DROPPING OFF THE EDGE 2015

Sydney – Friday 21st August 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**

- **2:50pm break – 15 minutes**

- **Facilitated Discussion**

  4pm 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.
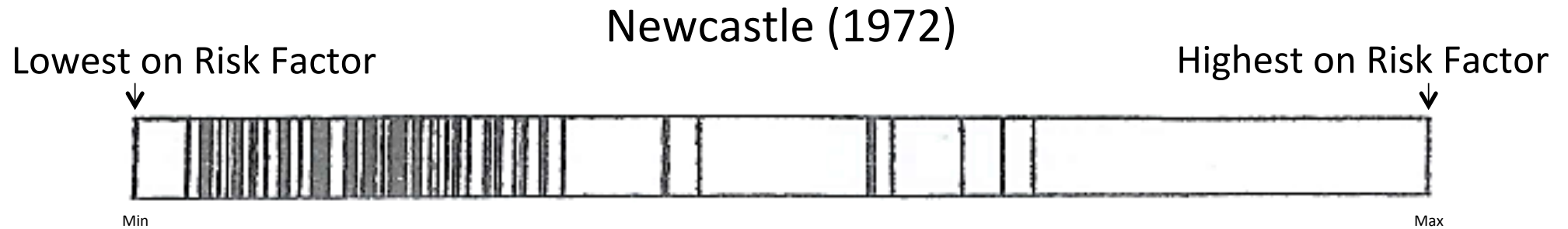
Catholic Social Services Australia

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 - Professor Tony Vinson

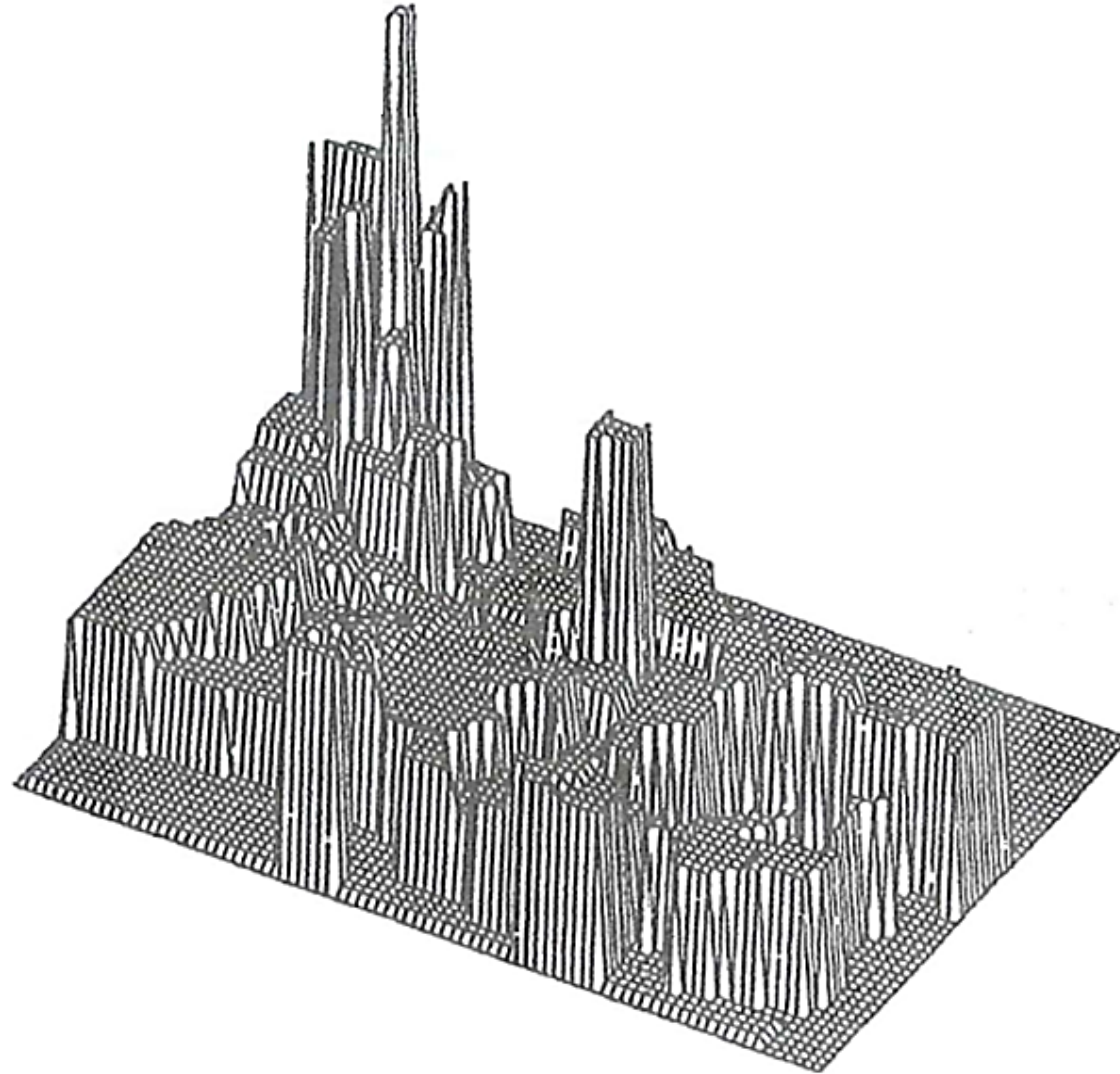# Distribution of suburbs on the risk factor (juvenile delinquency excluded)

Newcastle (1972)

Lowest on Risk Factor

Highest on Risk Factor

Min

Max

Range of risk scores

New South Wale Regions (1974)

Lowest on Risk Factor

Highest on Risk Factor

Min

Max

Variations in "risk scores" across 75 minor suburbs of Newcastle

Newcastle (1972)

Vinson, T. and Homel, R. (1975) "Crime and Disadvantage. The coincidence of medical and social problems in an Australian city". British Journal of Criminology. Vol. 15, No. 1, 21-31.

JESUIT SOCIAL SERVICES / CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES STUDIES

- 1999, 2004 (VIC/NSW) 2007,2015 (AUST)

- 1999 – Vic 6.5% = appx. half top positions; Court appearances, maltreatment, unemployment, low income

- 2004 – more indicators, same concentration, similar rank order; 2.1% Vic postcodes = 25% prison admissions; child maltreatment need 2.7%,

- 2013 – 2.6% of Vic P'Cs = 25% of children on youth justice orders

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.**

- Not more 'old wine in new bottles'

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)

OVERALL SCOPE

Geographic distribution of social disadvantage

Use signposts (indicators)

Cooperation of governments and statistics generating agencies

CLASSIC

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

ADDITIONAL ANALYSES

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

BASIC QUESTIONS

a) Degree of concentration?

b) Recurring features of profiles?

c) Persistence or otherwise of disadvantage?

GENERAL ANSWERS

Every jurisdiction marked degree spatial concentration;

Qld/NT/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 (21 indicators x 31 top positions)

*3-5%

37 NSW postcodes 5-15 'top rankings' (2014) 9/11

	2007
25/37 criminal convictions	yes
23/37 unemployment; access to internet	yes
22/37 domestic violence	no
19/37 prison admissions; lack qualifications; long-term unemployment	yes
18/37 Juvenile offending; young adults not fully engaged	na & yes
16-17/37 overall education; Y3 reading; disability support	Yes, na & no
13-14/37 low family income; Y9 numeracy; Y9 reading	Yes & na
11-12/37 School readiness; psych. Admissions; Y3 numeracy	Na, no & na

OVERALL LOCATIONAL VULNERABILITY – OUR MAIN APPROACH

A single score on disadvantage index: factor scores.

Purpose of bands – avoid sensationalising individual areas.

GENERAL ANSWERS

Dominant characteristics: criminal convictions, adult imprisonment, juvenile offending, - additional burdens - unemployment, deficient education/qualifications, child maltreatment, low family income, domestic violence, psychiatric admissions.

1/3rd of multiply disadvantaged places Y3 & Y9 NAPLAN results SA/Qld./NT/Tas./WA - unengaged young adults prominent.

WEB

Inter-connections (correlations) and ʻwebʼ effects – more than sum of separately operating influences.

Correlations essentially mirrored dominant characteristics. A few special emphases – child maltreatment (Vic) and internet access (NSW and Qld)

PLACES

Statistical merging composite score, principal components analysis.

General consistency of results but dramatically so with top two bands (twelve most disadvantaged places).

PLACES

NSW – after fifteen years 9/12 the same. Consistent pattern over four projects.
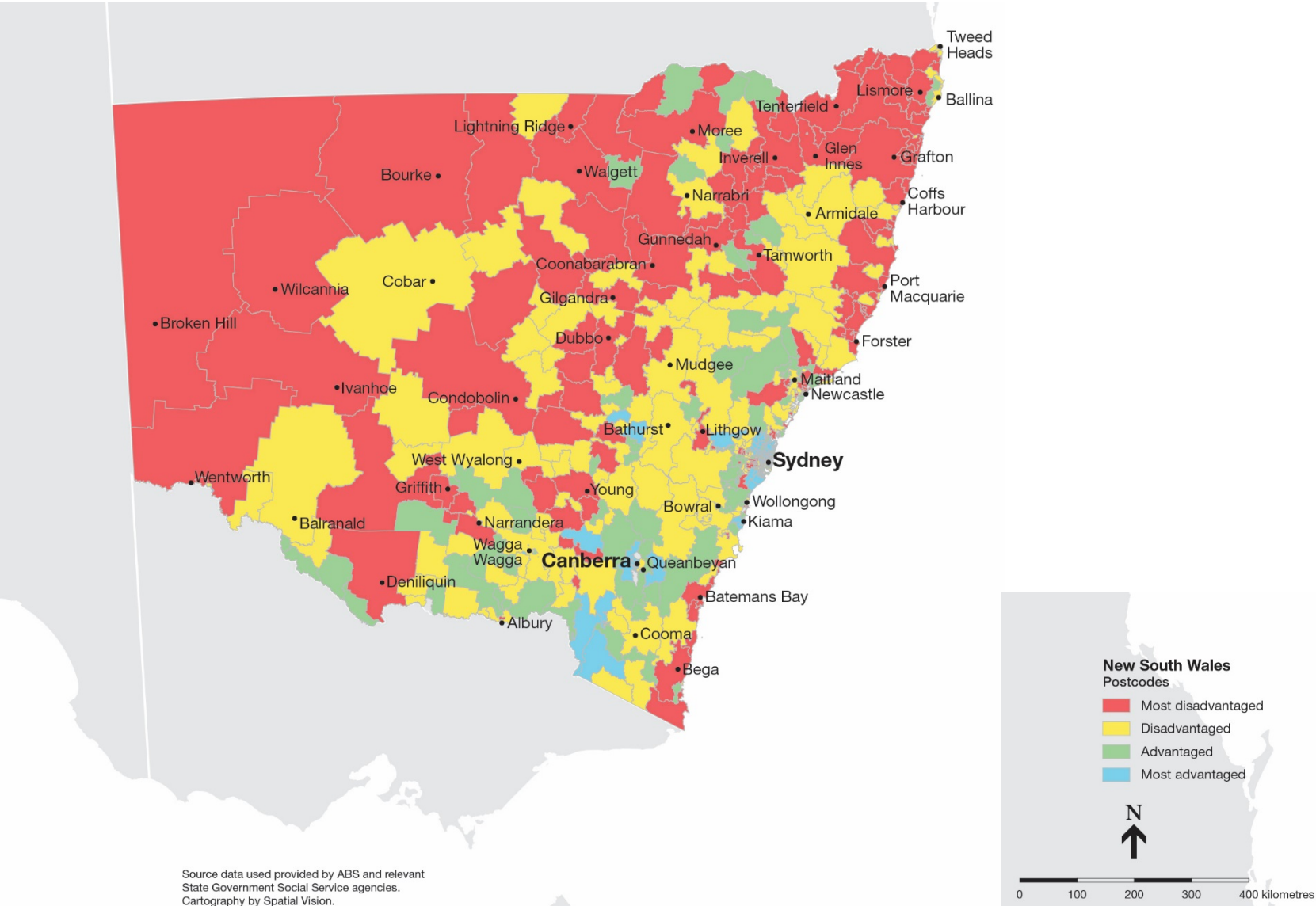
Vic – same pattern 8/12 places

SA – 2007-2015: 8/12; Tasmania and WA – comparisons not possible but in Tasmania concentration of disadvantage in the midlands and North-east. In WA, seven localities of confirmed disadvantage.

NSW: 12 MOST DISADVANTAGED IN 2015

Band	Postcode	Localities arranged alphabetically	Top 5% (✓)/ top 10% (*) in 2007
	2839	Brewarrina	✓
	2559	Claymore	✓
	2834	Lightning Ridge	✓
1	2832	Walgett	✓
	2836	Wilcannia	✓
	2306	Windale	✓
	2840	Bourke	✓
	2449	Bowraville	✓
2	2717	Dareton	*
	2466	Iluka	✓
	2469	Northern Rivers MSC	✓
	2163	Villawood	*

- **40 MOST DISADVANTAGED LOCALITIES IN NSW**

- **Band 1 – Brewarrina, Claymore, Lightning Ridge, Walgett, Wilcannia, Windale**

- **Band 2 – Bourke, Bowraville, Dareton, Iluka, Northern Rivers MSC, Villawood**

- **Band 3 – Cabramatta, Coonamble, Kempsey, Manilla, Warrawong, Werris Creek**

- **Band 4 – Coraki, Fairfield, Laurieton, Mount Druitt, Nambucca Heads, Ulmarra**

- **Band 5 – Casino, Eden, Gilgandra, Harrington, Port Kembla, Warren**

- **Band 6 – Berkeley, Broken Hill, Dorrigo, Evans Head, Forster, Inverell, Moree, Taree, Urunga, Wellington**

DOTE2015

MAP OF NSW

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**

REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS - MILDURA

2006 STARTED SERIES; Role of Local Govt.- give direction to Council′s goal

Strengths as well as possible shortcomings - structure to dig deeper and respond (community engagement framework; three layers)

More comprehensive than conventional health and welfare problems (eg., libraries, art gallery, environment)

One difficulty - avoiding defensive responses

Comparisons - sub-regions

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

July 2011

FOUR SUB-SYSTEMS

- Substance and style of decision-making,
- Resource generation, allocation,
- Integration of people, groups and community organisations,
- Maintaining energy, direction and motivation.

SUBSTANCE, STYLE OF DECISION MAKING

LEADERS:

• help commun. dev. goals for better future   60% 46%

• Carefully consider commun. needs   52% 46%

• Dev. Sound plans to achieve goals   51% 45%

• Share decision-making comm. members 43% 33%

RESOURCE GENERATION AND ALLOCATION

- **Local organisations and people contribute financially and voluntarily to support comm. Initiatives 85% 38%**

- **Official funds used wisely/fairly in this comm.. 52% 34%**

INTEGRATION INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS

- I believe my neighbours would help me in an emergency 95% 95%

- Overall I am very attracted to living in this neighbourhood 92% 92%

- I feel like I belong to this n'hood. 90% 91%

- I would be willing to work together with others to improve my neighbourhood 91% 72%

- I feel loyal to people in my n'hood. 87% 85%

- I plan to remain a resident of this n'hood for a number of years 83% 78%

Continue

- friendships and associations I have with other people in my n'hood mean a lot to me 79% 77%

- I regularly stop and talk with people in my neighbourhood 84% 82%

- Living in this neighbourhood gives me a sense of community 80% 79%

MAINTAINING ENERGY, MOTIVATION, DIRECTION

- **Tensions and conflict not allowed to get out of hand in this community 70% 82%**
- **My community accepts differences in lifestyle and beliefs 77% 82%**
- **This community upholds the rights of others by encouraging social justice, equality 69% n.a.**
- **This community periodically reviews its goals and aspirations for moving forward 63% n.a.**
- **This community ensures that differences of opinion do not create tension between its members 54% n.a**

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.
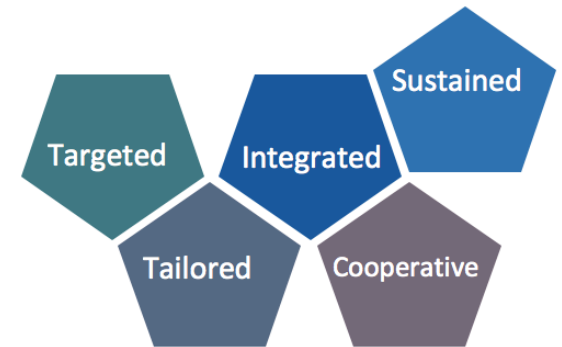
CONFRONTING AND OVERCOMING DISADVANTAGE

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

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

Contact:

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Catholic Social Services Australia   **02 6285 1366**