DROPPING OFF THE EDGE 2015

CAIRNS – 2nd September 2015

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JESUIT SOCIAL SERVICES
BUILDING A JUST SOCIETY

Catholic Social Services Australia

OUTLINE OF TODAY'S PROGRAM

- Overview of Key Findings from the Dropping off the Edge Report

- Time for Questions and Answers

- Our Advocacy Position

- Break – 15 minutes

- Facilitated Discussion

    3.30pm 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

A/Professor Margot Rawsthorne

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 as an entity in its own right and supplement general social policy.

UNITS OF STUDY

As small as available data permits.

- **Postcodes: Victoria (667), NSW (621), ACT (26)**

- **Statistical Local Areas (SLAs):**
  Queensland (475), South Australia (125) Northern Territory(16)

- **Local Government Areas (LGAs):**
  Tasmania (29), Western Australia (140)

ADDITIONAL ANALYSES

Housing stress

Family violence

Psychiatric admissions (not available State wide)

Readiness for schooling

NAPLAN results

Note: Some data was not available for small SLAs due to ABS privacy protocols

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Raw data received from relevant government body (including ABS)

Data converted in accordance with definitions outlined in Chapter 2

For example, low family income was calculated using *'the proportion of households with an income less than $600 per week in each counting area'*

Counting area then ranked from the highest to the lowest on each indicator of disadvantage

The data was also explored to establish correlations between indicators across a jurisdiction (when sufficient statistical strength). This enabled us to look beneath the surface for patterns of connectedness between indicators

Principal Components Analysis was also undertaken when appropriate to devise a single social disadvantage score.

BASIC QUESTIONS

a) **Degree of concentration?**

   Which locations appear in the top ranked positions across a range of indicators?

b) **Recurring features of profiles?**

   What (if any) are the common features of the most disadvantaged locations?

a) **Persistence or otherwise of disadvantage?**

   If available, how have specific locations fared overtime?

SPATIAL CONCENTRATION

Every jurisdiction marked degree spatial concentration;

SA, appx. 6% SLAs = 50% or more of top ranks*

Vic and WA – 1.5% postcodes = 12-14% top ranks*

NSW 6% = 49.5% of most disadvantaged rank positions*

*3-5%

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

- The 11 Most Disadvantaged Communities (ranked in top 5% at least 10 times)

Aurunkun	Kowanyama	Umagico (Northern Peninsula Area)	Woorabinda
Cherbourg	Mornington	Palm Island	Yarrabah
Doomadgee	Injinoo (Northern Peninsula Area)	Pormpuraaw	

- Majority of the Most Disadvantaged Communities are located in remote areas in far NQ.
- Only three of these SLAs fall outside the areas defined by the ABS as 'very remote' (Cherbourg, Woorabinda and Yarrabah)

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

Among these Most Disadvantaged SLAs there was large variations in child maltreatment (2-126) and juvenile convictions (1-94) data

- Next Most Disadvantaged group dominated by remote locations

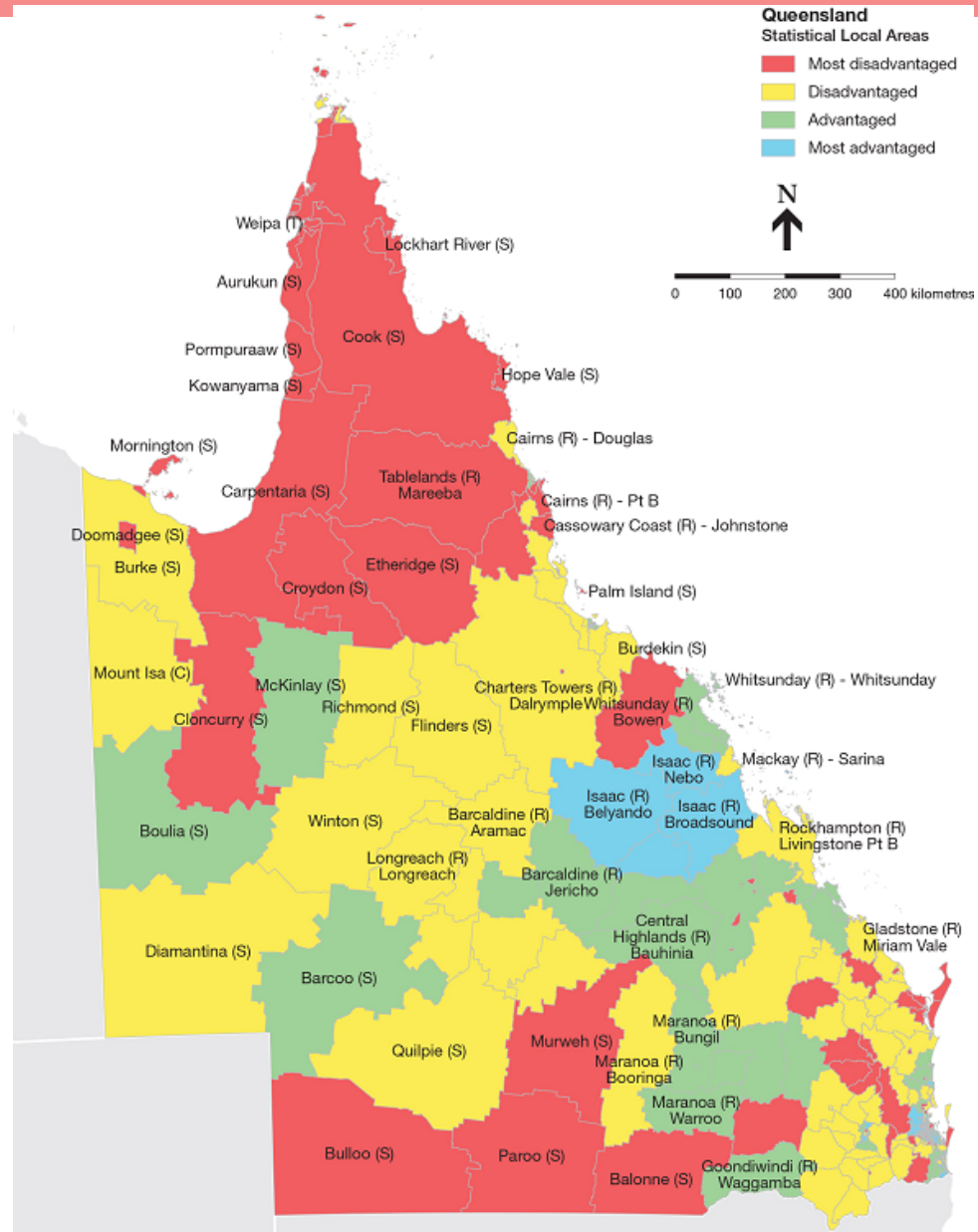| Burke	Carpentaria	Etheridge	Hope Vale	Inala
Lockhart River	Mapoon	Napranum	Bamaga (Northern Peninsula Area)	New Mapoon (Northern Peninsula Area)
Badu (Torres Strait Island)	Boigu (Torres Strait Island)	Erub (Torres Strait Island)	St. Pauls (Torres Strait Island)	Warraber (Torres Strait Island)
Mabuiag (Torres Strait Island)	Mer (Torres Strait Island)	Seisia (Northern Peninsula Area)	Wujal Wujal	

CHANGE OVER TIME – MOST DISADVANTAGED

More than half of the State's 40 most disadvantaged SLAs in 2014 were also identified as disadvantage in 2007. Direct comparisons between 2014 and 2007 are difficult due to boundary changes and improved data collection (particularly in relation to small remote SLAs).

Appearing in top 3 bands in both 2014 and 2007
Bundaberg – Kolan
Carpentaria
Inala
Mornington
Rockhampton – Mount Morgan
South Burnett – Wondai
South Burnett – Murgon
Woodbridge

IMPROVEMENTS IN RANKINGS BY INDICATORS

Location	Indicator rank improvements 2007-2014
Biggenden	Early school leavers/young adults not engaged; low income families; nil qualifications/ post school qualifications; Pre-school/school readiness
Hervey Bay	Early school leavers/young adults not engaged; low income families; unemployment; long-term unemployment
Murgon	Early school leavers/young adults not engaged; nil qualifications/post school qualifications
Mount Morgan	Early school leavers/young adults not engaged; Internet; nil qualifications/post school qualifications; unemployment; long term unemployment
Spring Hill	Pre-school/school readiness; psychiatric admissions
Wacol	Criminal convictions; prison admissions; psychiatric admissions; nil qualifications/ post school qualifications; unemployment

Mapping of disadvantage in Queensland by quartile

WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT?

- Demand action to ensure opportunities and wealth more evenly shared

- Data can help guide frontline services

- Findings can be invoked in social equity debates, policy formulation and inquiries.

- Test whether it really is possible to 'turn around' persistently disadvantaged communities – authentic community strengthening over time;

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

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

LIFTING OUR GAZE:
Community Appraisal and Strengthening Framework

Communities consist of four, inter-linked, sub-systems

- Substance and style of decision-making,

- Resource generation, allocation,

- Integration of people, groups and community organisations,

- Maintaining energy, direction and motivation.

These sub-systems shape the health and wellbeing of communities

SOCIAL COHESION

Connections between people and between them and their community

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

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.
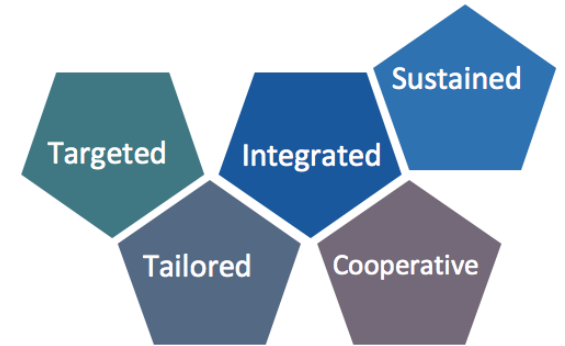
CONFRONTING AND OVERCOMING DISADVANTAGE

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

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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