

DROPPING OFF THE EDGE 2015

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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**

4.30 pm 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)

OVERALL SCOPE

Geographic distribution of social disadvantage

Use signposts (indicators)

**Cooperation of governments and statistics
generating agencies**

ESTABLISHED INDICATORS OF DISADVANTAGE

Low family income
Disability support
Confirmed child maltreatment
Criminal convictions
Prison admissions
Unskilled workers
Unemployment
Access to internet
Unengaged young people
Overall education
Limited post-school qualifications

ADDITIONAL ANALYSES

Housing stress

Family violence

Psychiatric admissions

Readiness for schooling

NAPLAN results

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. In the Northern Territory (due to the small number of counting areas) we used an alternative Rank Average 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;

Qld/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%**

NORTHERN TERRITORY

- Slightly different story
- Disadvantage more dispersed across Northern Territory than other States
- Only one SLA (Litchfield) did not appear in top 1 or 2 ranks on any of the 21 indicators available (2 others had similar advantaged profiles apart from Housing related indicators - Palmerston and Darwin)

- **Four SLAs accounted for 20 of the first or second rank (20/42 or 47%)**
- **The Four Most Disadvantage SLAs were (n=16)**
 - **Belyuen**
 - **East Arnhem**
 - **Katherine**
 - **Tiwi Islands**
- **Those that appeared at least 3 times in 1st or 2nd rank were (Next Most Disadvantaged):**
 - **Central Desert**
 - **MacDonnell**

- **The Four Most Disadvantaged SLAs had distinct patterns of disadvantage (unlike other States in which disadvantaged locations had much in common)**
- **For example, Belyuen was ranked 1st in relation to Post-School qualifications but Katherine was ranked 11th. A reverse relationship was evident in relation to Criminal Convictions (Belyuen was ranked 13th and Katherine ranked 1st)**
- **This suggests localised knowledge very important to designing responses to this disadvantage**

AVERAGE RANKS

- **The Average Rank analysis captures a locality's performances, high and low, on the full range of indicators.**
- **This approach also highlights the dispersed nature of disadvantage**
- **Scores ranged from 6.1 to 13.7 in the Northern Territory.**
- **In addition to the 6 SLAs mentioned previously, the Average Rank Score identified Victoria-Daly (6.4); Barkly (6.4) and Roper Gulf (6.5). These SLAs fared poorly across many indicators but did not appear consistently in 1st or 2nd ranked positions.**

CHANGE OVER TIME?

- **Little can be said about change in the ranking of localities in the Northern Territory due to the evolving nature of available data**
- **In 2007 we identified 2 regions as disadvantaged that no longer appear in this list, although this maybe simply due to boundary changes: Darwin Region Balance and Barkly.**
- **In other jurisdictions we see a great deal of stability between 2007 and 2014 in locations identified as disadvantaged. Consistent data and boundaries for the next study will enable us to test whether this is also the case for Northern Territory**

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**

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.

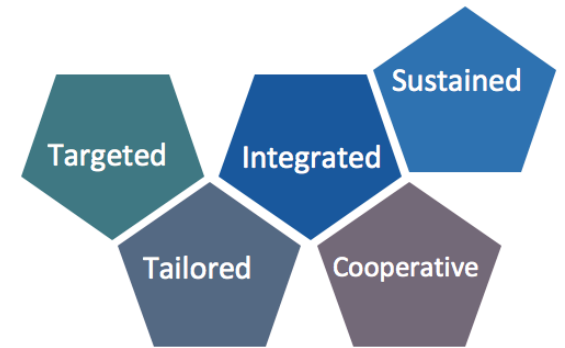
CONFRONTING AND OVERCOMING DISADVANTAGE

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 **#DOTTE2015**

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



Thank you

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