

# DROPPING OFF THE EDGE

## 2015

Perth – Friday 14<sup>th</sup> August 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
- 10.50am MORNING TEA – 15 minutes
- Facilitated Discussion

12 noon Finish

# 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

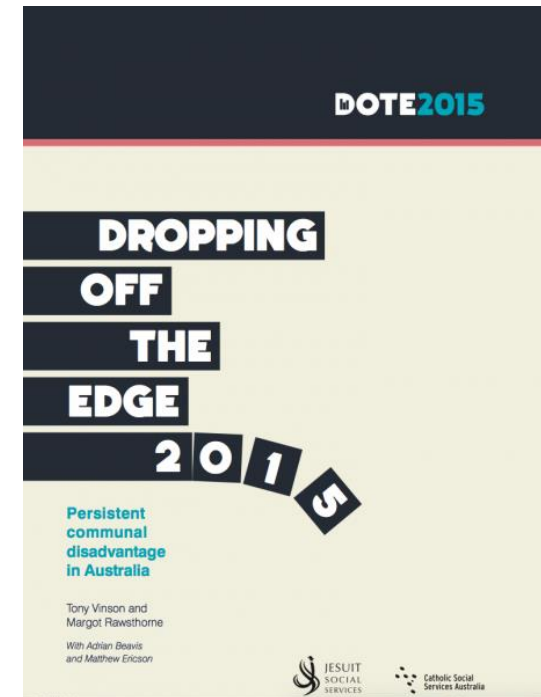
- We work to build a just society where all people can live to their full potential – by partnering with community to support those most in need and working to change policies, practices, ideas and values that perpetuate inequality, prejudice and exclusion.

## 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.

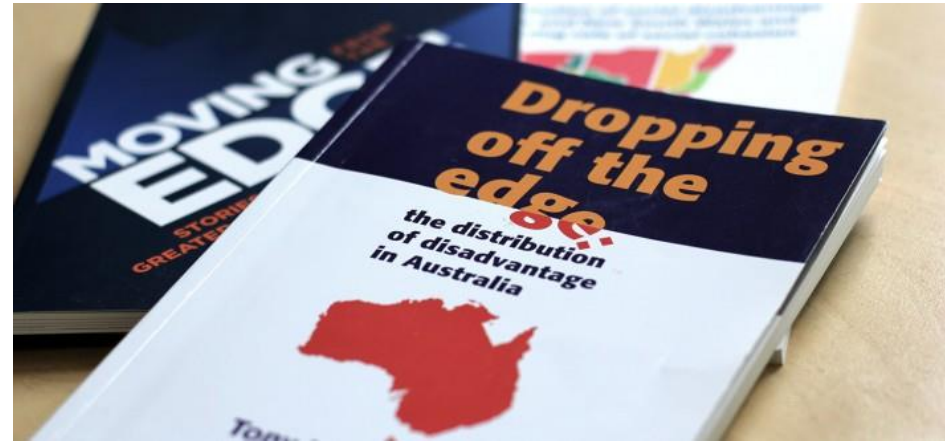
## Overview of Report

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

# 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



# Indicators (19) available in Western Australia

## Data available for Western Australia

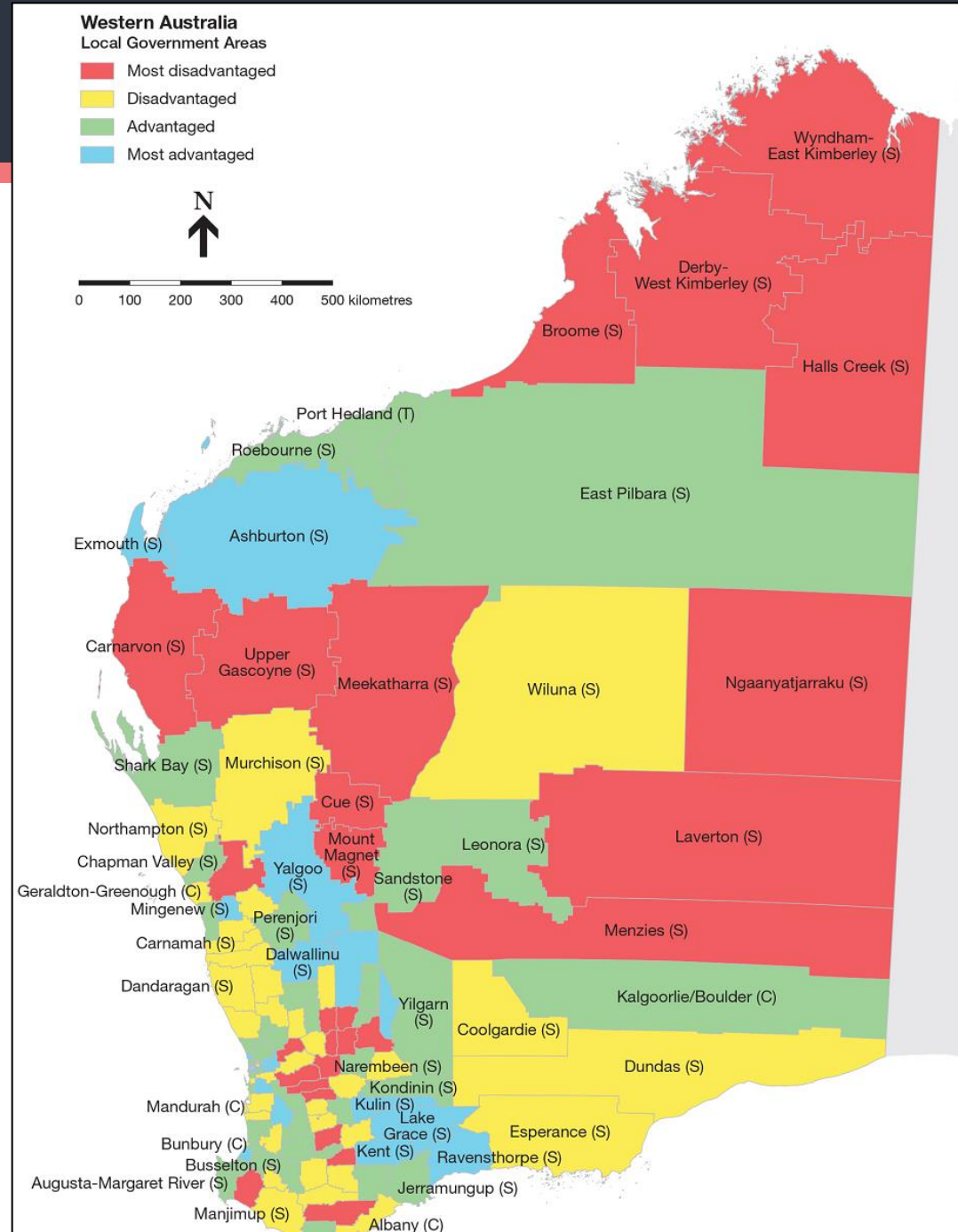
Internet access	Housing stress	Family income	Overall education	Post-school qualifications	Psych. admissions	Confirmed child maltreatment
Unskilled workers	Unengaged young adults	School readiness	Disability support	Long-term unemployment	Prison admissions	
Rent assist	Unemployment	Year 3 numeracy	Year 3 reading	Year 9 numeracy	Year 9 reading	

*Unavailable in the form requested – domestic violence, criminal convictions and juvenile offending*

## 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

# Mapping disadvantage – Western Australia



Indicators are weighted to give an overall ranking of most disadvantaged bands

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

## Main findings – 140 Local Government Areas in WA

- Disadvantage is entrenched and concentrated in a small number of communities in WA – these communities experience a complex web of disadvantage and bear a disproportionately high level of disadvantage.
- 7 of the 13 most disadvantaged communities were the same in 2007.
- In top 3% of disadvantaged communities, people:
  - 8x as likely to have spent time in prison
  - 6x likely to have been unemployed for a lengthy period
  - More than 5x likely to have low level of education and disengaged from education or employment as young adults
  - More than 3x likely to have a disability & 2.5x suffered child maltreatment.

## Main findings – Western Australia cont –

- Dominant characteristics of disadvantaged communities in WA– low internet access, disengaged young adults, low levels of education, prison admissions, low family income and unemployment.
- Rural, remote and indigenous communities feature as most disadvantaged with very few urban areas experiencing severe disadvantage.
- Variations in some of the prevalent indicators suggest understanding local contexts is important.

Access to internet

Young adults disengaged

Poor education levels

Prison admissions

Low family income

Unemployment

# Extract from 140 Local Government Rankings on Indicators (low number is worse ranking)

region_id	Locality name (N = 140)	R.internet.access	R.housing.stress	R.low.family.income	R.overall.education	R.post.schooling.qualifications	R.unskilled.workers	R.young.adults.not.engaged	R.readiness.schooling	R.disability.support	R.long.term.unemployment	R.rent.assistance	R.unemployment	R.y3.numeracy	R.y3.reading	R.y9.numeracy	R.y9.reading	R.child.maltreatment	R.criminal.convictions	R.juvenile.convictions	R.domestic.violence	R.prison.admissions	R.psychiatric.admissions
50080	Albany (C)	64	32	71	92	94	24	61	55	28	31	5	42	87	79	65	73	47				69	19
50210	Armadale (C)	102	7	88	88	82	42	68	39	64	20	13	39	69	71	48	51	45				70	57
50250	Ashburton (S)	134	133	136	112	124	116	77	42	121	68	109	100	40	39	20	44				118	88	
50280	Augusta-Margaret River (S)	106	10	86	128	114	12	83	46	90	46	17	58	100	111	84	69	71				121	44
50350	Bassendean (T)	82	32	93	59	105	64	96	35	41	39	26	67	71	101	10	29	16				83	37
50420	Bayswater (C)	94	20	94	54	118	69	104	53	79	37	29	60	78	108	59	49	57				119	76
50490	Belmont (C)	74	15	75	55	108	58	94	60	62	32	34	57	41	65	35	16	46				68	34
50560	Beverley (S)	15	79	10	44	52	75	14		5		55	24	51	92	13	11	5				62	116
50630	Boddington (S)	96	78	122	126	121	114	133	81	116		101	95	89	74	28	80				128	100	
50770	Boyup Brook (S)	52	80	27	97	77	43	51	84	29		44	51	88	97	92	78	85				77	73
50840	Bridgetown-Greenbushes (S)	78	53	38	96	80	30	63	52	31	34	33	48	104	85	79	90	67				96	14

## Top 5 Rankings on Selective Indicators

### Young Adults Not Engaged

1. Menzies (S)
2. Ngaanyatjarraku (S)
3. Halls Creek (S)
4. Trayning (S)
5. Mount Magnet (S)

### Housing Stress

1. Perth (C)
2. Wanneroo (C)
3. Kwinana (T)
4. Mosman Park (T)
5. Subiaco (C)

### Year 3 Reading

1. Meekatharra (S)
2. Ngaanyatjarraku (S)
3. Mount Magnet (S)
4. Laverton (S)
5. Halls Creek (S)



# Comparison of burden of disadvantage

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

	Ratio 97% to 3% NSW	Ratio 97% to 3% SA	Ratio 97% to 3% TAS	Ratio 97% to 3% QLD	Western Australia	Ratio 97% to 3%
<b>Remaining four States</b>						
Overall low level of education	2.9	5.3	1.4	4.1	Overall low level of education	4.8
Absence of post school qualifications	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.5	Absence of post school qualifications	1.2
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 people not engaged	5.0
Disability support	2.0	2.3	1.5	2.4	Disability support	3.3
Long term unemployed	3.3	5.1	1.4	2.3	Long term unemployed	6.0
Rent assistance	1.7	0.7	0.9	1.1	Rent assistance	0.2
Unemployed	2.9	5.2	1.3	1.7	Unemployed	5.8
Child maltreatment	---	---	---	4.2	Child maltreatment	2.6
Criminal convictions	2.3	4.1	1.5	8.5	Prison admissions	8.1
Juvenile convictions	2.3	2.4	1.8	6.1	Psychiatric admissions	2.1
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	---		

## 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

# **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.

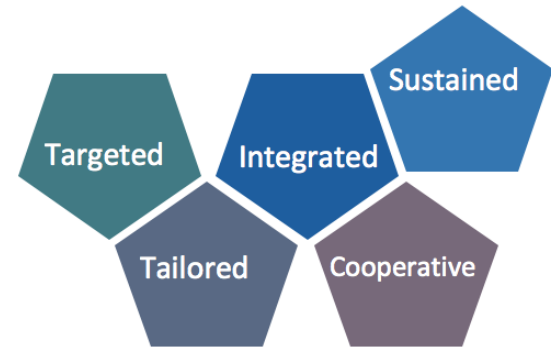


## Confronting and overcoming disadvantage

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

**Morning Tea 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](http://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**

