

DROPPING OFF THE EDGE 2015

Brisbane - 16th August 2015

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OUTLINE OF TODAY'S PROGRAM

- **Overview of Key Findings from the Dropping off the Edge Report**
- **Time for Questions and Answers**
- **Our Advocacy Position**
- **10.50am MORNING TEA - 15 minutes**
- **Facilitated Discussion**

12 noon finish

ABOUT OUR ORGANISATIONS

Jesuit Social Services

We work to build a just society where all people can live to their full potential - by partnering with community to support those most in need and working to change policies, practices, ideas and values that perpetuate inequality, prejudice and exclusion.

Catholic Social Services Australia

We represent a national network of 59 Catholic social service organisations that provide direct support to more than one million Australians each year. We develop social welfare policies, programs and other strategic responses that work towards the economic, social and spiritual well-being of the Australian community.

WHY WE COMMISSIONED THIS RESEARCH

- **The 2007 Dropping off the Edge Report (and 1999, 2004) led to Governments committing to a place based approach and the establishment of the National Social Inclusion Board.**
- **We received many requests for updating the data to provide a better evidence base.**
- **We cannot and should not turn away from the challenge of persistent and entrenched disadvantage.**
- **We hold hope that the young people in these communities will have a better outlook and life opportunities.**

Findings from the research

Adrian Beavis

GENERAL PERSPECTIVE

- Where an accumulation of problems makes a serious impact upon the wellbeing of residents of a disadvantaged area, locality-specific measures may be needed to strengthen the community and supplement general social policy.
- **Not more 'old wine in new bottles'**

UNITS OF STUDY

As small as available data permits.

- Postcodes: Victoria, NSW, ACT

- Statistical Local Areas (SLAs):

Queensland (475), South Australia, Northern Territory

SLAs are roughly the same as local government areas but not always, eg. Brisbane gives 163.

- Local Government Areas: Tasmania, Western Australia

OVERALL SCOPE

What: Geographic distribution of social disadvantage

How: Used signposts (indicators)

(All done with the cooperation of many governments.)

11 'CLASSIC' INDICATORS

**Low family income; disability; confirmed child maltreatment;
Criminal convictions; prison admissions; limited work skills;
Unemployment; access to internet;
Unengaged young adults; general education level of locality;
Limited post-school qualifications**

5 NEW TO 2015 INDICATORS

**Housing stress; family violence; psychiatric admissions;
Readiness for schooling; NAPLAN results**

For Queensland, 21 indicators were used.

BASIC QUESTIONS

- a) Degree of concentration?
- b) Recurring features of profiles?
- c) Persistence or otherwise of disadvantage?

QUEENSLAND

Data provided on 475 SLAs

6% of SLAs (30 SLAs) accounted for nearly 50% of the top rankings (ie. top 5% or 1-23 ranks on each indicator)

The 11 Most Disadvantaged Communities (2.3% of the total) accounted for 26% of the top rankings (ie. top 5% or 1-23 ranks on each indicator)

No. of SLAs	Top 5% frequency (ranked 1-23)	Total (n=483)
3	15	45
3	14	42
2	13	26
1	12	12
2	10	20

Degree of concentration of disadvantage

For every jurisdiction there is a marked degree spatial concentration;

- Qld/NT/SA, about 6% of SLAs = 50% or more of top ranks**
- NSW, Vic and WA - 1.5% postcodes = 12-14% top ranks**

Recurring features

All those defined as 'Most Disadvantaged' had common features of disadvantage:

- Youth disengagement
- Long term unemployment
- Prison admissions

Most also featured on indicators in relation to

- Low family income
- Low levels of internet access

Taken together, these create a web of disadvantage

Some preliminaries before the detail

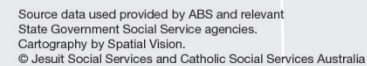
- We use bands to discuss the detail. The purpose of bands is to avoid sensationalising individual areas.
- This study is seeking to *describe*, not explain, where disadvantage is most prevalent.

Queensland: 12 MOST DISADVANTAGED SLAs IN 2015

BAND	Localities arranged alphabetically	Top 5% (✓)/ top 10% (*) in 2007
1	Aurukun	✓
	Doomadgee	✓
	Kowanyama	✓
	Mornington	✓
	Woorabinda	✓
	Yarrabah	✓
2		
	Cherbourg	✓
	Inala	*
	Lockhart River	*
	Napranum	*
	Palm Island	✓
	Pormpuraaw	✓

40 MOST DISADVANTAGED LOCALITIES

Band	2015	2007	Band	2015	2007
Band 1	Aurukun	-	Band 4	Cairns – Central Suburbs	Band 6
	Doomadgee	-		Cook	-
	Kowanyama	-		Fraser Coast – Hervey Bay B	Band 1
	Mornington	Band 2		Paroo	Band 3
	Woorabinda	-		Redland – Balance	Band 3
	Yarrabah	-		South Burnett – Nanango	-
Band 2	Cherbourg	-	Band 5	Acacia Ridge	Band 4
	Inala	Band 2		Beenleigh	-
	Lockhart River	-		Eagleby	Band 4
	Napranum	-		Garbutt	-
	Palm Island	-		North Burnett – Gayndah	Band 6
	Pormpuraaw	-		North Burnett – Biggenden	Band 1
Band 3	Bundaberg – Kolan	Band 2	Band 6	Bundaberg – Bundaberg	Band 4
	Carpentaria	Band 5		Caboolture Central	Band 2
	Rockhampton – Mount Morgan	Band 1		Deception Bay	Band 6
	South Burnett – Wondai	Band 6		Fraser Coast – Maryborough	-
	South Burnett – Murgon	Band 1		Gladstone – Miriam Vale	-
	Woodridge	Band 1		Gympie – Kilkivan	-
				Rocklea	-
				Southern Downs – Warwick	-
				Tablelands – Mareeba	Band 4
				Waterford West	Band 6



IN SUMMARY

Four waves of research over a fifteen year period have confirmed the cumulative social disadvantage of a small number of localities across Australia.

DISADVANTAGE: STATISTICAL OR 'REAL'?

Device of comparing 3% most disadvantaged localities with Remaining 97%.
Occurrence ratios.

Three illustrations -

	Vic	WA	NSW	
Juvenile offending	3.4	---	2.3	
Child maltreatment	3.1	2.6	---	
Long-term unemployed	2.9	6.0	3.3	
Prison admissions	2.8	8.1	3.6	
Overall education	2.7	4.8	2.9	

WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT?

Data can help guide frontline services

Findings can be invoked in social equity debates, policy formulation, Inquiries.

Test whether it really is possible to ‘turn around’ persistently disadvantaged communities -

Authentic community strengthening over time;

Commonwealth/state units-small but influential, secondments to drive strategy

Learn from examples of what can be achieved against the odds.

IMPACT OF SOCIAL COHESION

- **Can the strength of local social bonds lessen the impact of damaging social, health and economic conditions on community wellbeing?**
- **Key concept: social cohesion (connections between people and between them and their community)**

SOCIAL COHESION

Defining characteristics:

- Volunteerism
- Membership of local groups
- Group action to improve community
- Neighbours help in difficult times
- Feel safe walking in neighbourhood
- Agree people can be trusted
- Attendance at local community event
- Feel valued by society

EXAMPLES OF IMPACT OF SOCIAL COHESION

	495 postcode areas	LOW social cohesion N=164	HIGH social cohesion N=155
CRIME			
Unemployment/imprisonment	.44	.67	.17
CHILD MALTREATMENT			
Low family income/child mistreatment	.36	.59	.27
NON-ATTENDANCE AT PRESCHOOL			
Low family income/no preschool	.39	.56	.17
UNEMPLOYMENT			
Early school leaving/unemployment	.42	.67	.14
PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS			
Unemployment/psych. hosp. admissions	.30	.50	.12
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE			
Unemployment/domestic violence	.41	.44	.30
LOW BIRTH-WEIGHT			
Early school leaving/low birth-weight	.19	.46	.11

RESOURCING DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

Victorian evidence supports the role of social cohesion in dampening the effects of harmful communal conditions.

But building cohesion needs to be accompanied by creation of other tangible opportunities in areas such as:

- Education and training/re-training
- Work and income generation
- Improving health
- Parenting skills
- Problem solving law enforcement
- Developing local leadership capacities

Questions and discussion on the findings

**Advocacy position of
Catholic Social Services Australia
and
Jesuit Social Services**

URGENT ACTION NEEDED TO ADDRESS DISADVANTAGE

A small number of communities experience persistent and entrenched disadvantage.

It is not the responsibility of individuals alone to solve but for governments to work with the community to provide real opportunities for economic and social participation, and a cohesive community life.

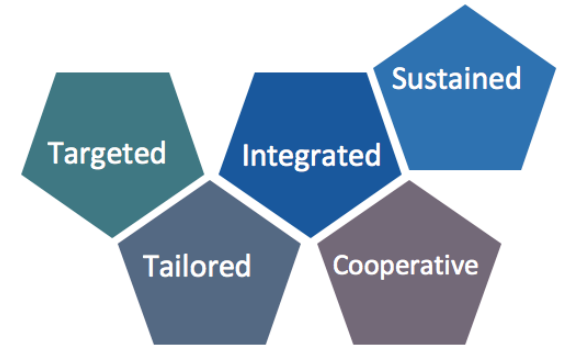
CONFRONTING AND OVERCOMING DISADVANTAGE

We cannot and should not turn away from the challenge of persistent and entrenched disadvantage.

A new approach is needed so we don't continue to fail the 3% of communities that bear the greatest burden of disadvantage.

STARTING THE CONVERSATION - WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ADDRESS ENTRENCHED DISADVANTAGE?

- Focus on most disadvantaged locations
- Develop solutions that are unique to each community
- Response is integrated - across silos and across governments
- Long term
- Involve communities



We need a multi-layered, cooperative and coordinated strategy that is **owned and driven by the community**.

It must involve all layers of government and the business and community sectors, reflecting shared responsibility and joint commitment to resolve this entrenched problem.

The strategy must take account of the unique characteristics and circumstances of local communities and must be sustained over the long term.

OUR ADVOCACY POSITION

We call on Government and the community to urgently give priority to changing this unacceptable situation and provide a better future for these communities through:

1. Sustained and long term commitment to change

- **minimum of 20 years**
- **multiparty agreement across electoral cycles**
- **at all levels – national, state and local**

OUR ADVOCACY POSITION - CONT

2. Address economic and social disadvantage at the level of the:

- **individual -housing, income, education, employment, services and supports**
- **community - culture and community norms, role models, social connections, access to services, peers, school and teacher quality**
- **macro - economic growth, structural change and institutional functioning**

OUR ADVOCACY POSITION - CONT

3. Working with the community, business and government on local solutions that are targeted, tailored and agile:

- **harnessing resources, innovative ideas and strengths**
- **agreeing feasible local action plans -setting priorities, targets and allocating adequate resources**
- **establishing local governance mechanisms tailored to the circumstances of the communities**
- **providing expert assistance and guidance as required**

OUR ADVOCACY POSITION - CONT

4. Integrating government to support local solutions and effectively drive change:

- **establishing a lead agency with authority nationally and in each state and territory to integrate and coordinate activity**
- **establishing performance targets for departments setting priority actions and resource allocation**
- **allocating adequate funds over required period to deliver change**
- **monitoring and evaluating effectiveness and developing the knowledge base of what is successful**

Morning Tea Break
- 15 minutes

DISCUSSION:

- 1. What are the issues affecting disadvantage in your community?**
- 2. What has worked well in your community to address disadvantage?**
- 3. What are some further ideas to address disadvantage?**

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.dote.org.au and #DOTe2015

- Report
- Summary Document
- State Fact Sheets
- Maps
- Advocacy Materials
- State Based Briefings



Thank you

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