

DROPPING OFF THE EDGE 2015

Dropping off the Edge 2015 examines 140 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Western Australia across 19 different indicators of disadvantage. The indicators, based on statistics collected from a number of government agencies, reflect factors that may limit life opportunities in the broad areas of social wellbeing, health, community safety, access to housing, education and employment.

LGAs were ranked on each indicator, with high rankings indicating the LGA was significantly affected by the particular limiting factor (eg unemployment or disability). These results were then used to produce a 'rank average' taking into account aspects of disadvantage to which the locality is particularly vulnerable, and those aspects to which it is less vulnerable, and combining them into a single score.

Dropping off the Edge 2015 builds on similar reports released in 2007, 2004 and 1999, although Western Australia did not feature in the earlier two reports.

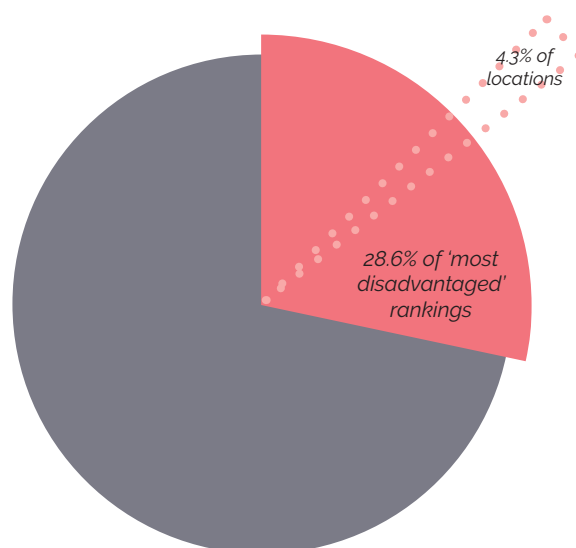
Key Findings

- Disadvantage is concentrated in a small number of communities within Western Australia.
- These communities experience a complex web of disadvantage and bear a disproportionately high level of disadvantage within the state.
- A number of LGAs have remained depressed for long periods demonstrating the persistent, entrenched nature of the disadvantage experienced by these communities.

Disadvantage is concentrated

A limited number of LGAs account for a disproportionate number of 'top ranked' (ie most disadvantaged) positions:

- **4.3% of localities** account for around **28.6% of 'most disadvantaged' ranks**.
- **13 localities** (just under **10% of the total**) account for nearly half (**47.7%**) of the most disadvantaged rankings across the range of indicators.



The disproportionate distribution of disadvantage within the state is highlighted when the incidence of particular factors such as unemployment and contact with the justice system among those living in the 3% most disadvantaged LGAs is compared with the rest of the state. Those living in the 3% most disadvantaged LGAs in the state are:

- roughly 8 times as likely to have spent time in prison
- 6 times as likely to have been unemployed for a lengthy period
- around 5 times more likely to have a low overall level of education, or to be disengaged from education or employment as young adults
- more than 3 times as likely to have a disability
- 2.5 times as likely to have suffered child maltreatment.

A complex web of disadvantage

The study examined 17 LGAs which ranked in the 'most disadvantaged' group on more than five indicators, and found that these multiply-disadvantaged areas had a number of dominant features:

- **Low internet access** – three out of four of the multiply-disadvantaged localities had this characteristic.
- **Disengaged young adults** - 65% of the multiply-disadvantaged areas recorded very high numbers of young adults who were not engaged in employment or further education.
- **Low overall education levels** - this was a key factor in 65% of the multiply-disadvantaged LGAs, while the same proportion showed poor Year 3 reading results.
- **Contact with the criminal justice system** - 65% of these multiply-disadvantaged areas showed rates of prison admissions at the highest level.
- **Low family income and unemployment** - high rates of both indicators were present in 59% of multiply-disadvantaged areas.

Despite the commonalities, there was also some diversity regarding the prevalence of other indicators. This variability suggests the need to be sensitive to specific local contexts.

Seven of the 13 locations identified as 'most' or 'next most' disadvantaged in 2007 remain severely disadvantaged in the 2015 report. Many of these locations are rural or remote with very few urban areas experiencing severe disadvantage in 2015.

Dominant characteristics of Western Australia's multiply-disadvantaged locations

Access to internet

Young adults disengaged

Poor education levels

Prison admissions

Low family income

Unemployment

Locational disadvantage is entrenched

Due to the unavailability of some data in Western Australia (including criminal conviction, juvenile offending and domestic violence) comparison between 2015 and 2007 is difficult.

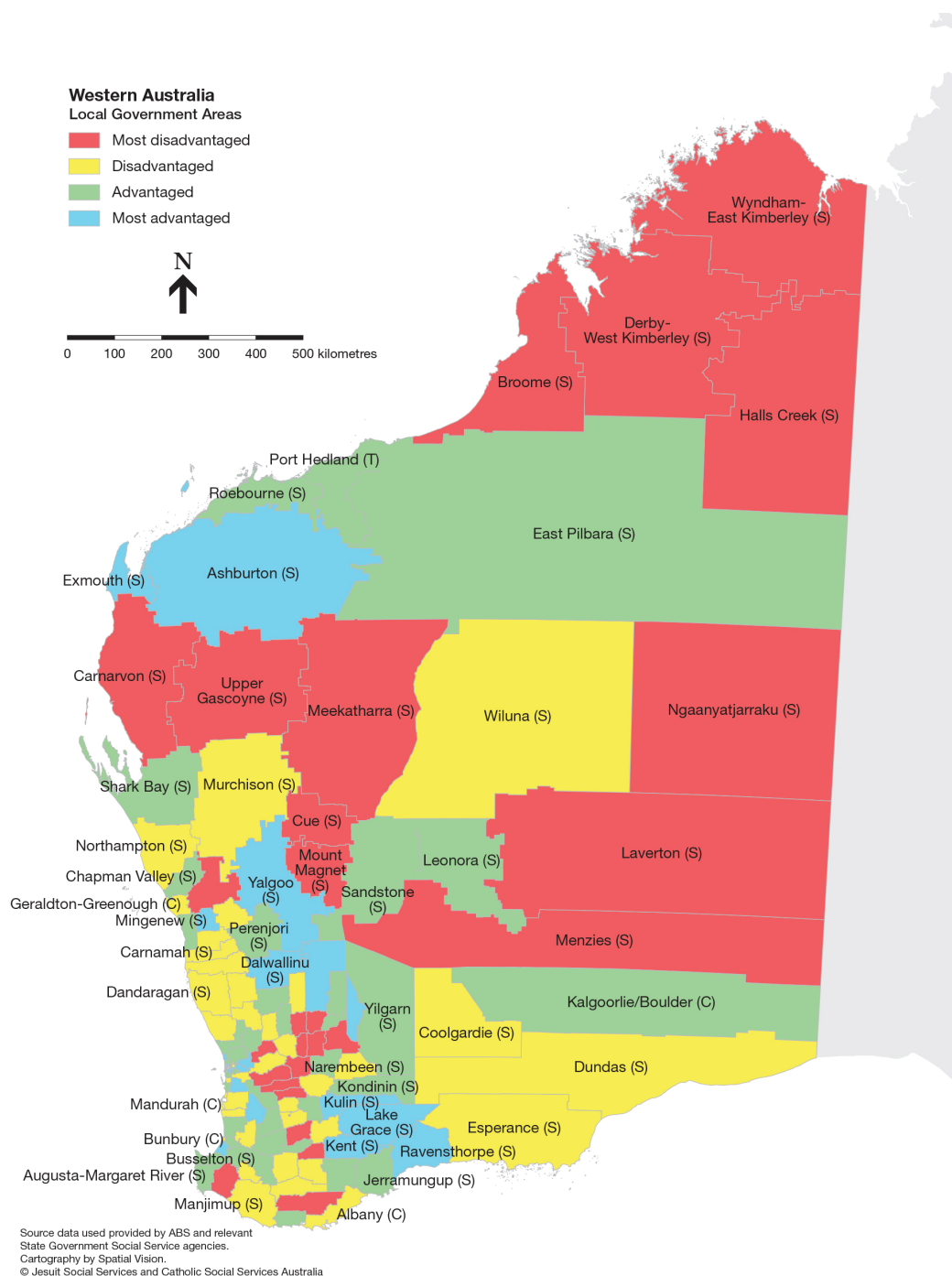
As a result, we have used a simple count of the number of times a location appeared in the 'top' or 'most disadvantaged' rankings across all indicators to create a list of 'most' and 'next most' disadvantaged.

For consistency, we have compared these findings to a similar list from 2007.

Most disadvantaged LGAs in Western Australia – comparison with previous years

(Listed alphabetically in bands of disadvantage)

Band	2015	2007
Most disadvantaged	Derby-West Kimberley	Dundas
	Halls Creek	Halls Creek
	Meekatharra	Menzies
	Menzies	Ngaanyatjaraku
	Mt Magnet	Sandstone
	Ngaanyatjaraku	Upper Gascoyne
	Wyndham-East Kimberley	
Next most disadvantaged	Beverley	Carnarvon
	Broome	Denmark
	Kellerberrin	Kondinin
	Laverton	Laverton
	Mullewa	Murchison
	Murchison	Perth
	Tammin	Trayning
	Trayning	
	Upper Gascoyne	
	Wiluna	



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DROPPING OFF THE EDGE 2015 Persistent communal disadvantage in Australia

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