

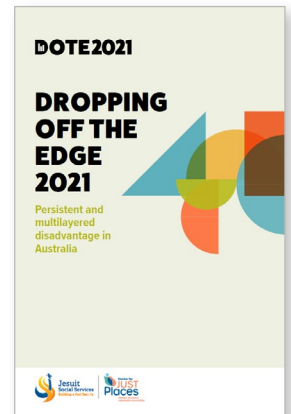


New *Dropping off the Edge* report shows persistent location-based disadvantage

What is the report about?

Jesuit Social Services has recently released the [2021 *Dropping off the Edge*](#) report. The report presents findings of a long-term study carried out by experts from the University of Canberra, which examines disadvantage in every community in each State and Territory in Australia. The study measures disadvantage using 37 indicators across seven domains - social wellbeing, health, community safety, economic, education, environmental, and intergenerational outcomes.

The report identifies where disadvantage is concentrated, which communities are experiencing deep and multilayered disadvantage, and which issues are restricting outcomes for people in the most disadvantaged areas. The report can be used by Government, service providers and communities seeking to understand and address entrenched and complex geographical disadvantage.



Where is disadvantage concentrated in NSW?

Disadvantage is concentrated in a small and disproportionate number of communities:

- Seven areas, around 1% of locations, account for 11% of the most disadvantaged rank positions across all indicators.
- 13% of locations account for 55% of the most disadvantaged rank positions across all indicators.

Almost every location experiencing the greatest disadvantage is located outside Sydney, in particular, towards the north and west of the state:

- 37 of the 40 most disadvantaged areas are outside Sydney, and nine of the 10 areas suffering extreme disadvantage are outside Sydney.
- The ten most disadvantaged (SA2) locations in NSW are: Bidwill – Hebersham – Emerton (Greater Sydney); and Bourke - Brewarrina, Coonamble, Far West, Kempsey, Nambucca Heads, Port Kembla – Warrarong, Tamworth – West, Tuncurry, Walgett – Lightning Ridge (Rest of NSW).

What issues impact outcomes in the most disadvantaged locations?









The most common forms of severe disadvantage in places ranking highly on indicators of disadvantage are intergenerational unemployment; family violence; and young people leaving school early without engaging in subsequent employment or learning.

At a more general level, low income is most strongly associated with disadvantage across the state, having the strongest impact on the summary index.

How has locational disadvantage changed over time?

Locational disadvantage is persistent. A small number of communities have experienced entrenched disadvantage on multiple fronts for long periods of time. Nine of the top 10 most disadvantaged areas in NSW were also ranked highly disadvantaged in 2015, and eight of the top 10 were also ranked highly disadvantaged in 2007.

Those living in the 3% most disadvantaged areas:

 <p>are more than 4x more likely to be living in public housing (4.4x)</p>	 <p>have at least 2x the rate of jobless parents (2.7x)</p>	 <p>have at least 2x the rate of long-term unemployment (2.3x)</p>	 <p>are almost 3x as likely to be dealing with heat vulnerability (2.9x)</p>
 <p>have at least 2x the rate of child maltreatment (2.7x)</p>	 <p>are more than 3x more likely to have high levels of prison admissions (3.3x)</p>	 <p>are 4x more likely to be exposed to family violence, or have a juvenile criminal conviction</p>	 <p>have at least 2x the rate of disability (2.4x)</p>

How can the report be used?

The report can help to inform policy development, program design, funding allocation and service delivery by identifying the intersection of indicators of disadvantage, and areas within NSW most in need of remedial action. It includes a map where users can visualise the location of disadvantage down to the local (SA2) level. The report builds on similar studies carried out by Jesuit Social Services in 1999, 2004, 2007 and 2015. It therefore allows users to track changes over time, which can help in assessing the efficacy of particular approaches. Governments, service providers and communities can use information about the different types of disadvantage that persist in different locations, and the multi-faceted nature of disadvantage, to develop place-based solutions.

What's next?

In February 2021, Jesuit Social Services established the [Centre for Just Places](#). The Centre will deliver future Dropping off the Edge reports. It will also develop more detailed maps of disadvantage, conduct research on locational disadvantage between iterations of the report, and use findings to advocate for solutions.

Where can you find out more?

The full [Dropping off the Edge report](#) and the [NSW summary](#) are available online. [Interactive maps](#) are located on the findings summary page for each State and Territory.

How was the 2021 Dropping off the Edge study carried out?

The study measured 37 indicators across seven domains. Some indicators used in previous reports were dropped and two new domains - environmental and intergenerational outcomes - were introduced. The study looked at 2,292 areas across every State and Territory in Australia. It defined areas using Statistical Area Level 2s (SA2s), an Australian Bureau of Statistics unit which is small enough to represent a community that interacts socially and economically, and generally includes one or multiple suburbs. The report ranked each SA2 on disadvantage based on the number of times the area was in the top five per cent against the grouped indicators. It also summarised a number of indicators into one index of disadvantage.

For the first time the study included qualitative interviews and focus groups with a number of communities to capture their experiences of living with disadvantage. This contextual information helps to interpret the meaning of the quantitative indicators, index, and indicator outcomes. It also highlights local resources to address the challenges identified in the analysis.



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