Social inclusion

Ngiare Brown
Australian Social Inclusion Board

Presentation to the
Australian Health Inequalities Program
Beyond Evidence on Reducing Health Inequalities:
What works, why and how
28 April, 2010
What is social inclusion?
...a socially inclusive society is one where all individuals have the opportunities, capabilities and resources to participate fully in their community.

An effective social inclusion agenda uses a range of initiatives to:
• develop people’s underlying resources
• address resourcing gaps
• encourage participation to learn, work, engage, have a voice
• invest in support systems & reform
• measure and evaluate progress
The Australian Social Inclusion Board

First meeting of the Board with Prime Minister Rudd, Deputy Prime Minister Gillard and Parliamentary Secretary Senator Stephens
The Board’s Terms of Reference

The Australian Social Inclusion Board will:

• Provide advice and information to the Minister for Social Inclusion on how to improve social inclusion across the country

• Consult widely and provide views and input on various aspects of social inclusion including how to measure disadvantage and social exclusion, how to increase economic and social participation and how communities can be engaged with social inclusion matters

• Report annually on progress on social inclusion and provide advice on specific matters referred to it by the Minister for Social Inclusion
The Board has reported on the state of social inclusion in Australia

In May 2009, the Board released *A Compendium of Social Inclusion Indicators*, which reported on available data comparing social inclusion in Australian with other OECD countries.

In January 2010, the Board released its first annual report *Social Inclusion in Australia: How Australia is Faring*, providing baseline measures across a range of social inclusion indicators.
Social inclusion is measured according to the Government’s framework of social inclusion indicators

**Participation**
Work, Learn, Engage & Have a voice

**Resources**
- Material/economic resources
- Health & disability
- Education & skills
- Social resources
- Community & institutional resources
- Housing
- Personal safety

**Multiple disadvantage**
Multiple and entrenched disadvantage

Indicators are grouped in domains under these three concepts
but some people are still struggling...

- Australia’s level of **income inequality** is slightly higher than the OECD and EU averages;
- One in eight people lived in households with **high financial stress**;
- 40% of **one-parent families with children** lived in high financial stress; and
- One in five low income households, and almost half of low income private renters, were classified as being in **housing stress**

Source: Social Inclusion in Australia: How Australia is Faring, 2010 and A Compendium of Social Inclusion Indicators, 2009
... we also have a high proportion of children living in jobless families...

In June 2009, 15% of all children aged under 15 years lived in jobless families. Most (67%) of these children lived in one parent households.

The proportion of children living in jobless households is higher in Australia than in all but four of 27 EU member states and higher than the EU27 average of 9.7%.

Over one-third of households that were jobless in 2001 remained jobless in 2006.

Source: A compendium of social inclusion indicators, 2009
Social gradients abound...

People living in low income households:

Have poorer health
35% of people in the lowest income quintile reported fair or poor health compared to 7% in the highest quintile

Are more likely to have difficulty accessing transport
10% of people in the lowest income quintile compared to 1% in the highest quintile

Are less likely to have access to internet at home
33% of people in the lowest income quintile compared to 85% in the highest quintile

Are less likely to attend community events
52% of people in the lowest income quintile compared to 75% in the highest quintile

Source: Social inclusion in Australia: How Australia is faring, 2010
Disadvantage in one respect appears to lead to disadvantage in others

Around 5% of Australians aged 18 to 64 years experience three or more types of disadvantage. These multiple disadvantages are considered across three domains:

**Economic**  
*low income and no access to funds in an emergency, jobless households*

**Personal**  
*poor self-assessed health, education below Year 10*

**Social**  
*feeling unsafe at home alone after dark, unable to get support in times of crisis*

Source: *Social inclusion in Australia: How Australia is faring, 2010*
A small but significant number of Australians have multiple disadvantages

Analysis by the Social Inclusion Unit of the 2006 ABS General Social Survey found that 5% of persons aged 18-64 years had 3 or more disadvantages based on 6 factors across 3 domains:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Disadvantages</th>
<th>Proportions</th>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>67.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
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</table>

Incidence of selected types of disadvantage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Low income and material deprivation</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low work (in jobless household)</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human</td>
<td>Low health</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low education</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Low safety</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low support</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Social inclusion in Australia: How Australia is faring, 2010
Where you live matters...

Service access is more likely to be an issue for those living outside major cities. Only 18% of people in major cities reported difficulties compared to 28% in inner regional areas and 39% in other areas which includes outer regional and remote locations.

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey found that approximately 21% of Indigenous Australians reported they needed to go to a dentist in the previous 12 months but did not, 15% needed to go to a doctor but did not, and 8% needed to go to an ‘other healthcare professional’ but did not.

Costs, waiting times or unavailability and difficulty accessing transport or the distance needed to travel were common issues cited.

Source: Social inclusion in Australia: How Australia is faring, 2010
Children living in low socioeconomic areas are more likely to be developmentally vulnerable

The AEDI measures progress to show how well we support our children’s development.

Overall, 58% of children who speak a language other than English, 31% of children living in very remote Australia, and 29% of Indigenous Australian children are developmentally vulnerable on two or more AEDI domains.

Source: Social inclusion in Australia: How Australia is faring, 2010
There are considerable societal costs of exclusion

Addressing disadvantage helps to

• **create a fair society** which not only values fair treatment and opportunity, *but actually works hard to achieve it*

• **reduce the threats to security and harmony** that arise from excluding groups

• **increase overall productivity**

*People with disability* aged 15-64 years have an employment rate of 49% compared with 77% for those without disability.

*People with a severe mental disorder* aged 15-64 years have an employment rate of 55%.

*Indigenous Australians* aged 15 years+ have an employment rate of 54% compared with 73% for the non-Indigenous population.

*Those without a Year 12 qualification* have an employment rate of 58% compared with 74% overall.

Source: *Social inclusion in Australia: How Australia is faring, 2010*
Social inclusion principles recognise the inter-linked nature of disadvantage

Aspirations
- Reducing disadvantage
- Increasing social, civic and economic participation
- Developing a greater voice, combined with greater responsibility

Approaches
- Building on individual and community strengths
- Building partnerships with key stakeholders
- Developing tailored services
- Giving high priority to early intervention and prevention
- Building joined-up services and whole of government(s) solutions
- Using evidence and integrated data to inform policy
- Using location-based approaches
- Planning for sustainability

See: Principles for Social Inclusion – everyone’s job
Breaking the cycle of disadvantage

The Board has agreed key projects for 2010, including to

- develop advice on **governance models that work best for locational approaches** to address disadvantage, including systematic approaches that go beyond individual programs and take into account Australia’s diverse geography.

- investigate and develop policy models for **jobless single parent families** to address the range of barriers faced by this group, including examining what is working and what is not, and how the suite of existing government support services and legislation can better assist jobless families.

- develop a deeper understanding of the pathways into **cycles of disadvantage** and how to break them to, including to track the interplay of these events and factors across the life-course
Overview

Australia is a rich country... but some are missing out

- Some people face a number of barriers, so they start a step behind
- One form of disadvantage will often lead to further disadvantages
- Disadvantage tends to concentrate in particular neighbourhoods
- Barriers to participation have implications for individuals and families over the long term and can often be bequeathed to the next generation

The Board will continue to

- measure and report on progress across a range of social inclusion indicators, and
- draw attention to disadvantage through new work on breaking the cycle of disadvantage