

DROPPING OFF THE EDGE 2015

Shoalhaven Anti-Poverty Week

Thursday 22nd October 2015

Liz de Chastel – Director Strategic Policy and Engagement: Social Policy
Catholic Social Services Australia



Outline of Presentation

- Overview of Key Findings from the Dropping off the Edge Report
- Our advocacy position
- Ideas for addressing disadvantage



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

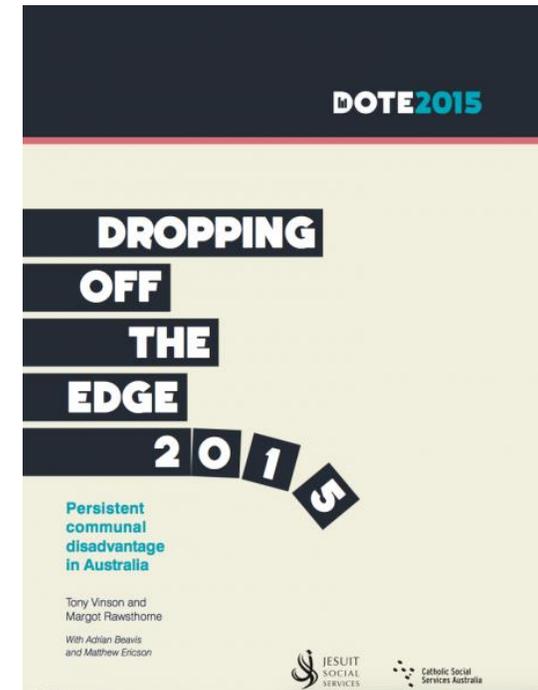
- We work to build a just society where all people can live to their full potential – by partnering with community to support those most in need and working to change policies, practices, ideas and values that perpetuate inequality, prejudice and exclusion.

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 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.

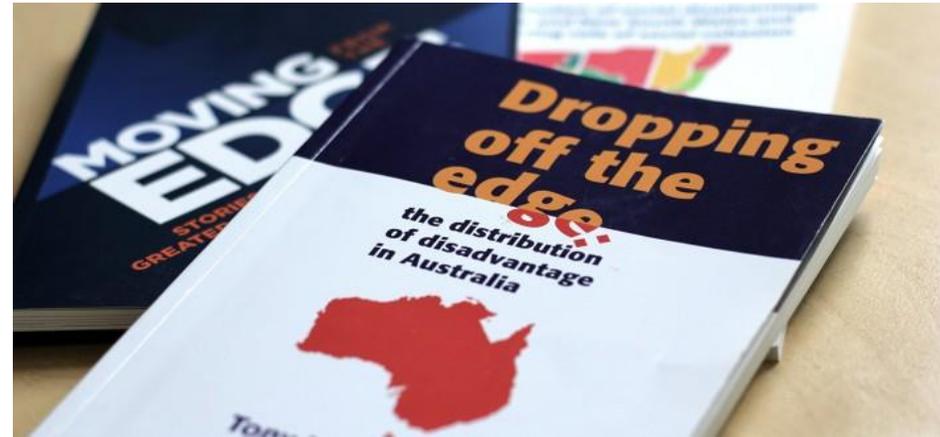
Overview of Report

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 (SLA' s) :** Queensland (475), South Australia (125), Northern Territory (16)
- **Local Government Areas (LGA' s):** 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

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

Table 3-5: NSW's 40 highest-ranking postcode areas on the 'disadvantage' factor (listed alphabetically in bands)

Band	Localities arranged alphabetically	Estimated population	Top 5% (✓) / Top 10% (*) in 2007
1	2839 Brewarrina	1,254	✓
	2559 Claymore	3,308	✓
	2834 Lightning Ridge	4,500	✓
	2832 Walgett	2,300	✓
	2836 Wilcannia	604	✓
	2306 Windale	3,095	✓
2	2840 Bourke	2,047	✓
	2449 Bowraville	1,208	✓
	2717 Dareton	567	*
	2466 Iluka	1,739	✓
	2469 Northern Rivers MSC	n.a	✓
	2163 Villawood	5,304	*
3	2166 Cabramatta	20,780	-
	2829 Coonamble	2,998	*
	2440 Kempsey	28,134	✓
	2346 Manilla	2,550	-
	2502 Warrawong	4,770	✓
	2341 Werris Creek	1,437	-

Band	Localities arranged alphabetically	Estimated population	Top 5% (✓) / Top 10% (*) in 2007
4	2471 Coraki	1,478	✓
	2165 Fairfield	17,032	-
	2443 Laurieton	1,931	✓
	2770 Mount Druitt	15,794	✓
5	2448 Nambucca Heads	6,137	✓
	2462 Ulmarra	446	*
	2470 Casino	11,000	✓
	2551 Eden	3,043	-
	2827 Gilgandra	2,700	*
	2427 Harrington	2,259	✓
	2505 Port Kembla	4,400	*
	2824 Warren	1,523	-
	2506 Berkeley	7,427	-
	2880 Broken Hill	18,517	✓
6	2453 Dorrigo	1,072	-
	2473 Evans Head	2,722	-
	2428 Forster	13,116	✓
	2360 Inverell	9,347	✓
	2400 Moree	9,346	-
	2430 Taree	20,000	✓
	2455 Urunga	3,020	✓
	2829 Wellington	4,540	✓

Main findings – NSW – 621 postcodes

- Dominant features of multiply disadvantaged communities – criminal convictions, access to internet, unemployment, domestic violence, lack of qualifications, young adults disengaged, limited education
- In the 3% of most disadvantaged communities –
 - 3.6 x spent time in prison
 - 3 x long term unemployment
 - 3 x low level of education or suffered domestic violence
 - 2 x mental health or disability

Criminal convictions

Access to internet

Unemployment

Domestic violence

Lack of qualifications

Young adults disengaged

Limited education

Main findings – NSW

- 24/40 appeared in most disadvantaged in 2007 and earlier studies
- Regional/rural and Indigenous communities feature in the most disadvantaged – outer metro areas also vulnerable



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
Overall low level of education	2.9	5.3	1.4	4.1
Absence of post school qualifications	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.5
Unskilled workers	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.0
Young adults not engaged	2.2	5.2	2.0	4.7
Disability support	2.0	2.3	1.5	2.4
Long term unemployed	3.3	5.1	1.4	2.3
Rent assistance	1.7	0.7	0.9	1.1
Unemployed	2.9	5.2	1.3	1.7
Child maltreatment	---	---	---	4.2
Criminal convictions	2.3	4.1	1.5	8.5
Juvenile convictions	2.3	2.4	1.8	6.1
Domestic violence	2.8	---	2.3	4.2
Prison admissions	3.6	10.0	1.6	5.2
Psychiatric admissions	1.8	3.5	1.1	---

Example of Improvements between 2007–15

- Windale (new Newcastle) has marked improvements in Year 3 NAPLAN.
- In this community, a “School as Community Centre” was established – more parental involvement in early education and general community well being.
- “Green Shoots” demonstrate hope for younger generation

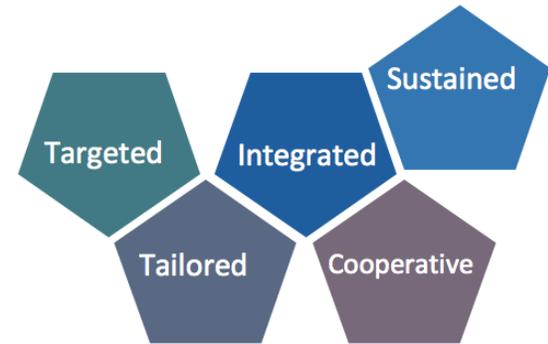
**Advocacy Position of
Catholic Social Services
Australia and
Jesuit Social Services**

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 – October 2015

- 13 formal state briefings across the country + many smaller targeted stakeholder meetings
- 200+ 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

Feedback – policy ideas and challenges

- Communities should be integral to the change and be at the centre of decision making and vision
- Each area is dealing with different issues – one size fits all does not work
- Need to get the right balance between individualized services & investment in the community
- Services should be co-ordinated on the ground – silos in service delivery hindering outcomes
- Long term commitment is needed – early intervention is best.

Further information

www.dote.org.au and #DOTE2015

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



Thank you

Contact:

Catholic Social Services Australia

02 6285 1366

Jesuit Social Services

03 9421 7600

