

# A Social Inclusion Strategy *for* *Tasmania*



*A consultation paper*

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### **A Social Inclusion Strategy for Tasmania: a consultation paper**

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

A social inclusion strategy for Tasmania is a key component of my Government's commitment to building a clever, kind and connected Tasmania.

This strategy must provide opportunities for all Tasmanians to participate in the social, economic and civic life of our State and be supported by a system that helps people to access support services, education and job opportunities, as well as social and community networks.

A social inclusion strategy will generate solutions to benefit Tasmanians who often face multiple challenges, including poverty, geographic isolation, intergenerational disadvantage, poor education, disability, physical and mental health issues and other barriers.

### **To address these barriers we must be clever.**

Our strategy will pursue social innovation and new ways to address old problems. We will use your ideas and build on the strengths that already exist in our communities, so that we learn from what is already working. We will develop evidence-based approaches, use early intervention and prevention methods and make better use of data to target our action. We will design smarter responses to complex social issues to generate effective and sustainable change in people's lives.

### **We can be kind.**

Our strategy will drive investment in communities that are kind and caring for people who are in need. The persistence of poverty in Tasmania challenges the conscience of the entire community. We can work together to make sure that all Tasmanians live with dignity and life's essentials, such as safe and secure shelter, a basic meal, warm clothes and personal support.

### **We can be connected.**

Our strategy will connect spheres of government and government agencies and design the joint approaches to service delivery required for people with complex needs. It will connect all sectors of our community to address exclusion in Tasmania. It will enable Tasmanians to put forward ideas for being better connected to family and friends, and ensure inclusion in our communities. In designing our strategy, we will connect with and listen to Tasmanians and act on your ideas.

I encourage you to respond to this consultation paper and have a say in the shape and direction of this important strategy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Bartlett'. The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large loop at the end.

**David Bartlett MP**  
Premier

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Tasmanian Government is committed to a social inclusion agenda to better serve Tasmanians who experience deep and persistent social exclusion. This paper will guide important community consultation for the development of a Tasmanian strategy.

There is much work already underway by all spheres of government, in community sector organisations, with volunteers, in the business sector and in academia to build strong and inclusive communities in Tasmania. A social inclusion agenda offers a way to pull together the great work being done by people in a strategy and offers a way to facilitate new ways of working together for targeted action based on research and evidence to address disadvantage and exclusion in Tasmania.

Given everyone's interest and responsibility in developing inclusive communities in Tasmania, it is important to listen to, act on and learn from the views of as many organisations, groups and individuals as possible. It is important that Tasmanians share what is already happening in communities and their ideas on how everyone can work together as part of a social inclusion strategy. To facilitate this input, the Tasmanian Government will hold community forums in Neighbourhood Houses around the State. The Government will also consult with community sector organisations, the business sector and all spheres of government and the wider community on a draft social inclusion strategy for Tasmania. This consultation paper is a first step in the design of a draft social inclusion strategy for Tasmania. This consultation paper is in two parts. Part one discusses the concept of social inclusion and looks at some key aspects of social inclusion that need to be considered in the development of a strategy. They include the processes of social exclusion; the barriers to inclusion; and the way in which the multiple and complex needs of socially excluded Tasmanians necessitate a highly integrated policy response.

Part two reviews a number of social inclusion approaches taken by other Australian states and internationally. There are common elements to the strategies of each jurisdiction, including the commitment to a long-term life of the strategy, evidence-based policies and clearly defined and measurable targets and outcomes. This paper assumes the importance of such features and instead focuses discussion on the way the different strategies treat the elements explored in Part one.

### PART ONE - WHAT IS SOCIAL INCLUSION?

Social inclusion is a term used to describe how government, community, business, services and individuals can work together to make sure that all people have the best opportunities to enjoy life and do well in society. It is about making sure that no one is left out, or forgotten, in our community.

#### What is social exclusion?

People in any society can face disadvantages, including unemployment, low income, low literacy and numeracy, lack of access to services, disability, poor health, mental health issues, or discrimination.

Social exclusion can occur when a person experiences a number of disadvantages all at once, making it very difficult for them to participate in their community – for example, in work, in education or in joining a community group. These disadvantages can be seen as 'barriers' to inclusion. A combination of barriers can combine to prevent people from improving their lives and engaging with the community.

Social exclusion can also be used to describe a whole community or an area where there is a high concentration of disadvantage.

More often than not, the most socially excluded people face the most difficult and complex combination of barriers.

### How can social inclusion make a difference?

Social inclusion is a concept that has attracted the attention of government's nationally and internationally to design new ways of working together to address complex individual and social issues.

Social inclusion focuses on disadvantage, or barriers, to being included in the community and understanding how those barriers are connected to each other. Social inclusion recognises that overcoming one barrier (eg unemployment) might be difficult without first dealing with another (eg mental illness). Social inclusion also acknowledges that lack of support in relation to some barriers can lead people towards other problems (eg alcohol or drug dependency).

Social inclusion recognises that:

- A 'one-size-fits-all' approach does not always work for socially excluded people.
- People become socially excluded through different life paths and face a different combination of barriers. They face various problems that need to be addressed at the same time and in a more personalised way.
- Action should be based on both supporting people experiencing social exclusion, and on preventing people from becoming socially excluded in the future.
- Providing support at an early stage means that patterns of disadvantage can be broken, and people are equipped to deal with problems before they build up and become more difficult.
- The aim is to ensure people have the life skills to be independent, confident and able to feel valued by, and participate in, the community

## PART TWO - WHAT DO SOCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGIES DO?

Social inclusion strategies in Australia and around the world look at new ways for governments, communities, services, business and individuals to work together to help tackle the barriers faced by socially excluded people. The strategies try to strengthen and build connections in communities so they can be socially inclusive. Often social inclusion strategies use a number of approaches to focus action:

**Group** People may be socially excluded as part of a group that often suffers a number of disadvantages at once eg people living with a disability.

Action is focused on addressing the combination of barriers they face.

**Place** People may be socially excluded because of where they live eg an isolated community may face different disadvantages than an inner-city community.

Action is focused on addressing the combination of barriers faced by a particular community.

**Event** People may be socially excluded due to the impact of important events during their lives that trigger the creation of barriers eg illness, death of a family member, going to prison, or losing a job.

Action is focused on preventing barriers from building up when these events happen and helping people stay on track.



**Issue** People may be socially excluded and face a particular barrier that is so challenging it needs to be addressed before it is possible to move on eg homelessness, long-term unemployment, or a drug addiction.

Action is focused on the most difficult barrier faced by people who are socially excluded, which in turn may help them to then address other barriers.

**Lifecycle** People face different challenges at different stages in their lives eg the early years, teenage years, or old age.

Action is focused on the issues and barriers normally faced at different stages of life. This includes focusing on what can be done earlier in life to help prevent people from becoming social excluded later on.

## How do governments address social inclusion?

### *Ireland:*

- A lifecycle and place-based approach with a focus on employment, education, training and income support to facilitate greater social inclusion.
- More akin to an anti-poverty strategy.

### *United Kingdom:*

- A lifecycle approach, focused on breaking cycles of intergenerational disadvantage through early intervention and prevention.
- Multi-agency service delivery prioritised. Investment in a number of pilot programs to look at ways to improve the connections between services.

### *South Australia:*

- Target groups (references) with action plans setting out targets, strategies and progress measures.
- A focus on improving multi-agency work across government and ensuring accountability and agency buy-in through governance structures that invoke all stakeholders from the top down (from the Premier to those in front-line service delivery).

### *Victoria (proposed):*

- Issues-based and place-based target groups with a social inclusion and investment plan for each.
- Focus on mobilising government action to address the multiple needs of each target group and the importance of a holistic response.
- Strong focus on locational disadvantage and delivering programs designed to strengthen social cohesion.

### *Australian Government:*

- Combination of issue-based and target group-based approaches along with a focus on place-based disadvantage.
- Responses are being led by particular Australian Government agencies with central coordination by the Social Inclusion Unit in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

The Australian Government has identified the following early priorities for social inclusion in Australia:

- addressing the incidence and needs of jobless families with children
- delivering effective support to children at greatest risk of long-term disadvantage
- focusing on particular locations, neighbourhoods and communities to ensure programs and services are getting to the right places
- addressing the incidence of homelessness
- employment for people living with a disability or mental illness
- closing the gap for indigenous Australians.

#### **Tasmanian Government:**

The Tasmanian Government has established a Social Inclusion Unit in the Department of Premier and Cabinet, committed to the appointment of a Social Inclusion Commissioner for Tasmania and identified the following early priorities for social inclusion in Tasmania:

- Homelessness: developing a Tasmanian homelessness plan.
- Literacy and numeracy: developing an action plan to ensure that all Tasmanians have the literacy and numeracy skills for life and learning.
- The development of a social inclusion strategy for Tasmania.

#### **Questions to guide feedback**

The Social Inclusion Unit has developed a brochure to help guide feedback. The brochure contains a brief set of more general questions to prompt and guide community discussion on social inclusion. The brochure is available by contacting the Social Inclusion Unit. In addition to the brochure, a series of questions are contained in this consultation paper. These questions are more specific to the design and development of a social inclusion strategy for Tasmania. The questions are not exhaustive and are only intended as a guide. Please respond to as many or few as suits and provide any other information you consider important.

#### **Social inclusion in the Tasmanian context**

1. What individuals or groups do you consider to be socially excluded in Tasmania?

#### **Barriers to social inclusion**

2. What are the barriers to social inclusion for these individuals or groups?
3. Are there any structural and/or institutional processes that inhibit an individual or group from fully participating in the Tasmanian community?
4. In what ways do barriers to social inclusion inter-relate for socially excluded Tasmanians?

#### **Whole-of-government and whole-of community responses**

5. What current whole-of-government and/or whole-of-community projects or programs addressing social exclusion do you consider are effectively operating in Tasmania?

6. What should be the role of the Social Inclusion Unit in addressing social exclusion in Tasmania and promoting, developing and implementing whole-of-government and whole-of-community responses?

### Intergenerational, locational and transitional disadvantage

7. What is required to address intergenerational disadvantage in Tasmania?
8. What is required to address locational or place-based disadvantage in Tasmania?
9. What is required to address transitional disadvantage in Tasmania?

### Social inclusion approaches in Tasmania

10. What needs to be done to prevent individuals or groups from becoming socially excluded in Tasmania?
11. What needs to be done to enable individuals or groups who are presently socially excluded to become connected with their community?

### A social inclusion strategy for Tasmania

12. What guiding principles do you think a social inclusion strategy for Tasmania should adopt?
13. Considering the approaches (eg place-based, issues-based) adopted by other jurisdictions, how should a social inclusion strategy be developed for Tasmania?
14. What should be the priority areas for a strategy and which individuals, groups or issues need to be addressed first?

15. In developing a strategy, do you consider the following approaches to be applicable in the Tasmanian context:

- a cohort approach
- a lifecycle approach
- an issues-based approach
- a critical transition points approach
- a locational or place-based approach

16. Do you consider that there are any other approaches that may be suitable for application in Tasmania?

### Governance structures for a social inclusion strategy

17. What needs to be considered when developing a governance structure to successfully implement a social inclusion strategy in Tasmania? *(Please consider the role of the structure in promoting whole-of-government and whole-of-community responses in delivering services and projects to achieve the goals of the Strategy)*
18. Are there any other comments that you would like to make in relation to the development of a Social Inclusion Strategy for Tasmania?

### Responding to this consultation paper

You can respond to the consultation paper by contacting the Social Inclusion Unit:

**Phone:** 6233 9953  
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Responses must be received by Friday  
12 December 2008.



# A SOCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY FOR TASMANIA

## A CONSULTATION PAPER

### Introduction

There is considerable work already underway to build strong and inclusive communities in Tasmania; it is taking place in all spheres of Government, in community sector organisations, among volunteers, in the business sector and in academia. A social inclusion agenda offers a means of capturing the significant work underway in a strategy that also seeks to find new ways of working together to address disadvantage and exclusion in Tasmania.

Social inclusion theory provides a new way for governments to understand and address social issues and improve outcomes for individuals and communities. The concept emphasises the inadequacy of addressing issues that impact on an individual's life outcomes – whether they be personal, community or socio-economic – in isolation from one another. It provides governments and their agencies with a broader framework in which to understand problems and coordinate effective strategies. Ultimately, social inclusion theories should lead to better outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

The Tasmanian Government is pursuing a social inclusion agenda to positively affect the lives of Tasmanians who experience deep and persistent social exclusion. This paper is to guide important community consultation for the development of a Tasmanian strategy.

Part one discusses the concept of social inclusion and looks at some key aspects of social inclusion for consideration in the development of a strategy. These aspects include the processes of social exclusion; the barriers to inclusion; and the way in which the multiple and complex needs of socially excluded Tasmanians necessitate a highly integrated policy response.

Part two reviews a number of social inclusion approaches taken by other Australian states and internationally. There are common elements to the strategies of each jurisdiction, including the commitment to a long-term life of the strategy, evidence-based policies and clearly defined and measurable targets and outcomes. This paper assumes the importance of such features and instead focuses discussion on the way the different strategies treat the elements explored in Part one.

## PART ONE

### SOCIAL INCLUSION THEORY

#### 1. What is social inclusion?

Social inclusion is a relatively new concept in social policy. Modern usage of the term 'social exclusion' was first applied in the 1980s in France where it referred to a range of marginalised groups that had remained unaffected by traditional policy interventions. The concept of 'social exclusion,' or its opposite, 'social inclusion,' has since been adopted in varying degrees in individual member states of the European Union (EU), most notably, the United Kingdom and Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

Social inclusion refers to effective participation, both socially and economically by an individual in all aspects of society. It relates to the capacity of an individual to consume (purchase goods and services), produce (participate in socially or economically valued activities), politically engage and socially interact.<sup>2</sup> At its optimum, social inclusion is about having access to opportunities, options and choices in life and having the personal capacity, self confidence and individual resilience to make the most of them.<sup>3</sup>

Individuals experience 'social exclusion' through the process of being alienated from the social, economic, political and cultural systems that contribute to a person being part of their community.<sup>4</sup> Social exclusion can also be used to describe the circumstance of geographical areas that experience multiple forms of disadvantage.<sup>5</sup>

The concept of social exclusion – in comparison to the theory of income poverty - offers a new focus; acknowledging the multidimensional nature of poverty and the interplay of various forms of disadvantage over time.<sup>6</sup> Although there is considerable overlap, social exclusion is distinguished from the concept of poverty because it recognises that non-economic measures are as equally important as economic ones.<sup>7</sup>

#### 1.1 The processes of social exclusion

Distinct from the characteristics and conditions of social exclusion – and identifying those who experience it – is the attention that needs to be paid to the structural and institutional causes of exclusion.<sup>8</sup> Understanding the processes of social exclusion can lead to understanding the condition of exclusion, and therefore enable policy makers to develop strategies that respond effectively.<sup>9</sup>

Social exclusion can be described as the process of being shut out from the social, economic, and cultural systems that contribute to the inclusion of a person into the community.<sup>10</sup> It refers to the interplay of actions and reactions, both institutional and individual, which promote an outcome of social exclusion for that person. For example, the causes of a person's individual challenges may be varied. Issues may be caused by life events and be also caused or compounded by an unsupportive home life or community. This exclusion can, in turn, be exacerbated by an individual feeling unable to access institutions and lead to disengagement from education, and potentially unemployment. The dysfunctional consequences of economic and social policies can also create structural disadvantage. Multiple factors can coalesce to create a condition of social exclusion because the responses of various actors – whether they be individuals, parents, schools, the justice system, communities, government departments or the media – are either unable to support, or actively impede, social inclusion.

The development of an effective social inclusion strategy demands an understanding of the process of social exclusion. It requires an analysis of institutions, structures and conventions along the life path of an individual that implicitly reinforce an outcome of social exclusion.<sup>11</sup>

## 1.2 The barriers to social inclusion

The condition of social exclusion exists and persists because of barriers to inclusion. That is, an individual is subject to various obstacles or difficulties that prevent them from accessing those elements which are crucial to the achievement of social inclusion. These barriers can generally be characterised as follows:<sup>12</sup>

**Social barriers** – lack of positive role models, communication or behavioural difficulties that hinder social interaction, negative peer influence and low expectations; reduced opportunity to participate in communities through lack of access to contacts and networks of support.

**Economic barriers** – lack of access to employment, education, skills and training.

**Financial barriers** – lack of access to assets such as property and credit; dysfunctional credit or savings behaviour; an inability to budget/appreciate the value of money (this is referred to as ‘financial exclusion’).

**Amenity barriers** – lack of access to places of living and recreation with adequate facilities and services.

**Information barriers** – lack of life literacy skills, such as an inability to read signs or pamphlets and fill in forms; lack of computer and internet access (this is referred to as ‘digital exclusion’- internet access is particularly important because information flows are increasingly computer-based and information disadvantage negatively impacts upon educational outcomes<sup>13</sup>).

**Embedded barriers** – cultural cycles of disadvantage, both locational and intergenerational (discussed below), that are difficult to break and lead to a higher probability of social exclusion.

## SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE TASMANIAN CONTEXT

- What individuals or groups do you consider to be socially excluded in Tasmania?

## BARRIERS TO SOCIAL INCLUSION

- What are the barriers to social inclusion for these individuals or groups?
- Are there any structural and/or institutional processes that inhibit an individual or group from fully participating in the Tasmanian community?
- In what ways do barriers to social inclusion inter-relate for socially excluded Tasmanians?

## 1.3 The modes of social exclusion

Barriers for socially excluded people are often intrinsically linked, reflecting a condition of ‘multiple and complex’ needs. The modes in which social exclusion manifests itself can be broadly categorised as ‘multiple and complex needs’ and ‘cycles of disadvantage.’

### Multiple and complex needs

Factors of social exclusion can include unemployment, poor skills, low income, poor housing, engagement in crime, poor health, behavioural problems, lack of access to transport and experience of family breakdown.<sup>14</sup> For the most socially excluded, these factors combine as multiple disadvantages. Progress in overcoming one limitation (eg employment) can be impeded by other barriers (eg drug addiction or mental illness).<sup>15</sup>

## Cycles of disadvantage

### Intergenerational disadvantage

Research consistently confirms that there are intergenerational cycles of disadvantage where continuing socio-economic factors often determine life outcomes. In the UK, it has been found that children born to disadvantaged households have a higher chance of experiencing similar problems to their parents.<sup>16</sup> Evidence has also demonstrated that children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to be subject to the most acute combinations of problems.<sup>17</sup> Longitudinal evidence from New Zealand<sup>18</sup> shows that for children born to the most-advantaged 50 per cent of the population, only around 2 in 1 000 will end up with multiple problems at age 15. Yet for children born to the 5 per cent most-disadvantaged families, more than 216 in 1 000 will end up with multiple problems at age 15 – a 100-fold increase in risk.

### Locational disadvantage

Closely related to the notion of intergenerational disadvantage is that of locational disadvantage. Professor Tony Vinson's report *Dropping off the Edge: the Distribution of Disadvantage in Australia* (*Dropping off the Edge*) found that just 1.7 per cent of communities across Australia accounted for more than seven times their share of top-rank positions in relation to the major factors that cause intergenerational poverty.<sup>19</sup> The finding is supported by a National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling study that developed measures of social exclusion and found significant variability between Australian regions.<sup>20</sup> It also found that children living in rural and regional areas outside capital cities, and on the urban fringe, are at increased risk of social exclusion.<sup>21</sup>

## 1.4 The social inclusion response to the modes of social exclusion

### Joined up work

Traditionally, governments employ 'policy silos' to frame action and service delivery, according to Ministerial portfolios such as 'health,' 'education,' 'justice,' 'community affairs,' and 'police.' However, this often leads to a disaggregation of the responses to social exclusion and a failure to take into account the relationship between those responses.

Social inclusion theory frames social policy differently – it acknowledges that an individual's participation in society and life outcomes can be mired by a number of barriers (economic, financial, social, informational and embedded) and that they are often interrelated. In response, social inclusion strategies typically emphasise the need for 'joined up work' to service the multiple and complex needs of the individual.

Joined-up services are those involving more than one agency that are coordinated and integrated around the needs of the individual citizen in the context of his or her family and community (Cappo, 2002 in Alan Hayes, Matthew Gray and Ben Edwards, *Social Inclusion: Origins, Concepts and Key Themes*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, October 2008, found at [www.socialinclusion.gov.au/](http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/)).

Social inclusion agendas recognise that socially excluded people have multiple needs requiring a multi-policy response, whereby the individual is at the centre of holistic policy action. There is a call to coordinate and personalise services and fit them around the needs of individuals.<sup>22</sup> Accordingly, social inclusion agendas typically call for innovative ways for government agencies, levels of government and different sectors to work together. Strategies advocate partnerships, horizontal work across portfolios and governance structures that incentivise joined-up working.

In a further effort to deal effectively with social exclusion, strategies can adopt a 'lifecycle' approach, targeting multi-agency programs to age-cohorts (eg early years, children and teenagers, older people).<sup>23</sup> Other strategies may instead focus on the barriers to inclusion and the issues that affect socially excluded people. For example, instead of health, housing and education, agencies are mobilised around drugs, homelessness, school retention, or the cohorts of young offenders, early school leavers and refugees.

### WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT AND WHOLE-OF-COMMUNITY RESPONSES

- What current whole-of-government and/or whole-of-community projects or programs addressing social exclusion do you consider are effectively operating in Tasmania?
- What should be the role of the Social Inclusion Unit in promoting, developing and implementing whole-of-government and whole-of-community responses?

### Breaking the cycle

In addition to responding to the complex and multiple needs of socially excluded people, social inclusion theory accepts that cycles of disadvantage are embedded in society, and that they are both locational and intergenerational. In response, social inclusion strategies are designed to break the cycles of disadvantage – they target policy intervention according to place and according to critical points in the lifecycle.

### Intergenerational disadvantage

For social inclusion, the need to break the cycle of disadvantage necessitates the use of early intervention and prevention methods at influential stages in the lifecycle (in particular, the early years) and to assist cohorts caught within the cycle of disadvantage at a young age, and therefore at high

risk of social exclusion in later life (eg children of teenage parents and children in state care).

The promotion of early intervention and prevention methods is nothing new in social policy – there is strong evidence which shows that early intervention and prevention methods are often more cost-effective for governments than dealing with the consequences of non-intervention at the acute end of service delivery. However, social inclusion theory makes an explicit link between strong patterns of disadvantage in society and the ability of early intervention and prevention strategies to break those patterns.

### Transition points

In addition, social inclusion strategies often seek to exploit critical transition points. A critical transition point is often a stage in an individual's life that presents a 'fork in the road' that will significantly impact on later life outcomes; for example, the transition from school to work or further study. A survey by Sane Australia<sup>24</sup> reveals that the majority (87 per cent) of people with a mental illness have been left homeless, or without suitable housing, as a result of being in hospital.<sup>25</sup> Leaving hospital is therefore a critical transition point for people with a mental illness. Other critical transition points include exiting prison, state care, evictions from public housing, and leaving school.

### Locational disadvantage

Not only do strategies attempt to break cycles of intergenerational disadvantage, but they also seek to mitigate the influence of locational disadvantage. As such, social inclusion strategies tend to adopt place-based target groups. This enables locality-specific measures to be used to supplement broader social policy. Each location identified requires a suite of programs tailored to that geographical area that reflects processes of social exclusion and addresses the barriers to inclusion that are experienced by people in that particular area.

The reality of locational disadvantage has led commentators to question whether social cohesion – the index of connectivity between people and between them and their community - can lessen the negative impact on social, health and economic conditions.<sup>26</sup> In *Dropping off the Edge*, a correlation was found between geographical areas evidencing characteristics of positive social cohesion<sup>27</sup> and the relatively lower rate of characteristics of social exclusion. That is, the degree of association between adverse conditions and unwanted outcomes was lower in the high-cohesion localities than in the low-cohesion ones.<sup>28</sup>

However, most commentators stress that the influence of structural macroeconomic factors in creating concentrations of poverty must be fully acknowledged when strategies are being developed to combat locational disadvantage.<sup>29</sup> In other words, social policy measures designed to promote social inclusion will have limited effect if divorced from the economic realities of a location.

### INTERGENERATIONAL, LOCATIONAL AND TRANSITIONAL DISADVANTAGE

- What is required to address intergenerational disadvantage in Tasmania?
- What is required to address local and placed-based disadvantage in Tasmania?
- What is required to address transitional disadvantage in Tasmania?

### 1.5 Promoting individual ownership

Social inclusion theory provides an important guide in the development of social policy because, in comparison to individual-based analyses, it more readily acknowledges the social nature of the human condition.<sup>30</sup> In the face of negative responses (both institutional and individual) to legitimate problems, and the accumulation of interlinked barriers to inclusion, it is more likely that an individual

will move towards exclusion because they are often left unable and *uninspired* to do otherwise. Processes of exclusion and barriers to inclusion typically provoke certain human responses<sup>31</sup>, among them discouragement, feelings of powerlessness, frustration, anger and self doubt.

Therefore, social inclusion strategies focus on self-empowerment, self-esteem and self-worth to inspire an individual to re-engage with society<sup>32</sup>. By extension, it also embraces the notion of social cohesion. As its name suggests, social inclusion acknowledges the relationship between the individual and society and the synergistic way in which self-valuing is rewarded by societal support, leading then to improved self-valuing.

The social inclusion response looks at ways to positively engage the individual and provide holistic support to motivate people to participate in the economic and social life of the community and to support and encourage communities to provide the opportunity for social participation. Importantly, strategies do not shy away from attributing rights and responsibilities and raising standards and expectations to empower and encourage.<sup>3</sup>

### SOCIAL INCLUSION APPROACHES IN TASMANIA

- What needs to be done to prevent individuals or groups from becoming socially excluded in Tasmania?
- What needs to be done to enable individuals or groups who are presently socially excluded to become connected with their community?



## THE CASE FOR CHANGE

Traditional social policy programs have been successful on a number of fronts and there are numerous programs underway that are making real differences to the lives of people experiencing disadvantage. And yet, a recent survey by the Social Policy Research Centre has found that some Australians do not have a substantial meal at least once a day, a decent and secure home, warm clothes and bedding if it is cold,<sup>34</sup> or access to important services, social networks and financial resources.<sup>35</sup> This indicates that social policy is failing, and suggests the need for a better approach.

Tasmania's deprivation and social exclusion, relative to other states and territories, has been well-documented.<sup>36</sup> Tasmania has higher levels of welfare dependency, a higher proportion of households with low-economic resources, lower literacy levels and lower school retention rates than a number of other Australian states and territories<sup>37</sup>. Another recent study has shown that children living in Tasmania, along with children in Queensland, the Northern Territory and to some extent South Australia, are more likely to be living in areas with a high risk of social exclusion compared to children living in the other states and territories.<sup>38</sup> The study attributes this to higher rates of unemployed, sole-parent families and families with low levels of education.<sup>39</sup> This indicates that cycles of intergenerational disadvantage exist in Tasmania.

Locational disadvantage is also evident in Tasmania. According to *Dropping Off the Edge*, the local government areas (LGAs) of Break O'Day, Brighton, Central Highlands, Derwent Valley, Glamorgan Spring Bay, Southern Midlands and Tasman evidence factors of disadvantage to significantly greater degree than other LGAs<sup>40</sup>. Further, in 2006, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, nine of Tasmania's 29 LGAs were ranked among the 20 per cent most disadvantaged in Australia.<sup>41</sup>

Social inclusion theory offers a new way of understanding the characteristics and conditions of disadvantage that exist in Tasmania, including social inclusions multidimensional nature and persistence. Through this understanding, it offers new ways to frame action and emphasises the importance of the links between the individual, communities and society. This is consistent with current Tasmanian policy directions such as Tasmania's Stronger Communities Taskforce and *Tasmania Together*.

### 2.1 The objective

The objective of a social inclusion strategy is to facilitate better life outcomes through better economic and social engagement for individuals to the benefit of both the individual, their communities and society.

A social inclusion strategy must acknowledge and directly address the processes of exclusion, as well as the barriers to inclusion, and the links between them. It needs to identify who is experiencing exclusion and why. It must also break the persistent cycles of disadvantage, both locational and intergenerational. It needs to exploit the critical intervention points, and use early intervention/prevention methods and locality specific measures to avert the otherwise unyielding cycles of disadvantage.

## PART TWO

### SOCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGIES

The aim of a social inclusion strategy is to develop comprehensive policies to support an individual to become an integrated member of society. Part two provides a review of existing social inclusion strategies within Australia and internationally, with a particular focus on the social inclusion concepts discussed in part one. It should be noted that there are characteristics that commonly feature in the strategies that, although significant, will not be the focus of discussion, including:

- A long-life strategy – in recognition of the embedded problems and lifecycle change.
- Regular public reporting – to encourage political accountability to the public.
- Well-defined targets and outcomes – to establish certainty about what the social inclusion strategy is trying to achieve, enable progress to be measured and ensure accountability.
- Enhanced coordination between levels of government and the community sector.
- Evidence based practice – systematically identifying ‘what works,’ promoting best practice and adapting programs and policies as evidence emerges. and
- Better information sharing between agencies and levels of government to improve coordination of services.

Instead, the focus is on those elements discussed in part one, which are treated differently by particular iterations of social inclusion strategies, and are afforded different degrees of emphasis. In an attempt to promote more joined up government responses and break cycles of disadvantage through time and place intervention points, existing social inclusion

strategies tend to adopt one, or a combination of, the following approaches to focus policy action:

- a cohort approach
- a lifecycle approach
- an issues-based approach
- a critical transition points approach
- community or place-based approach

One notable distinction between the strategies is the emphasis placed on particular barriers. In this way, strategies tend to identify prime barriers to inclusion for target groups and prioritise action accordingly. For instance, some strategies treat homelessness as a prime barrier to inclusion on the basis that long-term housing provides an individual with the stability and security necessary to overcome other barriers to inclusion. Equally, the importance of educational attainment is identified by highlighting the particularly strong link between intergenerational poverty and low educational attainment.<sup>42</sup>

Conversely, some jurisdictions take the view that poor health is an outcome of social exclusion; and while particular initiatives may have a health focus or may contribute to reducing health inequalities, these are not highlighted as explicit purposes of the strategy.<sup>43</sup> The subsequent section addresses the following social inclusion strategies in turn<sup>44</sup>:

- **Ireland** - *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016*
- **United Kingdom** - *Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion 2006*
- **South Australia** - *Social Inclusion Initiative 2002- 2010*
- **Victoria (current)** - *Fairer Victoria: Strong People, Strong Communities 2008*
- **Victoria (proposed)** - *Social Inclusion: The Next Step for a Fairer Victoria*
- Australian Government Social Inclusion Agenda.

It should be noted that the review of the strategies is limited by the available documentation, which is often produced by governments themselves and not the result of detailed independent evaluation.

## 2.1 IRELAND

### Context

Ireland's 1997 National Anti-Poverty Strategy, combined with a strong period of economic growth, led to significant progress in tackling disadvantage in Ireland in the last decade. Despite this, evaluation of progress has found that poverty and social exclusion are persistent problems for some members of society. In response, the Irish Government introduced a comprehensive program of action to assist those who continue to be socially excluded.

### The new plan

*National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016*

### Approach

The Irish strategy appears to allocate increased resourcing to a mix of existing social programs, as well as introduce a raft of new measures to improve delivery and coordination.<sup>45</sup> The *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion* is focused on poverty and social exclusion, with an overall goal to:

*Reduce the number of those experiencing consistent poverty to between 2 per cent and 4 per cent by 2012, with the aim of eliminating consistent poverty by 2016.*

The primary focus of the strategy is overcoming economic and financial barriers to inclusion for those who are most deprived and vulnerable, as a preliminary step to greater inclusion.<sup>46</sup>

### Key considerations and target groups

#### Ireland: National Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016

A focus on:

- Barriers to Inclusion – Economic and Financial
- Multiple and Complex Needs – Joined up Work
- Breaking Cycles of Locational Disadvantage

Has led to the adoption of:

- A 'lifecycle' approach, with the following target groups



### *Lifecycle approach*

The Irish strategy adopts the lifecycle approach by creating target groups based on cohorts (eg age, disability). Policy action is focussed by high-level strategic goals within each cohort and delivered according to existing government portfolios (eg Department of Health or Education). The dominant theme of the high-level goals is to overcome economic barriers to inclusion. The strategy is focused on education and employment and ensuring target groups can access an appropriate welfare wage to support them towards greater economic participation in society. In this sense, the strategy treats income and employment as prime barriers, and highlights their removal as a necessary step towards greater social inclusion. Secondary goals for each target group commonly relate to housing and health outcomes. Target groups are children, people of working age and older people. People with disabilities also constitute a target group on the basis that its members often suffer from chronic exclusion: research in Ireland shows that people with disabilities have lower education participation rates, far lower participation rates in the workforce and are twice at risk of poverty than other citizens.<sup>47</sup>

The Irish strategy acknowledges that children experience disadvantage in the context of their family, and policies that strongly support parents into financial stability and/or employment will have a major impact on outcomes for children.<sup>48</sup> There is also a strong focus on improving early development and care services.

The policy direction shifts for the cohort of older people. High-level goals relate to income support and community care services, and an overall aim to enable older people to maintain a comfortable standard of living.

### *Multiple and complex needs – Joined up work*

The Irish strategy identifies the greatest challenge as service delivery and the lifecycle approach is adopted to assist agencies and policy makers to achieve better coordination and integration of services.<sup>49</sup> However, the strategy itself does not provide any clues as to how 'joined-up' government will be achieved, or any evidence of past successes.

### *Breaking the cycle of locational disadvantage*

In addition to the lifecycle approach, the Irish strategy reflects the problem of locational disadvantage by adopting place-based target groups (community). The processes of social exclusion and the barriers to inclusion that are experienced by different communities are reflected in the strategy through delineation between urban and rural disadvantage:

- **Urban disadvantage** – where there are high levels of unemployment and high concentrations of poverty, a decline in the social infrastructure such as access to places of living and recreation with adequate facilities and services.
- **Rural disadvantage** – where there are declining or slow-growing populations, migration of younger people, lack of services, lack of employment opportunities and low income lead to social isolation.

The high-level community goals and corresponding initiatives relate to housing, health and the integration of migrants. There is also focus on access to transport, digital and financial inclusion and the use of sport and the arts to facilitate greater inclusion.

## Governance

Ministerial accountability for outcomes in social inclusion lies with the Minister for Social and Family Affairs.

The Minister reports to the Cabinet Committee on social inclusion, drugs and rural development, which gives overall strategic direction to the development of policies to combat poverty and social exclusion and ensures that their implementation is regularly monitored and promoted at the highest level.

The Office of Social Inclusion (OSI) is based in the Department of Social Affairs and Family. Significantly, the Department is strongly geared towards welfare support and this focus has directly translated into the design of the Irish strategy.

OSI has overall responsibility for coordinating and driving the Government's social inclusion agenda and is responsible for:

- coordinating the process across agencies, regional and local government and implementing key support functions
- monitoring and evaluating the Irish Government's social inclusion strategies
- implementing a communications strategy on social inclusion
- producing an annual report.

OSI works in conjunction with social inclusion units located within every relevant government agency. These units are responsible for co-ordinating their agency's contribution to achieving social inclusion in liaison with OSI.

## Other features

Poverty impact assessments are featured in the Irish strategy. They involve government agencies and local authorities assessing policies and programs at the design, implementation and review stages. This is in

relation to the likely impact that they will have on poverty and on inequalities which are likely to lead to poverty, with a view to poverty reduction.<sup>50</sup>

## 2.2 UNITED KINGDOM (UK)

### Context

Since 1997, the alleviation of poverty has been a major policy priority for the UK Government. As part of its approach to reduce poverty, it has established the Office of the Third Sector and developed links with the voluntary and community sectors. Government policy in the UK has been characterised by a strong focus on partnerships, innovation and broad consultation.<sup>51</sup>

After 10 years of monitoring progress in the UK, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's<sup>52</sup> concluded that the strategy pursued since the late 1990s is now largely exhausted.<sup>53</sup> It notes that over the last decade, the proportion of both children and pensioners in poverty had fallen, while the proportion of working-age adults in poverty has remained unchanged. As a result, more than half the people now in poverty are working-age adults.<sup>54</sup>

There is a view that, in some spheres, policy development has lagged behind target-setting. While there has been success in reducing poverty in the general population, a small minority has effectively been left behind.<sup>55</sup> Connecting with minority groups suffering from 'deep and persistent exclusion'<sup>56</sup> is the predominant focus of the UK's social inclusion strategy.

### The new plan:

*Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion*  
September 2006

### Approach

The UK plan is targeted at those individuals who have failed to benefit from the improvements of past anti-poverty reforms, and who tend to be caught in the deepest cycles of deprivation and disadvantage.

Significantly, the UK plan recognises that for this minority, the barriers are not only economic but also social and cultural.<sup>57</sup> In this sense, and perhaps in contrast to the Irish strategy, the UK plan more readily reflects the concept of social inclusion in government social policy.

The UK plan focuses effort on boosting existing programs that have evidenced success (eg the early years program *Sure Start*) and the commissioning of research or reports, and pilot programs in new areas of focus. For example, the strategy announces a green paper on children in care and pilots for multi-agency service delivery to support adults experiencing chronic exclusion. In this sense, the UK plan is a living document that is designed to continually respond to the emerging evidence-base.

The UK social inclusion strategy emphasises the importance of the different arms of government working together more effectively. Strategies propose a range of systematic reforms aimed at fundamentally changing the way the government delivers help and support to socially excluded people.<sup>58</sup>

### Key considerations and target groups

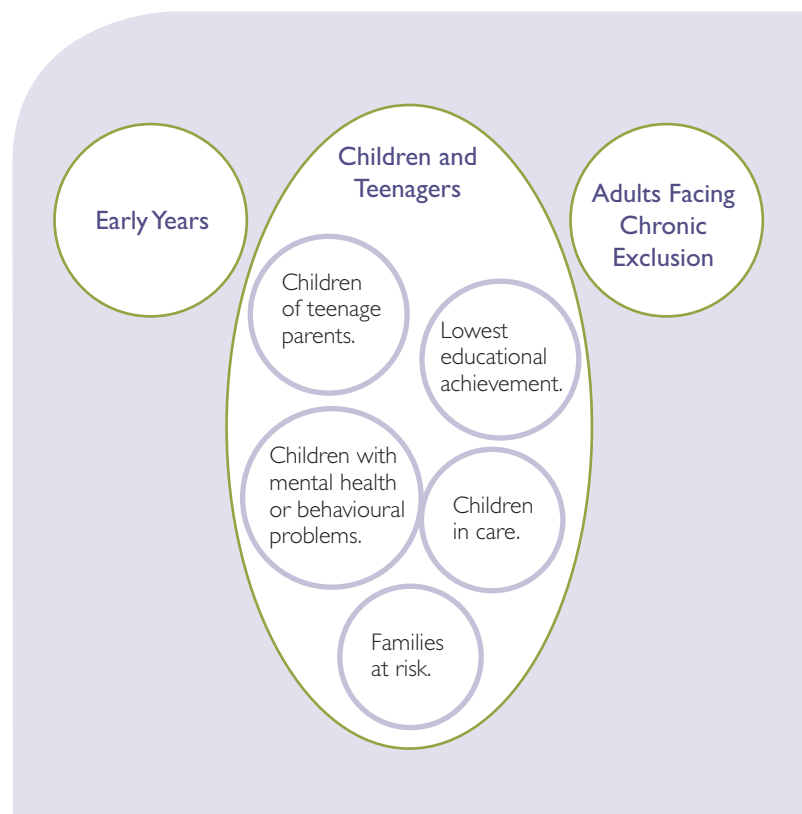
#### UK: *Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion 2006*

A focus on:

- The Barriers to Social Inclusion
- Breaking the Cycle of Intergenerational Disadvantage through critical transition/ prevention points
- Multiple and Complex Needs – Joined up work

Has led to the adoption of:

- A 'lifecycle' approach, with the following target groups



### Lifecycle Approach, with Target Groups

In the UK strategy, a lifecycle approach is adopted, where action is focused around age cohorts. In the case of children and teenagers, this is further broken down into at-risk target groups. Programs are focussed on addressing the issues and/or barriers, facing the target groups. The lifecycle approach is employed to facilitate a holistic approach to addressing the multiple needs of the individuals facing social exclusion.

### Breaking the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage

Children from the 5 per cent most-disadvantaged households in the UK are more than 100 times more likely to have multiple problems at age 30 than those from the 50 per cent most-advantaged households.<sup>59</sup> The UK strategy responds to the evidence that cycles of disadvantage are reinforced within families and communities and the Government stresses the need to break the persistent cycles of disadvantage. For instance, the UK approach identifies disadvantaged families as a



target group in recognition that 'parental and wider family problems...cast a shadow that spans whole lifetimes and indeed passes down the generations. These family experiences can limit aspiration, reinforce cycles of poverty and provide poor models of behaviour that can impact on child's development and well-being.'<sup>60</sup> Families at risk are identified as a target group in an attempt to encourage a more family focused approach from agencies.<sup>61</sup> For instance, to encourage services to respond to their clients as parents rather than as individuals <sup>62</sup> (eg addressing the needs of children whose parent goes to prison or has a mental illness<sup>63</sup>).

The UK strategy focuses effort on breaking the cycle through early intervention and prevention. There is a heightened focus on parenting and the early years (due to research showing their life-long impact on education, emotional wellbeing and resilience), and prevention, as improved data is making it increasingly possible to identify who needs support. The strategy advances the use of better prediction tools for use by front line practitioners and the use of key early warning signs of long-term exclusion to instigate action at an early stage.

Intervention is also targeted to critical transition points as defined by the evidence base as important points of influence eg the introduction of support mechanisms when individuals leave prison and leave state care.

### ***Multiple and complex needs – Joined up work***

The UK strategy recognises the multi-dimensional barriers to social inclusion (including economic, social, financial, digital and embedded). It also explicitly acknowledges that socially excluded people suffer from multiple and complex needs that, distinct from improvements in the quality of particular services, demands the need to improve the connections between services.

The UK Government notes that it is developing a better understanding of the linkages between poverty and a set of complex problems. It admits

that the traditional one-size-fits-all approach to service delivery is not working. It emphasises the need to tailor services to the needs of the individual.<sup>64</sup> As such, in order to promote better multi-agency working, the plan seeks to broaden and strengthen intergovernmental agreements and partnerships, and improve data sharing capabilities between agencies. The UK has commissioned pilots to improve service provision. One such pilot is multi-agency teams on the front line that are required to coordinate and personalise a policy response to the needs of an individual suffering from social exclusion.

The plan is also focused on forming meaningful linkages between agencies that may not have a history of working together. For example, prisons and children's services, specifically ensuring a family gets the support it needs when a parent goes into prison, or comes out of prison.<sup>65</sup>

### ***Promoting individual ownership***

A characteristic of the UK social inclusion plan is the principle of rights and responsibilities. That principle is based on the belief that achieving social inclusion is not only about government-based action but also about empowering individuals to take responsibility for their own circumstances and life path. This manifests in a clear division of rights and responsibilities between the citizen, service provider and community through, for example, contracts between the individual and service provider. This principle is employed in the families at risk target group by focussing on parenting responsibilities.<sup>66</sup>

### **Governance**

The Minister for the Cabinet Office and Social Inclusion holds ministerial accountability for social inclusion. The Minister is supported by a Parliamentary Secretary.

Work is generated through the Social Exclusion Taskforce. Centrally situated in the Cabinet Office, the Social Exclusion Taskforce was established in June 2006 to replace the Social Exclusion Unit originally

established in 1997. The Taskforce does not directly deliver services. Instead, it works collaboratively with other agencies to identify priorities, test solutions and facilitate cooperation across government.

The Taskforce is responsible for coordinating the Government's drive against social exclusion, ensuring that the cross-departmental approach delivers to those most in need. In this sense, it champions within government the needs of the most disadvantaged members of society. The Taskforce also provides regular public updates on progress.

### *Innovation in governance*

The UK is looking at ways to focus on promoting the transparency of downstream costs to encourage accountability. For example, the responsibility for improving the educational attainment of a child diagnosed with a conduct disorder lies with the local education authority, but the costs of failure tend to be borne by the criminal justice system, welfare or employment agency.<sup>67</sup> One proposal is that these downstream costs are recognised in local strategic partnerships between levels of government and across portfolios, as a tool to promote cross-agency work.<sup>68</sup>

## 2.3 SOUTH AUSTRALIA

### **Context**

The South Australian Social Inclusion Initiative was created by Premier Mike Rann in 2002 and 'has been at the vanguard of Australian social inclusion policy and practice'<sup>69</sup>. Relative to other Australian states and territories, South Australia (SA) has a good social outcomes record; however there are pockets of disadvantage, particularly in the outer northern and southern areas of Adelaide. This locational disadvantage, and the need for a strategy that responds to the unique challenges of social exclusion, has been recognised by the South Australian Government.<sup>70</sup>

### **The new plan:**

*The Social Inclusion Initiative 2002-2010*

### **Approach**

The aim of this initiative is to address complex social problems and drive policy and programs with a focus on providing opportunities for vulnerable members of society to participate in the social and economic life of the community.

### *Key considerations and target groups*

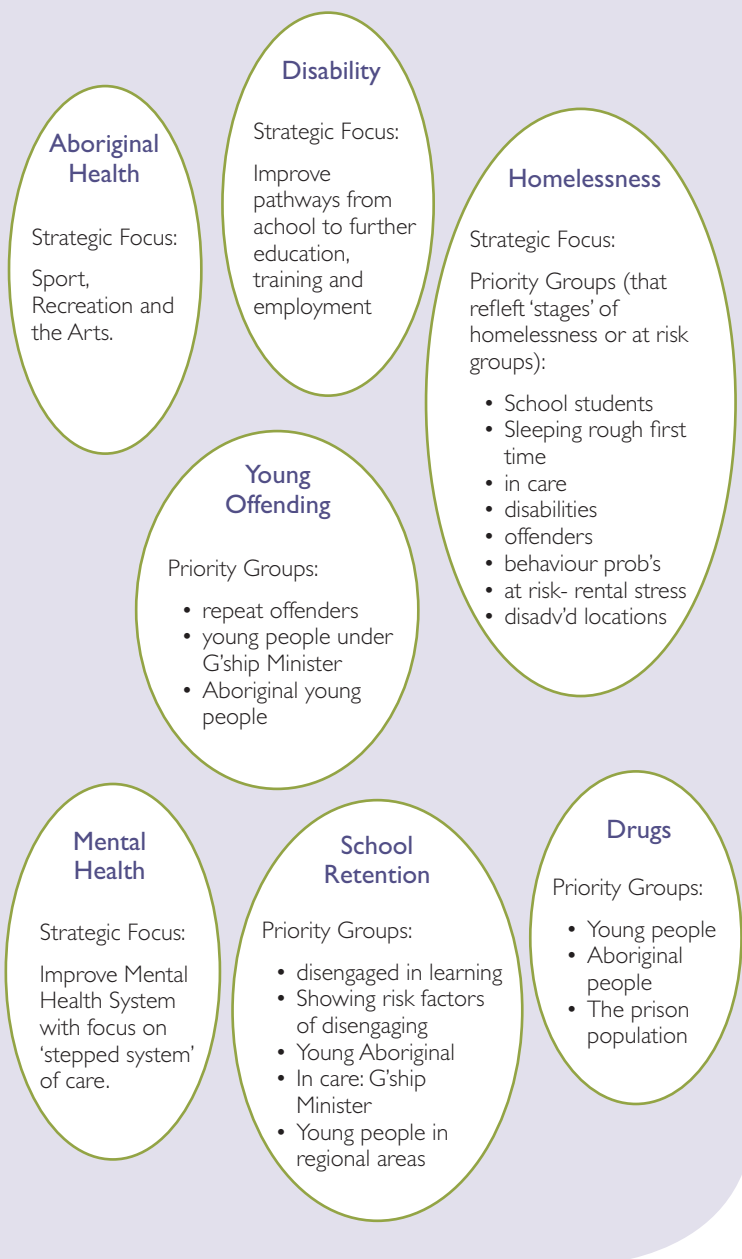
#### **South Australia: The Social Inclusion Initiative 2002-2010**

A focus on:

- Multiple and Complex Needs – Joined up work
- Breaking the Cycle of Intergenerational Disadvantage – critical transition/prevention points

Has led to the adoption of:

- Issues based target groups, or 'References', with an Action Plan for each that identify 'priority groups' or a 'strategic focus.'



Within each reference, priority groups or a strategic focus, are identified. For example, in the drugs reference, priority groups have been nominated according to their level of drug use and their economic costs to society. They include young people, Aboriginal people and the prison population. The policy focus is to tackle those barriers to social inclusion that are typically experienced by each cohort. Alternatively, the strategic focus for the disability reference is to support people with disabilities towards greater social inclusion by providing them with better opportunities for education, skills, training and employment when they leave school.

The Board and Unit develop an action plan for each reference with targets, strategies and performance measures against each. For instance, as part of work under the mental health reference, the Social Inclusion Board produced *Stepping Up: A Social Inclusion Action Plan for Mental Health Reform 2007-2012 (Stepping Up)*, providing more than 40 recommendations towards greater social inclusion for people with mental illness.

Consistent with social inclusion theory, *Stepping Up* promotes a more holistic understanding of the needs of people who engage with the mental health system.<sup>71</sup> It proposes early intervention and prevention strategies and recommends action for tackling barriers to inclusion, such as stigma and discrimination. There is also a focus on better multi-agency coordination, such as data-matching across a number of government programs with potential common clients to co-ordinate personalised care packages.

### Multiple and complex needs – Joined-up work

The South Australian approach emphasises the interconnectedness of problems, their causes and their solutions.<sup>72</sup> This is a dominant theme for the Social Inclusion Board, which champions the 'theory of change'. This is meaningful change that has an impact for the most marginalised members of the

### Issues-based target groups

All references have been identified by the Premier, who refers them as an issue or area for action to the Social Inclusion Board. Current references are Aboriginal health, disability, homelessness, mental health, school retention and young offenders. Homelessness has been identified as a prime barrier to inclusion and therefore features as one of the first three reference groups considered by the Social Inclusion Initiative (SII). Past references are drugs, international youth leadership, suicide prevention and the parks.

community can only be achieved through 'joined-up' responses that not only bring together the public sector, but also the private and not-for-profit sectors, working across organisational boundaries.<sup>73</sup>

SII explicitly acknowledges that problems like substance abuse, unemployment or homelessness are not agency specific<sup>74</sup> and issues must be addressed in an interrelated manner to achieve social inclusion.<sup>75</sup> Accordingly, a target in itself for the SII has been to encourage government to work together more effectively to address social exclusion.

Better multi-agency working is also evident in the mental health reference, whereby the Social Inclusion Board has sought to encourage inter-agency working by recommending partnerships for participation between agencies (for eg Partnership 1: Education, Employment and Training/Mental Health; and Partnership 2: General Health/Mental Health/Drug and Alcohol Services; and Partnership 5: Justice/Mental Health).<sup>76</sup>

### ***Breaking the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage – critical transition/ prevention points within each reference***

The SA initiative is committed to a highly targeted set of interventions based on detailed profiling. There is a strong focus on early intervention and prevention, including critical transition points for each reference, such as attendance at a hospital emergency department, taking up a tenancy in a boarding house, exiting prison, being at risk of eviction from public housing, and first experience of sleeping rough.<sup>77</sup> For the disability reference, the plan revolves around the key transition point of leaving school, and the pathway into more learning or employment.

## **Governance**

The South Australian plan considers that 'silo-based government has become part of the problem rather than the solution'<sup>78</sup> and attempts to facilitate joined up working within government through governance

structures and processes – including incentives, public reporting against targets and new funding structures.<sup>79</sup>

### ***Governance structure***

The South Australian initiative recognises that political authority is an essential element of the initiative, particularly to encourage the support of line agencies and to set a political expectation of better coordination between agencies.

#### ***The Premier – ultimately responsible***

The Premier has self-imposed responsibility for the success of the plan.

#### ***Inter-ministerial committees for each reference***

There are inter-ministerial committees for each reference group, tasked with oversight of the implementation of the action plans in relation to each reference.

Each inter-ministerial committee is chaired by a 'champion' or lead minister, who is allocated responsibility for the implementation and outcomes for each reference. For example, the Minister for Health is the lead minister for the drugs reference and chair of the Drugs Inter Ministerial Committee. Each lead minister reports to the Premier and the Cabinet on behalf of their committee. All ministers with relevant portfolio responsibilities – and their respective chief executives – are represented on each committee.

Through these committees, lead ministers are authorised to work across portfolios and submit multi-lateral budget bids within the normal budget process. In this sense, the ministerial committees are designed to drive the implementation of the decisions of government regarding each of the References horizontally across the public service system.

### **Social Inclusion Board**

The initiative is supported by an independent Social Inclusion Board of 10 members with broad community representation, often leaders or experts in the public, private or community sector. The role of the Board is to analyse the barriers to social inclusion and processes of social exclusion and develop innovative and collaborative solutions, and then monitor implementation.

The Board reports regularly to the Premier. The Premier has specifically authorised the Board to make recommendations to inter-ministerial committees in relation to funding priorities and to speak publicly in relation to the social exclusion agenda.<sup>80</sup> The Chair and Board are independent from government but strongly embedded in a process by linkages to the Social Inclusion Unit.

### **Social Inclusion Unit**

The Unit is located within the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC), and its role is to support the Board by undertaking research and analysis and engaging in consultation with stakeholders. It has a focus on building relationships within government and non-government agencies and the community sector. The Unit is subject to two streams of accountability - independent Chair of the Board and Chief Executive (Secretary) of DPAC. It also works with government agencies in a facilitative, advisory and coordination role. Activities also include ongoing negotiation around implementation by relevant line agencies, as well as monitoring and evaluating progress.

### **Innovation in governance**

An Audit Committee reviews and produces a progress report on the SA Plan every two years. Membership of the Audit Committee includes a non-government representative from each of SA's major boards, including the Social Inclusion Board.<sup>81</sup>

The SII plan accepts that the joined up approach to policy development and service delivery has implications for the way funding is allocated. In particular, the Board has recommended that in terms of the budget process, there is a need to move beyond the traditional bi-lateral process to a multi-agency process, including consideration of various funding models, such as pooled budgets and associated accountability mechanisms to support this evolving multi-lateral resource allocation model.<sup>82</sup> However, an evaluation of progress has found that the new funding models have been difficult to co-ordinate.<sup>83</sup>

SII is enshrined in government policy at the highest level - the SA Strategic Plan.<sup>84</sup> Chief executives, as part of their performance agreement, are also required to report against the targets for which their agency has lead responsibility in the SII plan.

### **Other features**

Another mechanism designed to attribute responsibility and incentivise joined up government is the measures for monitoring and reporting. Progress is not only measured against people-centred outcomes for each reference (eg Aboriginal people and children and young people) but also against systems-change outcomes. This includes joined up working, partnerships with community, early intervention and prevention, innovation and wise investment.

The SA initiative includes a dual-track process for faster implementation. The SII Board makes recommendations to Government while at the same time the Unit negotiates possible actions with agencies and conducts research to inform the SII Board.

### **A Rapid Appraisal of the South Australia's Social Inclusion Initiative**

In June 2007, *A Rapid Appraisal of the South Australia's Social Inclusion Initiative* was produced for the Social Exclusion Knowledge Network of the Commission

on Social Determinants of Health as a joint initiative of the SA Government, the Australian Inequities Program and Flinders University.

The report, which focuses on the first three references adopted by SA SII (homelessness, drugs and school retention), found that the action plans for each reference had led to positive change in the lives of many thousands of South Australians.<sup>85</sup> The report also makes the following observations:

- **Difficulty experienced in engaging line agencies:** It was concluded that further work needs to be undertaken to build funding incentives for joined up government and develop structures to support multilateral funding and accountability.<sup>86</sup> Although the system of accountability, as well as the strong emphasis on evaluation and reporting, seems to give the strategy traction across government agencies, there are suggestions that SA has not achieved complete agency buy-in, and that there is a risk that agencies will return to their usual siloed methods of tackling issues in a few years, or as soon as the political emphasis dissipates.<sup>87</sup>
- **Importance of a 'champion' for social inclusion to SII's success:** The Commissioner for Social Inclusion has standing and respect and good knowledge of the issues and his fearlessness in challenging the public sector and the Government in undertaking their tasks has been extremely effective in giving the strategy prominence in the community.

The SA SII Board is currently looking at developing mechanisms to ensure sustainability of social inclusion outcomes. For example, to embed social inclusion into agency plans or strategic documents and by encouraging the development of line agency budgets to continue social inclusion work.<sup>88</sup>

## 2.4 VICTORIA

### Context

*A Fairer Victoria: Creating Opportunity and Addressing Disadvantage 2005-07*, driven by the Minister for Victorian Communities, was developed as the Victorian Government's overarching social strategy to improve the lives of all Victorians. It is a long-term social policy action plan to combat disadvantage and create opportunities for all community members, including reforms to children's services and investment in social housing, mental health and disability services.

*A Fairer Victoria 2005-07* has five key objectives:

1. Ensuring that universal services provide equal opportunity for all.
2. Reducing barriers to opportunity.
3. Strengthening assistance to disadvantaged groups.
4. Providing targeted support to the highest risk areas.
5. Involving communities in decisions affecting their lives and making it easier to work with the Government.

Under these five objectives, there are 14 major strategies and 85 actions.

In addition to the new program initiatives, *A Fairer Victoria* also involves changes to service delivery, whereby services are more localised, better coordinated and relevant to community needs.

### The new plan

*Fairer Victoria: Strong People, Strong Communities 2008*



## Approach

A *Fairer Victoria 2005-07* has been superseded by A *Fairer Victoria: Strong People, Strong Communities 2008*, which directly builds on the former. The 2008 version claims that work will continue, but the focus will intensify with additional funding for programs and initiatives in four priority areas. They are:

1. **Early Years** – support for children and families most at risk.
2. **Improving education and helping people into work** – Reducing educational inequality, supporting young people at risk and reducing barriers to workforce participation.
3. **Improving health and wellbeing** – Reducing health inequalities and promoting wellbeing.
4. **Developing living communities** – strengthening neighbourhoods and local communities.

In line with social inclusion theory, the plan is based on principles of early intervention and prevention and a focus on people and places with high needs. It emphasises the need for multi-agency effort to help ‘tackle the complex problems that cut across the traditional responsibilities of Ministers and agencies.’<sup>89</sup>

In some instances, the Victorian approach directly responds to the process or causes of social exclusion. For example, it acknowledges the evidence that family violence is a major driver of homelessness. As such, the Government’s family violence strategy is presented as a program designed to reduce homelessness.<sup>90</sup>

### Target groups

A *Fairer Victoria 2008* emphasises a focus on a lifecycle approach but unlike the age cohorts adopted by the UK and Ireland, the Victorian plan aligns issues with government portfolios – early years, skills, education and employment, and health.

## Breaking the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage

Consistent with social inclusion theory, the Victorian plan claims that a central aim is to break cycles of disadvantage, especially by exploiting opportunities to positively affect life outcomes at critical transition points: in the transition from early years of life to school, the transition from school to work, the movement from joblessness to employment, and recovery from ill health.<sup>91</sup>

Victoria places a strong focus on early intervention and prevention, for example through early years and targeted early intervention programs to reduce chronic disease.<sup>92</sup>

## Breaking the cycle of locational disadvantage

The Victorian plan uses place-based initiatives to bring community, government and business together to identify and address issues in particular local areas. The plan acknowledges areas where there are long-standing patterns of disadvantage, including poorer infrastructure as well as more people experiencing multiple and compounding problems.<sup>93</sup> The plan responds to the evidence that investment in community strengthening can help stop a cycle of disadvantage experienced in low socio-economic communities.<sup>94</sup> Two Victorian programs provide some compelling evidence – *Neighbourhood Renewal* and *Community Renewal*.

These place-based initiatives are concerned with building social cohesion in places where there are high rates of social exclusion, to ensure that people are not disadvantaged because of where they live. The programs recognise that homelessness is one of the most severe manifestations of disadvantage. In this sense, similar to South Australia, Victoria recognises homelessness as a prime barrier to greater inclusion that necessitates priority Government action.

**Neighbourhood Renewal** is an initiative run by the Victorian Office of Housing. It represents a new approach in bringing together resources, stakeholders and service delivery. More than 20 Neighbourhood Renewal projects have been progressively launched around Victoria since 2001. Each place is assigned a local neighbourhood team that works in accordance with an action plans with six key objectives :

- increased community pride and participation
- improved employment, learning and local economic activity
- enhanced housing and environment
- reduced crime and greater safety
- better health and wellbeing and
- increased access to services and improved government responsiveness.

The Victorian Government notes that more than 5 000 jobs and training opportunities have been created in Neighbourhood Renewal areas and property crimes and crimes against persons are down 70 per cent and 50 per cent respectively. In 2005, 23 per cent of residents in 15 areas affirmed stronger community pride since the life of the initiative.

As part of a Fairer Victoria 2008, the Neighbourhood Renewal program will receive additional funding for the development of a community hub in a disadvantaged area. Engaging all three levels of government, the hub will provide a place for the community to come together and socialise as well as deliver vital services, including the delivery of education programs, drug, alcohol and counselling services, aged and disability services, clinical services, child and maternal health services, tenancy services, local government and aged care services.

## The Social Inclusion Plan Proposed by the Ministerial Advisory Committee for Victorian Communities

In 2007, the Ministerial Advisory Committee for Victorian Communities (the Committee) produced a paper entitled *Social Inclusion: the Next Step for a Fairer Victoria*. The paper recommended that the Victorian Government adopt an action plan tightly focussed around social inclusion theory.

Although the Victorian Government has not agreed to this proposal, it has undertaken to assess how the concept of social inclusion can inform the Victorian Government's social policy (and there is evidence of this in the 2008 plan). Irrespective of the Government's decision not to adopt the strategy, the recommendations provide ideas as to how to translate social inclusion theories into practice.

### Approach

*Social Inclusion: the Next Step for a Fairer Victoria* directly correlates with the concept of social inclusion. It proposes to build on existing Victorian programs across all sectors and agencies that have been successful in reaching people experiencing social exclusion. It also proposes to develop specific plans, detailing both action and investment, for target groups that are at risk of, or experiencing, social exclusion.

### Key considerations and target groups

#### Victoria (proposed): *Social Inclusion: the Next Step for a Fairer Victoria*

A focus on:

- Multiple and Complex Needs – Joined Up work
- Breaking the Cycle of Locational Disadvantage

Has led to the adoption of:

- Issues-based and placed-based Target Groups with a 'Social Inclusion and Investment Plan' for each



*Social Inclusion: the Next Step for a Fairer Victoria* has two key emphases – addressing the multiple needs of an individual and addressing the needs of a disadvantaged area. Accordingly, target groups are identified on the basis of either place (geographic area) or particular issues that are indicative of social exclusion (or groups that are considered socially excluded).

Target groups are early school leavers, people with disabilities, refugees, young offenders, homeless people and women with children on low incomes. Indigenous people, people experiencing mental health issues, sole parent families on low incomes, and mature workers are also identified by the Committee as potential target groups.

### **Multiple and complex needs – Joined Up Work**

The Committee proposes that target groups are subject to specific social inclusion and investment (SII) plans that address the multiple and complex needs of the individual, or the barriers faced by a particular disadvantaged area. The plans would be

agreed to by government in partnership with local governments, communities, and the non-government and private sectors.

The SII plans would<sup>95</sup>:

- determine the inclusion gap for each group including mapping current investment and initiatives
- determine the partnerships required to develop the social inclusion and investment plan, including a lead department and other key departments and sectors
- identify and act on the systemic issues, or processes of exclusion, that require reform such as racism, access and affordability
- remove any structural, bureaucratic and red-tape barriers to progress
- ensure that the identification of needs and solutions are based on a collaborative approach between government, local communities and all other sectors.

The Plans would describe<sup>96</sup>:

- agreed outcomes, objectives, indicators and floor targets
- agreed actions, investments, accountability, monitoring and evaluation to increase social and economic inclusion.

### **Breaking the cycle of locational disadvantage**

In relation to locational disadvantage, priority groups are identified as those areas demonstrated to experience the greatest locational disadvantage in *Dropping off the Edge*. The Committee recommends that the place-based work of projects such as *Neighbourhood Renewal* is picked up and expanded, with a separate plan for each target community, responding to its unique challenges. Again, the focus is on the importance of social cohesion and the need to address the interplay of various factors that

lead to social exclusion for different communities. In this vein, the Committee stresses the importance of the public sector culture becoming more flexible.<sup>97</sup>

The SII plans would<sup>98</sup>:

- map current investment, initiatives and audit community infrastructure to determine the 'inclusion gap'
- allow for collaborative planning and investment by federal, state and local governments in partnerships with communities
- mandate a whole-of-government commitment to work with and invest in priority places, co-ordinate between agencies, and negotiate whole-of-government agreements
- establish place-based projects teams to implement action plans
- build in sustainability by enabling each priority area to maintain community ownership and to continue community regeneration after the initial program is completed.

## Governance

The Committee recommends the appointment of a Victorian Minister for Social Inclusion and the establishment of a Cabinet sub-committee including the Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Social Inclusion and key portfolio ministers to oversee the development of policy, allocate investment and monitor outcomes.

The Minister for Social Inclusion would be supported by a Social Inclusion Policy Unit located in the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The Unit would be tasked to generate policies for the target groups, commission research and authorised to develop, monitor and report publicly through the Premier or appropriate ministers on key social inclusion outcomes and indicators that measure progress.

Consistent with social inclusion reform, the Committee proposes measures to achieve better government coordination. It advances the idea of whole-of-government agreements across agency portfolios that link to the SII plans.

The focus on a social inclusion and investment plan for each target group is stressed by the Committee, which considers that ensuring that appropriate funding is committed up-front is key to the success of a social inclusion strategy. In this way, there is great emphasis placed on engaging Victorian Treasury in the development and implementation of the strategy from the outset. The Treasurer and Treasury Department are presented as potential collaborative partners to ensure SII plans are adequately funded and that sustainability is assured.

Funding would be sourced through a new Victorian Social Inclusion and Investment Fund, sponsored by the State and Federal Governments and attracting investment from the community, non-government, philanthropic and business sectors. SII plans would be financed, or partly financed, through this fund.<sup>99</sup>

## Other features

The Committee recommends the development of floor targets as a mechanism to close the gap in addition to the development of aspirational targets. A floor target is a minimum standard of attainment used to measure and address areas where there is a considerable gap in performance.<sup>100</sup> By making government accountable for maintaining a minimum standard rather than an average, floor targets help reduce the gap between the most socially excluded and the rest of society.<sup>101</sup> They also help show policy makers where the priorities should be at the local level.<sup>102</sup>

Similar to SA, the Committee emphasises the need for a mandate from the top, with the political will of the Premier being essential to driving a joined-up approach horizontally across government.

The proposed strategy is also focused on exploring levers to engage other sectors of the community. For example, the development, with the Federal Government, of a new tax credit incentive scheme for businesses and philanthropists to co-invest in the priorities identified in the social inclusion plan.

The Committee also proposes that the social inclusion framework include mechanisms (through action research programs) to make explicit the return on investment in social inclusion in order to encourage further effort.

## 2.5 AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SOCIAL INCLUSION AGENDA<sup>103</sup>

### Approach

In the lead up to the 2007 Federal election, the Labor Party announced its social inclusion agenda. The policy document stated that: "To be socially included, all Australians must be given the opportunity to:

- secure a job
- access services
- connect with family, friends, work, personal interests and local community
- deal with personal crisis
- have their voices heard."<sup>104</sup>

Following the election, the Government has identified the following early priorities for social inclusion in Australia:

- addressing the incidence and needs of jobless families with children
- delivering effective support to children at greatest risk of long-term disadvantage
- focusing on particular locations, neighbourhoods and communities to ensure programs and services are getting to the right places
- addressing the incidence of homelessness
- employment for people living with a disability or mental illness
- closing the gap for Indigenous Australians.<sup>105</sup>

Work on homelessness and closing the gap for indigenous Australians is being led by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, while the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations is leading work on employment for people with a disability or mental illness. Work on issues for children at risk, jobless families and locational disadvantage is being coordinated with the Social Inclusion Unit in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

A recent paper prepared for the Social Inclusion Unit by the Australian Institute of Family Studies provides a good overview of the definitions, history and approaches to social inclusion as well as information regarding some of the aspects of social exclusion highlighted above including locational disadvantage, jobless families, intergenerational disadvantage, children at risk, child poverty, employment of people with a disability and homelessness.<sup>106</sup>

### Governance

Since the election, the Government has established a Social Inclusion Committee of Cabinet, a Social Inclusion Unit in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the Australian Social Inclusion Board. The Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. Julia Gillard MP, is the Minister for Social Inclusion, and Senator the Hon. Ursula Stephens serves as the Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Prime Minister for Social Inclusion and Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector.

The Social Inclusion Unit performs a strategic policy advisory and coordination function across government and reports to the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister, as well as providing secretariat support to the Australian Social Inclusion Board.<sup>107</sup>

The Social Inclusion Board was established in May 2008 and serves as the Government's main advisory body on social inclusion issues. The Board has 14 members drawn from the public, private and not-

for-profit sectors and has met three times since its establishment (in May, July and September 2008). The Board's terms of reference state that it will "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."<sup>108</sup> The Board will report annually on progress on social inclusion to the Minister for Social Inclusion.

The Government has also begun consultation with the not-for-profit sector on establishing a national compact to guide the relationship between government and the sector into the future. This is in recognition of the strong role the not-for-profit sector plays in social inclusion activities such as policy development, service delivery and advocacy on behalf of socially excluded groups. The national compact could include, amongst other things: a statement of mutual roles and responsibilities; plans for sector sustainability; frameworks for dialogue and policy development; and regulatory reform. The consultation period for the compact closed on 24 September 2008.

### A social inclusion strategy for Tasmania

What guiding principles do you think a social inclusion strategy for Tasmania should adopt?

Considering the approaches adopted by other jurisdictions, how should a social inclusion strategy be developed for Tasmania?

What should be the priority areas for a strategy and which individuals, groups or issues need to be addressed first?

In developing a strategy, do you consider the following approaches to be applicable in the Tasmanian context:

- a cohort approach
- a lifecycle approach
- an issues-based approach
- a critical transition points approach
- a locational or place-based approach

Do you consider that there are any other approaches that may be suitable for application in Tasmania?

### Conclusion

Social inclusion refers to effective participation by an individual in all aspects of society, both social and economic. It relates to an individual's ability to consume, produce, politically engage and socially interact. At its optimum, social inclusion is about having the personal capacity, self confidence and individual resilience to make the most of the opportunities, choices and options in life.<sup>109</sup>

Developing a social inclusion strategy demands an understanding of the processes of social exclusion and looks at those institutions and along the life path of individuals that implicitly reinforce an outcome of social exclusion.<sup>110</sup> The challenge for a social inclusion strategy is to remove the barriers that



prevent an individual from participating socially and economically in society. These may be social, economic, financial, amenity-based, informational, digital or embedded. In attempting to meet this challenge, strategies often respond to the interaction between barriers, and acknowledge that combating some barriers cannot be contemplated without first overcoming prime barriers.

Social inclusion theory is gaining greater acceptance because it more readily acknowledges the social nature of the human condition. It acknowledges the relationship between the individual and society and the synergistic way in which self-valuing is rewarded by societal support and then, societal support leads to improved self-valuing. It promotes individual, and indeed community, ownership of circumstances, by attributing rights and responsibilities and recognising the link between contributing to society, self-value and positive social engagement.

This paper provides an overview of social inclusion strategies in other jurisdictions by focusing on their policy response to two broad modes of social exclusion. The first is the way in which social inclusion agendas typically recognise that socially excluded people have multiple and complex needs that require a multi-policy response. Accordingly, there is a call for innovative ways for government agencies, levels of government and different sectors to work together.

The second is the way in which social inclusion strategies respond to research showing the reality of intergenerational and locational disadvantage. Socio-economic factors often determine life outcomes, and disadvantage is often concentrated in geographical areas. As such, strategies look at ways in which cycles of disadvantage can be broken through intervention points both in time (early intervention and prevention methods; critical transition points) and place (locality specific measures).

The strategies featured in this paper, and their social inclusion emphases, can be summarised as follows:

#### **Ireland:**

- A lifecycle and place-based approach with a focus on employment, education, training and income support to facilitate greater social inclusion.
- More akin to an anti-poverty strategy.

#### **United Kingdom:**

- A lifecycle approach, focused on breaking cycles of intergenerational disadvantage through early intervention and prevention.
- Multi-agency service delivery prioritised. Investment in a number of pilot programs to look at ways to improve the connections between services.

#### **South Australia:**

- Target groups (references) with action plans setting out targets, strategies and progress measures.
- A focus on improving multi-agency work across government and ensuring accountability and agency buy-in through governance structures that invoke all stakeholders from the top down (from the Premier to those in front-line service delivery).

#### **Victoria (proposed):**

- Issues-based and place-based target groups with a social inclusion and investment plan for each.
- Focus on mobilising government action to address the multiple needs of each target group and the importance of a holistic response.
- Strong focus on locational disadvantage and delivering programs designed to strengthen social cohesion.

## Australian Government:

- Combination of issue-based (homelessness) and target group-based approaches (children at risk, indigenous, people with a disability), along with a focus on place-based disadvantage.
- Responses are being led by particular Australian Government agencies with central coordination by the Social Inclusion Unit in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

## A SOCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY FOR TASMANIA

### WORK ALREADY UNDERWAY

The Tasmanian Government is committed to the development of a Tasmanian social inclusion agenda and has established a Social Inclusion Unit in the Department of Premier and Cabinet to progress this work.

### The Social Inclusion Unit

The Unit's role is to undertake research, analyse data, facilitate cross-agency and cross-sectoral cooperation, and lead community engagement and consultation to develop evidence-based policy and create whole-of-community responses to social inclusion.

The Unit's initial work program is to commence work on two references identified by the Government: homelessness and literacy and numeracy and develop a whole-of-community social inclusion strategy for Tasmania in consultation with the community sector. This consultation paper is an important beginning for the development of the strategy.

## Homelessness

The Tasmanian Government recognises that homelessness is a prime barrier to inclusion and that homeless Tasmanians experience a challenging combination of barriers to inclusion. The Government engaged international homelessness authority, Rosanne Haggerty, to provide advice on a homelessness plan for Tasmania.

In line with recommendations contained in Rosanne Haggerty's report to Government, *Ending homelessness in Tasmania*, the Social Inclusion Unit is working closely with relevant government agencies and community sector organisations to develop a comprehensive homelessness plan for Tasmania. The Government has established a benchmark figure for primary homelessness ('rough sleeping') of 376 people<sup>111</sup>, and is committed to halving that figure by the end of 2010. The homelessness plan will address all the categories of homelessness - primary, secondary and tertiary - in Tasmania.

## Literacy and numeracy

The Tasmanian Government recognises that lack of literacy and numeracy skills is a prime barrier to social inclusion. Literacy and numeracy skills are the foundation of all learning and are strongly correlated with educational outcomes, school retention rates and successful transitions from school into further education or work.

The Tasmanian Government is working with literacy and numeracy experts to develop a comprehensive literacy and numeracy action plan. The plan adopts a lifecycle approach to ensure that all Tasmanians have the skills in literacy and numeracy to participate effectively in society and employment and make clear the connection between adult literacy and numeracy outcomes and ability to participate in their child's learning as a parent or carer.

## Tasmanian Social Inclusion Commissioner

The Tasmanian Government has announced its intention to appoint a Social Inclusion Commissioner for Tasmania. The Commissioner will be supported by the Social Inclusion Unit but will be independent of the Government. The Commissioner will be a champion for disadvantaged Tasmanians and communities and will lead the Tasmanian Government's social inclusion agenda.

## The way forward

Although there is work underway to respond to the immediate needs of socially excluded Tasmanians against key issue areas and developing the evidence base for a strategy, the form of a Tasmanian social inclusion strategy is yet to be decided. The Tasmanian Government is committed to developing a strategy that responds to Tasmania's unique context as the nation's most decentralised population with rural and regional communities. The Government acknowledges the diverse needs of socially excluded Tasmanians and makes effective links between Tasmanian services, structures and sectors to promote social inclusion in Tasmania. The Social Inclusion Unit intends to perform substantial data research and analysis in order to map the nature and depth of social exclusion in Tasmania and has already commenced work on an analysis of locational or place-based disadvantage in Tasmania. The Unit also intends to undertake further analysis to map community assets and service accessibility. The Tasmanian Government recognises that the development of an effective strategy must also be informed by extensive consultation with the Tasmanian community and across Tasmanian sectors, not only in terms of the nature of social exclusion in Tasmania, but also what can be done about it and how positive and practical solutions can be achieved.

## END NOTES

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  44. It should be noted that this paper covers strategies in a number of jurisdictions that are at different stages of implementation. The sources relied on to provide this overview have varied in both their level of detail and status. It has not been possible to draw on an independent evaluation of strategies for each jurisdiction, which has prevented this Paper from being able to provide more compelling comparisons in relation to the success or otherwise of the strategies.
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