DROPPING OFF THE EDGE 2015

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JESUIT SOCIAL SERVICES
BUILDING A JUST SOCIETY

Catholic Social Services Australia

DOTE2015

OUTLINE OF TODAY'S PROGRAM

- **History of this report**
- **Overview of key findings**
- **Discussion**
- **Examples from other communities**
- **Our advocacy position**
- **LUNCH**

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(621), NSW, ACT**

• **Statistical Local Areas (SLAs):**
 Queensland, South Australia, Northern Territory

• **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 Victoria, 22 indicators were used.

BASIC QUESTIONS

a) Degree of concentration?

b) Recurring features of profiles?

c) Persistence or otherwise of disadvantage?

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, Victoria and WA ⁻ 1.5% postcodes = 12-14% top ranks

VICTORIA

- Data provided on **667** postcodes

- 6.6% of postcodes (44 postcodes) accounted for more than 35% of the top rankings (a five-fold representation)

- The 11 most disadvantaged postcodes(2.3% of the total) accounted for 13.7% of the most disadvantaged rank positions (a nine-fold overrepresentation, and consistent with 2007 report

- 27 postcodes (4% of the total) yielded more than a quarter (28.2%) of the most disadvantaged rank positions (a seven-fold representation)

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.

- The 12 Most Disadvantaged Communities (ranked in top 5% at least 10 times)

Corio	Broadmeadows	Doveton	Frankston North
Morwell	Maryborough	Ardeer	Braybrook
Coolaroo	Campbellfield	Rosebud West	Wendouree

- Disadvantage is prominent around rural centres like Mildura, Shepparton and Morwell
- Disadvantage is also prominent in urban hubs such as Broadmeadows, Dandenong and around Sunshine

- Next Most Disadvantaged group

Moe	Eaglehawk	Lalor	St Albans	St Arnaud
Dandenong	Merbein	Mildura	Robinvale	Seymour
Thomastown	Nyah	Hastings	Lakes Entrance	Mooroopna
Rockbank	Shepparton	Wonthaggi		

CHANGE OVER TIME – MOST DISADVANTAGED

More than half of the State's 40 most disadvantaged postcodes in 2014 were also identified as disadvantaged in 2007.

Appearing in top 3 bands in both 2014 and 2007
Broadmeadows Corio Doveton Maryborough Braybrook Campbellfield Rosebud West

WEB OF DISADVANTAGE

Dropping off the Edge finds that multiply-disadvantaged postcodes have a high number of dominant features:

- **High unemployment** – around 70% of multiply-disadvantaged areas recorded unemployment levels in the highest band;

- **Interaction with the criminal justice system** – three in five multiply-disadvantaged localities showed criminal convictions in the highest band.

In addition, just under half of these multiply-disadvantaged postcodes had a population with an **overall level of education that was low**, and recorded **significant levels of disability**.

- More than a third of multiple-disadvantaged localities recorded high levels of **child maltreatment**, **family violence** and **mental health problems**.
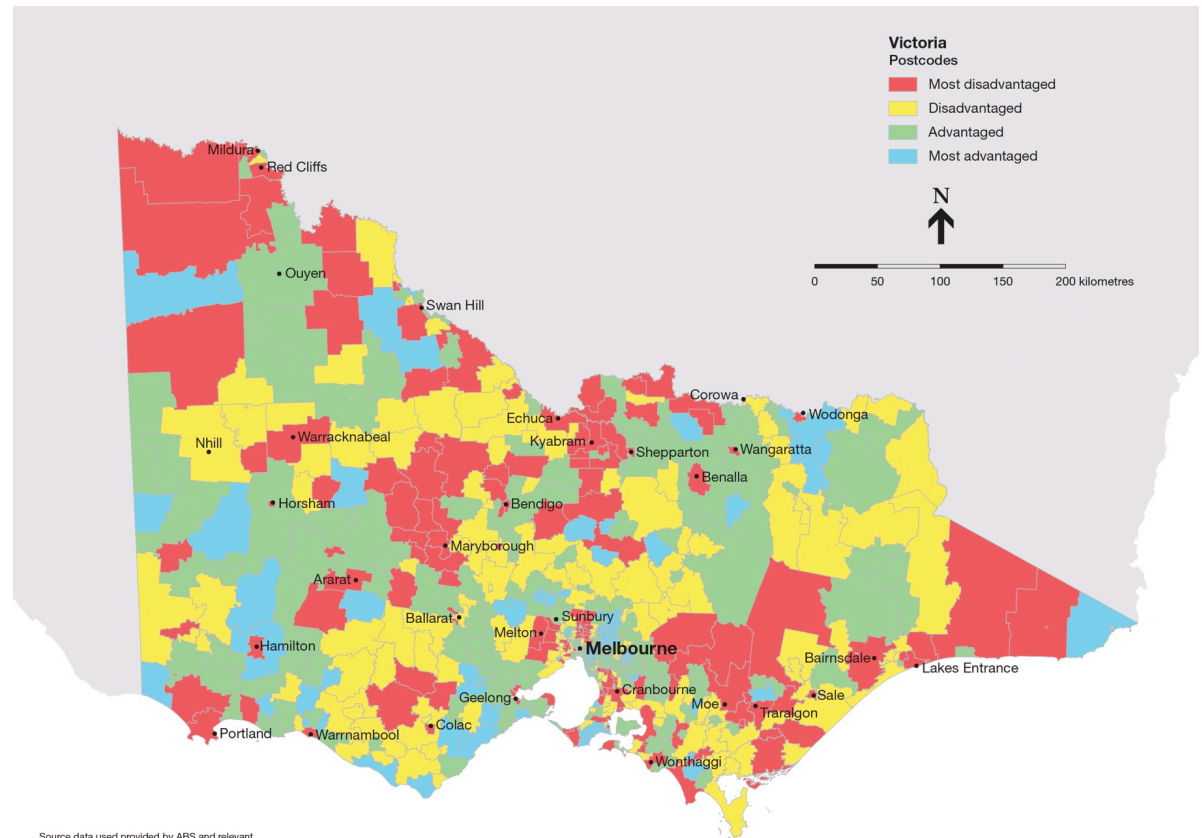
Gippsland: 12 most disadvantaged postcodes in 2015

BAND	Postcode	Localities arranged alphabetically	Top 5% (✓)/ top 10% (*) in 2007
	3842	Churchill	
	3984	Corinella	
1	3950	Korumburra	
	3825	Moe	
	3840	Morwell	
	3995	Wonthaggi	
	3922	Cowes	
	3816	Longwarry	
2	3956	Meeniyan-Venus Bay	
	3833	Noojee	
	3965	Port Welshpool	
	3844	Traralgon	

Of these 12 postcodes:
- One is in the top 10% for all Victoria
- Three are in the top 10 to 20%
- Eight are in the top 20 to 30%

MAP OF Victoria

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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

Questions and discussion
on the findings

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.

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

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**

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

Examples of work around the nation

- **Go Goldfields**
  - **Working to improve wellbeing of children, youth and families**
  - **Tackle unemployment, health and child protection**
  - **Strategies driven by community with focus on prevention/early intervention**

- **G21 Geelong Regional Alliance**
  - **Government, business and community working together to improve lives**
  - **Forum to discuss local issues and coordinate research and planning**
  - **300 community leaders across 8 key issues**

- **Logan Together**
  - **10-year community owned and initiated campaign to improve early childhood development**
  - **Funded by business, NFP, education and 3 levels of government**
  - **Comprehensive consultation finished and road map published soon**

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.
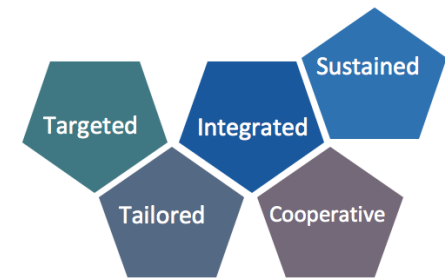
CONFRONTING AND OVERCOMING DISADVANTAGE

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

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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

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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