic income ('Putting the UBI to the test', The Post, July 29). The US cash transfer project he eulogised was not a test of basic income.

There have been over 100 experiments, which show positive results. The one he cites is not one of them. By definition, a basic income is a modest amount paid regularly to all usual residents, paid individually, without means-tests or behavioural conditions, regardless of income, gender, marital status or work status. In other words, everybody receives it as individuals.

The trouble with the study Crampton cites is that it does not pretend to respect that definition. Indeed, several limitations make the results irrelevant for assessing basic income.

It was a means-tested benefit paid to 1,000 individuals spread across 19 counties in Texas and Illinois, that is, about 50 per county, or less than 1%. That is hardly universal. The individuals self-selected. They only received the cash if they could prove they were poor. It was only paid to individuals aged between 20 and 40. It was only paid to one individual per household, which is never a good idea. It was only paid to an individual if nobody in the household was receiving disability benefits and if they were not in publicly-subsidised housing. It deliberately oversampled individuals from minority groups. Those features invalidate any claim to randomness, unconditionality or universality. Although useful and interesting, it was not a test of basic income.

Incidentally, the experiment began in the height of COVID, in a month when four million cases were recorded. In those circumstances, it is surely a marvel that a cash transfer only resulted in a drop of just over an hour a week in paid labour.

Moving towards a basic income for every resident citizen is a matter of common justice, freedom and basic security. As economists have shown, it is affordable without raising income taxes. And opinion polls show it now has majority support.

[Jump to the top](#)



### **Dr. Eric Crampton**

*Eric Crampton is chief economist at the New Zealand Initiative in Wellington. From 2003 through 2014, he served as Lecturer and Senior Lecturer with the Department of Economics at the University of Canterbury. He blogs at [Offsetting Behaviour](#).*

[Jump to the top](#)

## A US Basic Income Experiment that Wasn't

Crampton reported that a three-year study, funded by Silicon Valley donors and coordinated by Open Research, found that a \$1,000 monthly Universal Basic Income (UBI) did not improve employment outcomes or long-term health for low-income participants. Recipients reduced their work hours and saw a decline in earned income, while initial improvements in mental health and food security faded after the first year. The findings indicate that while UBI offers financial support, it may not function as an effective substitute for targeted social assistance due to high costs and reduced labour participation.

[Guy Standing's critique of the US income experiment, mentioning Eric Crampton's misleading article in footnote 9.](#)

In July 2024, the National Bureau of Economic Research issued a report from the researchers on an income-transfer project conducted in Illinois and Texas. It has generated global attention, with some commentators saying it undermines the case for basic income, others that it supports the case for it.

This note is a critique of the project, and one point should be made very firmly at the outset: This experiment was not a test of basic income. Anybody claiming otherwise is either unfamiliar with the concept of basic income or is being disingenuous.

To be fair to the researchers, the title of their main report refers to a 'guaranteed income', not a basic income. But as far as I can see, none of the researchers has rebutted the interpretation by critics. Moreover, as this writer knows, having been involved in the initial discussions of the

project in Stanford University, the initial researchers knew they could not do a proper basic income pilot.

You can find the full article [here](#)



## Useful resources ↓

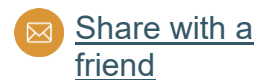
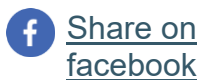
### Books

1. Zoe Staines, *Securing Women's Economic Security, Safety, and Freedom*, 25 June 2025.
2. Geoff Crocker, *Rethinking Income and Money, Incorporating Technology into Economic Theory*, 17 May 2025.

## Articles and Blogposts

1. Max Harris, [Welfare changes are trying to drag us back to a time most of us have left behind. The Post](#), 10 October 2025.
2. Susan St John, [Susan St John argues Jobseeker changes turn young adults into dependent children, and squeeze households further. interest.co.nz](#), 08 October 2025.
3. Claudette Hauiti, [Job seeker policy bad for struggling whānau](#), Waatea News, 07 October, 2025.
4. Craig Renney, [A small wrinkle in the Jobseeker policy](#), craigrenney.substack.com, 06 October, 2025.
5. Ganesh R Ahirao, [Economists call for immediate suspension of spending cuts substack.com](#), 21 November 2024
6. Craig Renney, [Open Letter to Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. substack.com](#), 05 October 2025.

Visit TUTHOA-BINZ Website for More Information



### ***Te Utu Tika Hei Oranga I Aotearoa - Basic Income New Zealand***

A fairer future starts here. Basic Income is the Poverty Fix. It promotes equity, dignity, and wellbeing for all.

You're receiving this newsletter because you care about creating a fairer Aotearoa. To learn more or get involved, visit our website or reach out directly. Together, we can build a happier and healthier society.

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