

# DROPPING OFF THE EDGE 2015

Long Term Unemployment Conference, Melbourne

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## Outline of Presentation

- Overview of Key Findings from the Dropping off the Edge Report
- Implications for Long Term Unemployed
- Importance of Social Cohesion
- Our Advocacy Position and Policy Challenges



# About our organisations

## 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.

## Jesuit Social Services

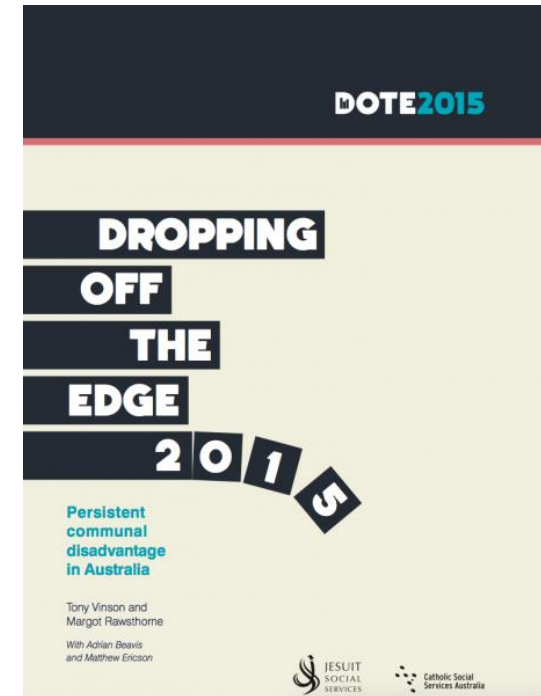
- We work to build a just society where all people can live to their full potential – by partnering with community to support those most in need and working to change policies, practices, ideas and values that perpetuate inequality, prejudice and exclusion.

## 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 believe 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.

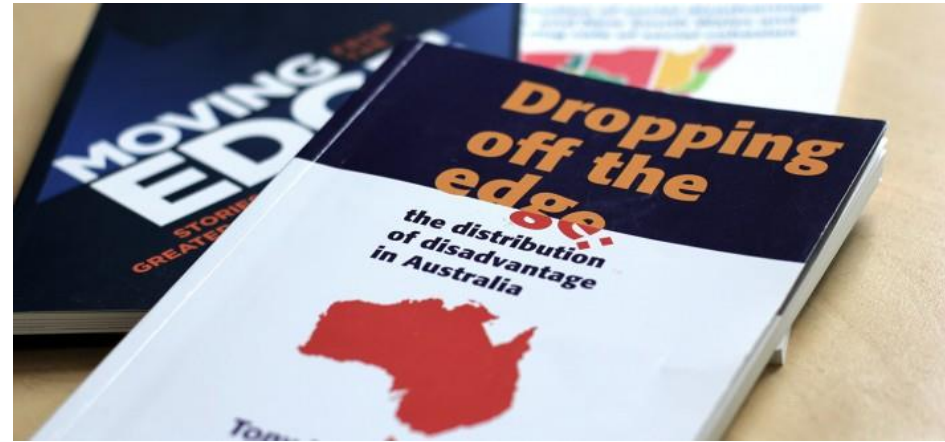
## Overview of Report

Dropping off the Edge 2015 studies populations areas in every state and territory of Australia to identify pockets of location-based disadvantage and the unique web of challenges faced by these communities.



## 16 years of research

- 1999 and 2004 – NSW and Vic
- 2007 and 2015 – National



2015 Authors – Prof Tony Vinson and Assoc Prof Margot Rawsthorne (University of Sydney) with Dr Adrian Beavis and Dr Matthew Ericson.

## What the research tells us

- Provides a picture of where disadvantage is concentrated
- Presents a snapshot of what attributes dispose an area to be highly disadvantaged
- Looks for patterns of connectedness between the indicators
- Devises a single social disadvantage score (ranking) for each locality within each jurisdiction
- Identifies highly disadvantaged communities warranting national as well as state and territory attention

## Units of Study

As small as the available records permit:

- **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)



# Indicators – National and State/Territory data

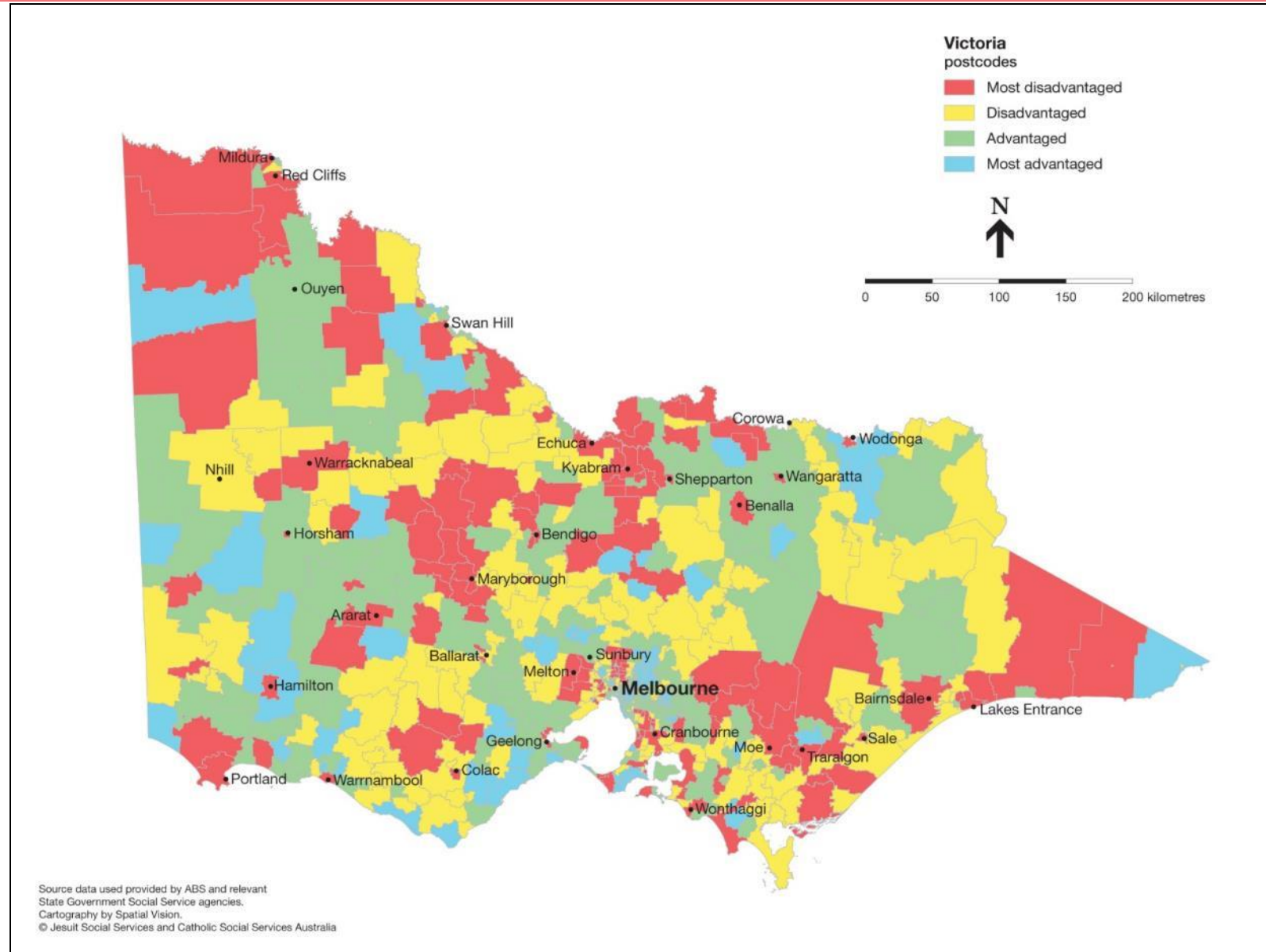
Variable name	Description
Internet access	proportion of households without access to the internet in each counting area
Housing stress	proportion of households allocating 30% or more of income to housing costs in each counting area
Low family income	proportion of households with an income less than \$600 per week in each counting area
Overall education	proportion of the population in a counting area aged 16-65 years who left school before 15 years of age
Post-schooling qualifications	proportion of population aged 18-64 years not possessing degree/diploma/grad diploma/grad certificate/postgraduate degree/certificate in each counting area
Unskilled workers	proportion of the workforce (ABS definition) classified as lowest skill (ABS definition) in each counting area
Young adults not engaged	proportion of 17-24 year olds neither engaged in full-time study or work in each counting area
Readiness for schooling	proportion of all children tested for language and cognitive skills (school-based) and assessed as being 'developmentally vulnerable' in each counting area
Disability Support	proportion of people aged 18-64 years in receipt of the Disability Support Pension in each counting area
Long-term unemployment	proportion of the workforce (ABS definition) aged 18-64 years in receipt of Newstart for one year or more in each counting area
Rent assistance	proportion of people aged 18 and over in receipt of rental assistance in each counting area

Unemployment	proportion of the workforce (ABS definition) aged 18-64 years in receipt of Newstart in each counting area
Y3 numeracy	proportion of year 3 students not "At or Above National Minimum Standard Percentage" on the numeracy assessment scales in each counting area
Y3 reading	proportion of year 3 students not "At or Above National Minimum Standard Percentage" on the reading assessment scales in each counting area
Y9 numeracy	proportion of year 9 students not "At or Above National Minimum Standard Percentage" on the numeracy assessment scales in each counting area
Y9 reading	proportion of year 9 students not "At or Above National Minimum Standard Percentage" on the reading assessment scales in each counting area
Child maltreatment	rate of confirmed maltreatment of a child per 1,000 of children and young people under 15 years of age living in each counting area
Criminal convictions	rate per 1,000 of people aged 18-49 years convicted of crime in each counting area
Juvenile convictions	rate per 1,000 of people 10-17 years convicted or found guilty of crime in each counting area
Domestic violence	rate of domestic/family violence orders per 1,000 population aged 18-64 years in each counting area
Prison admissions	rate per 1,000 of people aged 18-49 years admitted to prison in each counting area
Psychiatric admissions	rate of psychiatric hospital admissions per 1,000 of the population over 18 years of age in each counting area

## Main findings - National

- **Concentrated** – assessment 2125 discrete areas found disadvantage is concentrated in a small number of communities – 3% approx
- **Web of disadvantage** – prison admissions, unemployment, lack of formal education, domestic violence, mental health and low income are the most prevalent indicators
- **Persistent** – in general, 8/9 out of the top 12 communities have been the most disadvantaged previously
- **Focus** – regional/rural and Indigenous communities feature in the most disadvantaged, and outer metro areas also vulnerable

## Mapping Disadvantage Victoria



# 40 Most Disadvantaged Communities – Victoria (667 postcodes)

Band 1	Broadmeadows, Corio, Doveton, Frankston North, Maryborough, Morwell, (Korong Vale)
Band 2	Ardeer, Braybrook, Coolaroo, Campbellfield, Rosebud West, Wendouree
Band 3	Heathcote, Moe, Eaglehawk, Lalor, St Albans, St Arnaud
Band 4	Dandenong, Merbein, Mildura, Robinvale, Seymour, Thomastown, (Nyah)
Band 5	Hastings, Lakes Entrance, Mooroopna, Rock Bank, Shepparton, Wonthaggi
Band 6	Albion, Arrarat, Benalla, Orbost, Churchill, Corinella, Delacombe, Red Cliffs, Rosebud, Stawell



# Implications for Long Term Unemployed



# Main findings – burden of disadvantage

**Table 11-3: Ratio of 3% and 97% in various States**

Remaining four States	Ratio 97% to 3% NSW	Ratio 97% to 3% SA	Ratio 97% to 3% TAS	Ratio 97% to 3% QLD	Victoria	Ratio 97% to 3%	WA
Overall low level of education	2.9	5.3	1.4	4.1	Overall low level of education	2.7	
Absence of post school qualifications	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.5	Absence of post school qualifications	1.3	
Unskilled workers	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.0	Unskilled workers	1.5	
Young adults not engaged	2.2	5.2	2.0	4.7	Young adults not engaged	2.2	
Disability support	2.0	2.3	1.5	2.4	Disability support	2.4	
Long term unemployed	3.3	5.1	1.4	2.3	Long term unemployed	2.9	6
Rent assistance	1.7	0.7	0.9	1.1	Rent assistance	1.8	
Unemployed	2.9	5.2	1.3	1.7	Unemployed	2.5	5.8
Child maltreatment	---	---	---	4.2	Child maltreatment	3.1	
Criminal convictions	2.3	4.1	1.5	8.5	Criminal convictions	2.0	
Juvenile convictions	2.3	2.4	1.8	6.1	Juvenile convictions	3.4	
Domestic violence	2.8	---	2.3	4.2	Domestic violence	2.6	
Prison admissions	3.6	10.0	1.6	5.2	Prison admissions	2.8	
Psychiatric admissions	1.8	3.5	1.1	---	Psychiatric admissions	1.8	

## Recurrence of long term unemployment indicator in high ranking disadvantaged locations

- Equal 1<sup>st</sup> in Qld
- 2<sup>nd</sup> in South Australia
- Equal 4<sup>th</sup> in Victoria
- Equal 5<sup>th</sup> in NSW

# Strength of the correlations between indicators

	Long-term unemployment LTU	Unemployment Un	Un-engaged Young Un-eng	Criminal Convict Cc	Disability Dis	Yr 9 Read 9 R	Internet Int	Family income Inc	Overall educated Over	Yr 3 Read 3 R	Qualifications Qu	Domestic Violence DV	Prison admission Pris
LTU		.99	.84	.82	.87	.59	.78	.86	.70	.53	.66	.53	.65
Un	.99		.73	.79	.85	.53	.74	.82	.69	.50	.64	.51	.60
Un-eng	.84	.73		.64	.60	.59	.59	.56	.56	.55	.50	.53	.61
Cc	.82	.79	.64		.70	.63	.66	.58	.62	.56		.71	.82
Dis	.87	.85	.60	.70			.80	.84	.66		.67		
9 R	.59	.53	.59	.63			.56		.56	.52	.53	.58	.60
Int	.78	.74	.59	.66	.80	.56		.82	.76		.77		
Inc	.86	.82	.56	.58	.84		.82		.72		.74		
Over	.70	.69	.56	.62	.66	.56		.72			.71		
3R	.53	.51	.55	.56		.52						.58	.52
Qu	.66	.64	.50		.67	.53	.77	.74	.71				
DV	.53	.51	.53	.71		.58				.58			.83
Pris	.65	.60	.61	.82		.60				.52			



## DOTE evidence as a tool

- **Collates state and national data – not available elsewhere**
- **Research has been done over a time series so changes (+ve and -ve can be tracked)**
- **Provides an evidence base for service planning, needs assessment and advocacy for funding**

## Long Term Unemployed – what this research tells us

- Long Term Unemployed within communities in rural, regional and indigenous communities are the most disadvantaged
- Each individual and community is affected by different indicators of disadvantage and these need to be understood
- Example: In Qld the most disadvantaged communities have 4x the rate of domestic violence and 8x criminal convictions

## What does it mean for long term unemployed – cont

- **Long term unemployed people can also be dealing with complex disadvantage** within communities that have entrenched disadvantage – intergenerational disadvantage
- **Community wide disadvantage needs to be addressed** in conjunction with addressing long term unemployment for example affordable housing, services, training and transport
- **Strong communities can dampen the effect of disadvantage** – placing emphasis on community building and cohesion can assist individuals and families in these communities

# Importance of Social Cohesion



## Testing the impact of social cohesion – (Vic research by Tony Vinson)

- Social cohesion – Connections between people and between them and their wider community
- Do local social connections affect community resilience?
- Can the strengths of these connections lessen the impact of disadvantage?

## Characteristics of social cohesion

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

## Physical environment – supporting social cohesion

- Safe places to meet – libraries, parks
- Walking safely– lighting, activity areas
- Community facilities – recreation, halls
- Access to commercial, community & health services
- Public transport – to access services and social networks
- Housing – affordable, well designed for needs

## Findings about social cohesion

- Strong social cohesion can “dampen” effects of harmful conditions
- But needs to be supported by other interventions – education, income, health, parenting skills etc
- Place effects have greatest influence on children & late adolescence (eg health, education, parenting support)
- Requires long term intervention



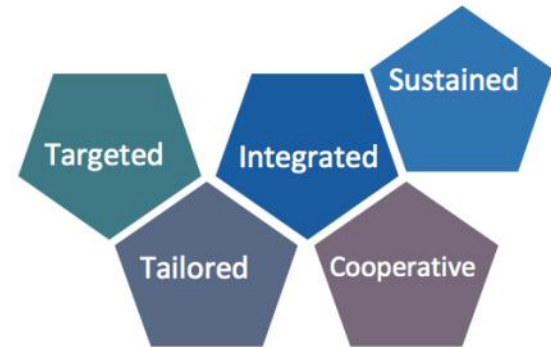
**Advocacy Position of  
Catholic Social Services  
Australia and  
Jesuit Social Services**

## 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

**Feedback from  
briefings undertaken  
by  
Catholic Social  
Services Australia and  
Jesuit Social Services**



## Briefings from August – November 2015

- 13 formal state briefings across the country + 20+ smaller targetted stakeholder meetings
- 250+ people attended from Government (politicians), Community Sector and some private sector
- Provided ideas and feedback on local issues – most were positive that disadvantage could be addressed and gave case studies as examples
- However some frustration with current practices

## Policy ideas and challenges

- Getting the right balance between individualised services & investment in the community
- Creative solutions needed as business as usual may not work
- Silos in service delivery hindering outcomes – interrelationships between indicators need to be understood
- Services should be co-ordinated on the ground

## Other ideas:

- Communities should be at the centre of decision making
- Each community is different and the issues need to be understood
- Rural and regional communities are generally the most disadvantaged – costs of services increased in these areas

## Further information

[www.dote.org.au](http://www.dote.org.au) and #DOTe2015

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





# Thank you

## Contact:

<b>Catholic Social Services Australia</b>	<b>02 6285 1366</b>
<b>Jesuit Social Services</b>	<b>03 9421 7600</b>

