



# media release

21 July 2015

## URGENT ACTION NEEDED TO ADDRESS ENTRENCHED DISADVANTAGE

**CatholicCare Melbourne urges a new approach to address entrenched disadvantage following the launch of the “*Dropping off the edge 2015*” report; a study jointly sponsored by Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA). The report’s key findings confirm that disadvantage is concentrated in a small number of communities where issues such as unemployment, low income, domestic violence, insecure housing and mental illness become entrenched over the long term.**

CatholicCare, a member agency of CSSA, has been working for several years with some of the Victorian communities identified in the report as the most disadvantaged, including: Corio, Doveton, Dandenong, Moe and Morwell.

“It is terribly disappointing to hear that the ranking of many of these communities has not improved since similar studies were first conducted in 1999,” said Fr Joe Caddy, CEO of CatholicCare.

“The findings of the report confirm what we have observed while working with families in these communities; their needs are complex and solutions are neither quick nor easy.”

“We have found that the best outcomes have been achieved when we have worked in close partnership with local government and the community and business sectors.”

Examples of CatholicCare’s community development approach include:

- Youth Refugee Settle Well program (North Geelong) – combining therapeutic counselling with education and employment support to achieve better employment pathways; this program is run in close partnership with North Geelong Secondary College
- Pathways to Employment (Dandenong) – intensive support and advocacy which has recently resulted in the successful placement of eight newly-arrived refugees at the Cabrini Linen Service
- Justice Education program (Dandenong) – early intervention for newly arrived refugees, in partnership with Magistrates Court, Victoria Police and others.

“CatholicCare is committed to supporting the most disadvantaged people in our communities; we’re here for the long haul,” said Fr Caddy.

“One of our greatest challenges is that funding is inadequate and often short-term. Effective solutions can only be achieved with sustained approaches and long-term partnerships.”

“Only then will we see enduring positive change for these communities and a better future for the people that live in them.”

**Media enquiries:** Bernadette Garcia | 0409 708 823 | [Bernadette.Garcia@ccam.org.au](mailto:Bernadette.Garcia@ccam.org.au)

**For more information about the report:** [www.dote.org.au](http://www.dote.org.au)

*CatholicCare are experts in family-focused care and provide a range of counselling, education, community and pastoral services. We support people regardless of their religious belief or background. [www.ccam.org.au](http://www.ccam.org.au)*