

PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Living on the Edge

Inquiry into Intergenerational Welfare Dependence

House of Representatives Select Committee on Intergenerational Welfare
Dependence

February 2019
CANBERRA

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Chair's Foreword

Australia has experienced a long period of economic growth, and most Australians enjoy high standards of living and opportunities to participate and progress in employment. The Australian Government helps people in need through welfare, training and employment programs.

We know that people mostly get back on their feet quickly– finding a job and resuming life ‘as normal’. But for some, the need for welfare ends up being long-term, and the impact on their wellbeing can be dire. ‘Entrenched disadvantage’ can result, affecting individuals, their children and the community.

This report outlines evidence the Committee received on entrenched disadvantage in Australia, including the risk factors, and people at greatest risk of experiencing entrenched disadvantage.

The Committee heard that causes of entrenched disadvantage are complex, and there are no universal explanations for why some people experience entrenched disadvantage while others avoid it. This inquiry focused on identifying the factors that contribute to or increase the risk of intergenerational welfare dependence. Known risk factors relate to location, education attainment, availability of jobs, health and welfare, and Indigenous or single parent status.

There were inspiring examples of innovation in welfare programs shared with the Committee, such as the Logan Together initiative in Queensland, and the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) run by the Brotherhood of St Laurence. These programs demonstrate the benefits of place-based, tailored, coordinated services that help people by supporting them at critical or key life stages. They provided transferrable learnings that can help other families and communities in overcoming disadvantage.

Agencies that fund and deliver welfare programs showed their commitment to continual improvement, working to improve outcomes for welfare recipients and

to reduce future welfare spending requirements. The task is complex, and decisions taken are not straightforward. It is clear that future success will involve greater coordination amongst stakeholders, and a shift towards flexible funding arrangements for welfare programs.

I believe this report is a stepping stone in the right direction, to improve support for Australians experiencing hardship, especially the estimated 700 000 Australians considered to be living on the edge. Supporting them into better circumstances will strengthen Australia. Targeted assistance for families receiving long-term welfare support must address individual needs and local challenges. A true turn-around in circumstances will depend on the government of the day prioritising change and committing to reviewing, evolving and improving programs that address entrenched disadvantage.

On behalf of the Committee, I would particularly like to acknowledge and thank inquiry participants and their representatives for their willingness to share difficult personal experiences of entrenched disadvantage. It became clear during the inquiry that Australian communities have people that are really doing it tough, particularly people in remote and regional areas of Australia and in many instances, single mothers and their children.

I would also like to thank all Committee members for their collegiate and bipartisan approach to the inquiry. Committee members brought to the table a diverse range of opinions and experience in relation to welfare, and were collaborative in their approach throughout this inquiry.

Mr Russell Broadbent MP

Terms of Reference

To inquire into and report on matters relating to welfare dependence of families and outcomes for children, and in conducting the inquiry, the committee:

examine the reasons for welfare dependence, with particular focus on why some families require welfare assistance for short periods only and why others become 'trapped' in the system;

consider:

the factors preventing parents from gaining employment;

the impact of intergenerational unemployment on children;

the important role of parents as 'first teachers';

a multi-generational approach which assists parents and their children together;

the impact, if any, of welfare in creating disadvantage; and

the impact of economic development in different locations and geography;

recommend options for:

breaking cycles of disadvantage;

measuring the effectiveness of evidence-based interventions;

the improvement of the financial capacity and security of families;

and

better coordinating services between tiers of government to support families; and

consider any other related matter.

List of Recommendations

Recommendation 1

- 3.76 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government continue to prioritise funding for place-based and wrap-around services that can demonstrate evidence of successful programs for people living with entrenched disadvantage.

Recommendation 2

- 4.64 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government immediately work through COAG to implement the agreed COAG recommendation from 2009 that all educational data sets including school attendance records should be shared between all states and territories.

Recommendation 3

- 4.95 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government works with state and territory governments to ensure immediate increases in funding for emergency relief housing and ongoing low cost housing throughout Australia.

Recommendation 4

- 5.21 The Committee recommends that funding arrangements for welfare-related programs are reviewed, with a view to avoiding short-term funding cycles. Three to five year agreements, with annual extensions subject to meeting agreed performance measures, would assist with funding certainty, while ensuring progress and satisfactory outcomes are achieved.

Recommendation 5

- 5.22 The Committee recommends that funding agencies work with service providers to ensure accountability for expenditure of public funding in a way that allows programs to be flexible and responsive to local conditions.

Recommendation 6

- 5.59 The Committee recommends the continuation of comprehensive longitudinal data collection by state, territory and Australian Governments, to enable informed decision making on the Priority Investment Approach.

Recommendation 7

- 5.60 Success of the Priority Investment Approach should be measured not just by reductions in welfare expenditure, but also by improved outcomes for welfare recipients.

Recommendation 8

- 5.61 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government continue to streamline data sharing protocols and arrangements with states and territories.

Recommendation 9

- 5.62 The Committee recommends that funding agreements with social service providers build in meaningful requirements for program evaluations or progress reports, and avoid imposing evaluation requirements that result in 'proxy' measures being reported to meet administrative timeframes.

Recommendation 10

- 5.80 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government improve its coordination with state and local programs, to ensure expenditure achieves the best possible outcomes, and avoids duplication.

Recommendation 11

- 5.94 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government supports programs that build local leadership capacity, and incorporate local input in identifying and implementing solutions to entrenched disadvantage.

Recommendation 12

- 5.95 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government adopt a set of principles similar to those suggested by Logan Together for addressing entrenched poverty, disadvantage and welfare dependency.

Recommendation 13

- 5.108 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government provides strategic leadership of welfare programs, based on national priorities and knowledge of best practice approaches.

Recommendation 14

- 5.109 The Committee recommends the Australian Government review the effects of government policy, including the adequacy of payments, on young people and single parent families in the 46th Parliament.

Recommendation 15

- 5.110 The Australian Government consider changing the point at which single parents move to Newstart Allowance; from when their youngest child turns eight to when their youngest child turns twelve. This should be in conjunction with continued efforts to increase the participation of parents in the workforce.

Recommendation 16

- 5.111 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government encourage employers to investigate opportunities associated with social investment organisations; including encouraging employers to make operational changes that would facilitate opportunities for single parents to enter the workforce, such as part-time or job-sharing arrangements.

Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|---|
| AASW | Australian Association of Social Workers |
| AEDC | Australian Early Development Consensus |
| AIFS | Australian Institute of Family Studies |
| AIHW | Australian Institute of Health and Welfare |
| AMSANT | Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory |
| ANU | Australian National University |
| APS | Australian Psychological Society |
| BNLA | Building a New Life in Australia |
| CALD | Culturally and Linguistically Diverse |
| COAG | Council of Australian Governments |
| CSSA | Catholic Social Services Australia |
| DIPA | Data Integration Partnership for Australia |
| DJSB | Department of Jobs and Small Business |
| DSS | Department of Social Services |
| GCYP | Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People (SA) |
| HILDA | Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia |
| HIPPY | Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters |
| LCC | Life Course Centre |
| LSAC | Longitudinal Study of Australian Children |
| LSAY | Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth |

| | |
|--------|--|
| LSIC | Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children |
| NAPLAN | National Assessment Planning Literacy and Numeracy |
| NCSMC | National Council of Single Mothers and their Children |
| NEIS | New Enterprise Incentive Scheme |
| NRHA | National Rural Health Alliance |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PHAA | Public Health Association of Australia |
| PPP | Positive Parenting Program |
| SVA | Social Ventures Australia |
| TTL | Try Test and Learn Fund |
| VAADA | Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association |

Members

Chair

Mr Russell Broadbent MP

McMillan, VIC

Deputy Chair

Mr Pat Conroy (Deputy Chair 30/05/18 – 10/09/18)

Shortland, NSW

Ms Ged Kearney MP (from 12/09/18)

Batman, VIC

Members

Hon Kevin Andrews MP

Menzies, VIC

Hon Sharon Bird MP

Cunningham, NSW

Mr Ben Morton MP

Tangney, WA

Mr Rowan Ramsey MP

Grey, SA

Ms Rebekha Sharkie MP

Mayo, SA

Mr Bert van Manen MP

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Executive summary

This report focuses on entrenched disadvantage in Australia. It identifies groups at higher risk of experiencing entrenched disadvantage, and the factors that contribute to families and their children receiving welfare support.

The Committee understands that many complex factors contribute to entrenched disadvantage. This report does not examine all the factors in detail, but draws on the evidence received by the Committee to identify the factors most likely to contribute to people receiving welfare support from one generation to the next.

The Committee recognises the resilience shown by many Australians experiencing entrenched disadvantage and acknowledges that many welfare recipients are doing an excellent job under difficult circumstances.

Research demonstrates a correlation between parents receiving welfare payments for significant periods of time and their children also receiving payments. However the Committee considers that there is no single explanation, factor, or mechanism that links the outcomes of one generation to that of the next.

Entrenched disadvantage and the programs that address it are complex and multi-faceted. The Committee identified the following factors that increase the risk of entrenched disadvantage:

- geographic location (accessibility / remoteness);
- educational attainment;
- Indigenous and single parent status;
- suitability of available employment;
- health and family welfare; and
- availability of appropriate support systems.

The report sets out two over-arching principles the Committee considers are essential to deliver successful programs. These are:

- place-based programs; and
- wrap-around services.

A place-based approach reflects an understanding of the community, and local circumstances. Targeted, wrap-around support services are also essential, especially in engaging children and families where barriers to education and employment are complex.

The report highlights the importance of transition phases that occur in each person's life. This is referred to as the life course approach. The report discusses the need to provide targeted and early intervention to support people through life changes in order to prevent entrenched disadvantage.

This report considers early intervention welfare programs should target the following phases of life:

- pre-natal and parenthood;
- education transitions including preschool, primary, secondary through to year 12, TAFE and Tertiary; and
- employment.

The report comments on the merits of the Priority Investment Approach. The Priority Investment Approach to welfare uses data analysis to identify groups at particular risk of long-term welfare dependence. The report highlights how the Department of Social Services is implementing this approach.

This report emphasises the importance of housing, healthcare and financial literacy. It is the Committee's view that although there are many potential target areas for welfare assistance, focusing on these areas will have a multiplying effect in preventing and addressing entrenched disadvantage.

The Committee considers there are several steps that can be taken to implement effective welfare programs. These are:

- long-term flexible funding;
- improved data and evaluation;
- coordinated funding;
- building community capacity; and
- strategic government leadership.

The report makes sixteen recommendations in total which are listed at the front of the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Select Committee on Intergenerational Welfare Dependence was appointed on 24 May 2018 to inquire and report on matters relating to welfare dependence of families and outcomes for children.
- 1.2 Australia's expenditure on welfare working age payments is approximately just over one-fifth of the Australian Government's budget. This includes support for families and children, people with disability, carers, communities and vulnerable people, migrants and refugees. It also includes programs, services, benefits and payments to support Australians to find suitable employment.
- 1.3 The welfare system is intended to provide a safety net to support people who need assistance, for example income support while people look for work or to study for new employment opportunities.
- 1.4 There are however, places and groups of people who have a disproportionate need for welfare support, including successive generations of individual families. Entrenched disadvantage is accompanied by significantly worse health and wellbeing.
- 1.5 In order to improve the wellbeing, independence and workforce participation of Australians, new evidence-based programs are being trialled and evaluated. Reducing entrenched disadvantage will also decrease the economic cost of welfare programs.

Scope of the inquiry

- 1.6 In the early stages of this inquiry, the Committee recognised that time limitations would not allow for a comprehensive inquiry into all relevant matters, which include welfare assistance, disadvantage and social mobility.

- 1.7 The Committee published a Discussion Paper in August 2018, highlighting issues that it would consider as part of the inquiry, and invited submissions on these topics.
- 1.8 The topics included 'scale, scope and definitions' in terms of welfare and capacity to work, dependence, data, scale and families. Possible causes of intergenerational welfare dependence were raised, and potential approaches to addressing the issue.
- 1.9 The Committee agreed to consider a range of issues including the potential impact of the current design of Commonwealth assistance programs and local factors that might contribute to intergenerational welfare dependence, with a focus on identifying evidence-based interventions that have been effective in breaking cycles of disadvantage.
- 1.10 Following the Discussion Paper's publication, the inquiry was advertised by media release on 20 August 2018, and submissions were invited from a range of stakeholders.

Inquiry conduct

- 1.11 The Committee received 41 submissions which are listed in Appendix A.
- 1.12 During the course of this inquiry, the Committee held eight public hearings. A list of public hearings, witnesses and organisations is at Appendix B.

This report

- 1.13 Chapter 2 addresses the complex causes of disadvantage, geographically focused intergenerational welfare dependence and particular risk groups. Chapter 2 also describes impacts of the welfare system on individuals and families, and on welfare service providers.
- 1.14 Chapter 3 examines the principles for successfully addressing intergenerational welfare dependence, elements of successful programs, and case studies where successful outcomes have been demonstrated.
- 1.15 Chapter 4 looks at the critical time periods for programs for addressing entrenched disadvantage, particularly early intervention at important transition periods throughout a person's life. Chapter 4 also discusses critical focus areas such as housing, healthcare and financial literacy.
- 1.16 Chapter 5 describes the steps towards successfully implementing welfare programs that use the principles discussed in Chapter 3. Chapter 5 discusses possible improvements in funding arrangements, the role of data in

informed decision making, coordination of funding and programs, community capacity building and strategic government leadership.

2. Entrenched disadvantage

- 2.1 This chapter describes entrenched disadvantage in Australia, including some groups at higher risk of entrenched disadvantage, and factors that contribute to intergenerational welfare receipt.
- 2.2 It is important to understand the extent and complexity of intergenerational welfare dependence, and the current policy responses across government, as a first step to forming a strategic response.
- 2.3 The inquiry's Terms of Reference use the terminology 'Intergenerational Welfare Dependence'. The Committee acknowledges that this terminology is not supported by many in the welfare sector. The Committee recognises that many factors contribute to a need for welfare assistance, and that 'dependence' carries an implication of individual fault. Throughout this report, the more neutral term 'entrenched disadvantage' is used.
- 2.4 The Committee heard that there are many complex factors that contribute to entrenched disadvantage. This report does not examine all the factors in detail, but draws on the evidence given to the Committee to highlight the most important elements. This includes groups that are more at risk of entrenched disadvantage, and factors that may contribute to people receiving welfare support from one generation to the next.

What is entrenched disadvantage?

- 2.5 The Productivity Commission has found around three per cent of Australians (around 700 000 people) experience persistent and recurrent poverty. These households do not experience mobility across the income

distribution and instead remain in the bottom deciles. This 'stickiness' is indicative of entrenched inequality.¹

2.6 The Department of Social Services (DSS) described:

... a segment of the population where disadvantage is entrenched and multigenerational, and manifests itself across a range of activities and areas of policy ...

2.7 DSS also commented that:

The Australian social security system serves the vast majority of people well. It is not to criticise that to say that in certain locations and in certain circumstances it doesn't necessarily service well.²

2.8 This is not an issue unique to Australia. The Australian Institute of Family Studies states 'like much of the OECD, Australia continues to have a small proportion of people who experience persistent disadvantage according to a number of social and economic measures.'³

2.9 Research from the Life Course Centre 'suggests that the playing field is not level for all families and children. Disparities in young people's outcomes are not simply the result of their or their parents' differential efforts. Unequal opportunities also play a critical role.'⁴

2.10 By itself, receiving welfare does not indicate entrenched disadvantage. Some families require support from the welfare system intermittently, or in response to one-off circumstances. This inquiry focuses on families and individuals that received income support, and whose children subsequently require income support.

2.11 The Life Course Centre pinpointed the difference between the term welfare dependence and welfare use:

It is important to differentiate welfare dependence from welfare use. The former implies lengthier periods of time on welfare or a tendency to repeatedly move in and out of welfare support over long periods. The latter implies fewer and shorter periods of time on welfare, or welfare support

¹ Productivity Commission, *Rising Inequality: A Stocktake of the Evidence*, Productivity Commission Research Paper, August 2018, Canberra, pp. 4-5.

² Ms Elizabeth Hefren-Webb, Deputy Secretary, Department of Social Services, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 17 October 2018, pp. 1, 4.

³ Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS), *Submission 24*, p. 3.

⁴ Life Course Centre (LCC), *Submission 11*, p. 4.

associated with specific life course stages such as youth allowance for students, with no expectation that support will be ongoing. A life course approach and longitudinal data that enables consideration of the timing, duration and sequence of welfare support, as well as consequences for others as implied by the concept of linked lives, is critical. Consideration should also be placed on access to opportunity.⁵

Intergenerational links

- 2.12 There is evidence of a link between parents receiving welfare payments and their children also receiving payments.⁶ Life Course Centre research shows young people aged 18-26 years are almost twice as likely to need social assistance if their parents have a history of receiving social assistance. The extent to which social assistance is linked across generations, however, depends on the nature of those benefits.⁷
- 2.13 The Life Course Centre found the relationship is particularly strong in the case of single-parent payments, disability payments, and carer payments where the likelihood of young people receiving social assistance is 1.6 times larger if their parents received any of these three payments than if they did not.
- 2.14 In contrast, partnered-parent payments and unemployment payments are associated with rates of social assistance receipt among young people that are 1.3–1.4 times higher. These correlations do not indicate causation; they identify potential pathways where welfare receipt might link across generations.⁸

Impact of parental unemployment

- 2.15 Regardless of its cause or exacerbating factors, the Committee heard that the negative impact on children of long-term parental unemployment has been well documented.

⁵ LCC, *Submission 11*, p. 3.

⁶ For instance, the actuarial report produced by PricewaterhouseCoopers for the Department of Social Services notes some younger welfare recipients are by definition children of people with low income, and therefore highly likely to be welfare recipients. Department of Social Services, *Valuation Report*, 30 June 2017, pp. 13, 23, 24. See also: Nathan Williamson, Deputy Secretary, Department of Social Services, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 19 September 2018, p. 3; PWC, *Submission 31*, p. 2.

⁷ LCC, *Submission 11*, p. 8.

⁸ LCC, *Submission 11*, p. 8.

2.16 The Salvation Army noted a broad range of effects of intergenerational unemployment on children:

Children raised in welfare-dependent families face challenges that restrict their abilities and capabilities, preventing them from moving out of a state of disadvantage. They often lack positive role models, experience low educational attainment, self-sabotage or are simply discouraged from aspiring to live more fulfilling lives than those around them.⁹

2.17 The Smith Family summarised the impact of intergenerational unemployment on children, stating:

The most significant impact of intergenerational unemployment and welfare dependency on children is the long-term effect on their educational engagement and outcomes, and in turn their ability to find work, and break the welfare cycle.¹⁰

2.18 The Public Health Association of Australia concurred:

Social conditions in early childhood have a strong impact on early child development. Child development then affects subsequent life chances through skills development, education, and occupational opportunities...Children's lifelong development and outcomes in education, income, health, and wellbeing are closely aligned with their parents' situations.¹¹

2.19 The Productivity Commission identified that children living in jobless households, a group that stands out among the multiple measures of inequality and disadvantage, are 'particularly at risk of economic disadvantage becoming entrenched, limiting their potential to seize economic opportunities or develop the skills with which to overcome these conditions.'¹²

2.20 More specifically, research by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) and the Australian National University (ANU), drawing on LSAC [Longitudinal Study of Australian Children] data, found children living in a jobless or short part-time hours family had poorer cognitive and social-

⁹ The Salvation Army, *Submission 10*, p. 4.

¹⁰ The Smith Family, *Submission 7*, p. 7.

¹¹ Public Health Association of Australia, *Submission 34*, p. 7.

¹² Productivity Commission, *Rising Inequality? A Stocktake of the Evidence*, Productivity Commission Research Paper, August 2018, p. 5.

emotional outcomes compared to children in families where at least one parent worked full-time or long part-time hours.¹³

- 2.21 The study found that while poorer developmental outcomes for children of jobless families and those working short part-time hours could partially be explained by parental characteristics such as education level, ‘joblessness does appear to have an effect on developmental outcomes’, amongst other factors.¹⁴
- 2.22 The study’s authors wrote joblessness can affect parent wellbeing in two ways:
- when accompanied by low income, joblessness reduces material living standards and can adversely affect parents’ health, ability to participate socially, and ability to improve their level of human capital through activities like education
 - an absence of paid employment can be stressful, possibly having a negative effect on parental mental health and relationships.¹⁵
- 2.23 The study was not able to identify the precise mechanism by which a lack of parental employment translated into poorer outcomes for children. But the researchers stated it appeared that the financial consequences of low levels of parental employment, and the negative impacts on parental mental health were important.¹⁶
- 2.24 International research has also found income poverty affects child developmental outcomes with stronger effects when low income starts early and is prolonged.¹⁷

¹³ J Baxter et al, *Parental Joblessness, Financial Disadvantage and the Wellbeing of Parents and Children*, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Occasional Paper, no. 48, 2012, p. viii.

¹⁴ J Baxter et al, *Parental Joblessness, Financial Disadvantage and the Wellbeing of Parents and Children*, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Occasional Paper, no. 48, 2012, p. viii.

¹⁵ J Baxter et al, *Parental Joblessness, Financial Disadvantage and the Wellbeing of Parents and Children*, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Occasional Paper, no. 48, 2012, pp. 3-4.

¹⁶ J Baxter et al, *Parental Joblessness, Financial Disadvantage and the Wellbeing of Parents and Children*, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Occasional Paper, no. 48, 2012, p. 47.

¹⁷ R McLachlan et al, *Deep and Persistent Disadvantage in Australia*, Productivity Commission Staff Working Paper, Canberra, 2013, p. 102.

Factors contributing to entrenched disadvantage

- 2.25 It is generally recognised by researchers and service providers that there is no single explanation, factor, or mechanism that links the outcomes of one generation to that of the next.¹⁸ Nevertheless, there are certain factors that correlate with intergenerational welfare dependence.
- 2.26 Submissions and witnesses spoke of these factors, and how disadvantage is embedded in particular communities, is persistent, and is multi-causal.¹⁹ These factors include:
- geographic location (accessibility / remoteness);
 - Indigenous and parental status;
 - suitability of available employment;
 - educational attainment;
 - health and family welfare; and
 - availability of appropriate support systems.

Complex interaction of factors

- 2.27 Before discussing separate elements, it is important to emphasise that these factors interact in complex ways for each community, family and individual. Evidence to the inquiry is clear that there is no single trajectory or explanation that adequately accounts for intergenerational welfare dependence.
- 2.28 The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), in its research into persistent disadvantage, notes the multifaceted nature of the problem. Various attributes, characteristics, events and factors interact in complex and dynamic ways to alter the likelihood and persistence of disadvantage:

The likelihood that external risk factors will result in persistent disadvantage seems to be amplified or mitigated by various individual characteristics. These interactions between environmental and individual characteristics are further complicated given that, while some individual characteristics are largely stable over time (for example, ethnicity and sex), others may or may not change (for

¹⁸ H Berry et al, *Intergenerational Reliance on Income Support: Psychosocial Factors and their Measurement*, Social Policy Research Paper, no. 31, 2007, p. 15.

¹⁹ Associate Professor Philip Mendes, Acting Head of Department of Social Work, Monash University, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 65; Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People (GCYP), *Submission 6*, p. 3; The Smith Family, *Submission 7*, p. 3; Engender Equality, *Submission 13*, p. 4; Jesuit Social Services, *Submission 27*, p. 1.

example, attitudes) and yet others will certainly change (for example, age, employment status, family status).²⁰

2.29 The AIHW notes the interaction between three categories of issues in the context of intergenerational disadvantage:

- individual attributes: Indigenous status, sex, attitudes about control over life events, and age;
- family characteristics: structure and relationships, income and housing, life events, job loss, changes in health, relationship conflict and violence, and educational opportunity and human capital; and
- wider risk factors associated with geographical location and changes to economic and labour market conditions.²¹

2.30 In addition to personal characteristics, broader institutional contexts have been found by the Melbourne Institute to be important in the transmission of disadvantage between generations: families, education and health systems, labour markets, tax and transfer policies 'all interact to drive the extent to which children's opportunities and outcomes depend on their family background.'²²

2.31 The Productivity Commission explained that the probability someone will experience disadvantage is influenced by a range of factors. Many of these factors are interlinked and when combined, can have a compounding effect. It notes 'untangling how the various factors interact and establishing causality is difficult.'²³ For instance, while research can identify various factors, only a small share of people exhibiting these factors will experience deep and persistent disadvantage.

2.32 Some research has shown that it is not clear whether some factors exist prior to disadvantage or as a consequence of disadvantage; whether unemployment is a cause or consequence of other aspects of disadvantage;

²⁰ A Hayes and A Hacker, *Persistent Disadvantage in Australia: Extent, Complexity and Some Key Implications*, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: Australia's Welfare 2017, no. 13, 2017, p. 44, 52.

²¹ A Hayes and A Hacker, *Persistent Disadvantage in Australia: Extent, Complexity and Some Key Implications*, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: Australia's Welfare 2017, no. 13, 2017, p. 44-49.

²² D Cobb-Clark et al, *Intergenerational Disadvantage: Learning about Equal Opportunity from Social Assistance Receipt*, Melbourne Institute Working Paper, no. 28/17, October 2017, p. 8.

²³ R McLachlan et al, *Deep and Persistent Disadvantage in Australia*, Productivity Commission Staff Working Paper, Canberra, 2013, pp. 93, 95.

or whether there is a correlation in factors that lead to parent and child receipt of income support or a direct causal process where children are more likely to receive income support if their parents did.²⁴

- 2.33 The Productivity Commission explains many important factors cannot be observed or objectively measured, such as motivation, values, and attitudes. Further, many influencing factors increase the probability of a certain outcome, they do not determine that an outcome will eventuate. 'There is no single predictable trajectory.'²⁵
- 2.34 This multidimensional complexity, encompassing a diverse range of indicators, makes it difficult, according to the Productivity Commission, to 'reach a single conclusion about the overall trend in disadvantage.'²⁶

Geographic location

- 2.35 The *Youth in Focus* study found the probability of receiving income support is not constant across the country. There is geographic variation in the receipt of income support with receipt more common in inner regional than major city areas, and also in some states/territories.²⁷
- 2.36 The Committee heard that in Queensland, for instance, over 50 per cent of the most disadvantaged people live in only four places; 76 per cent in ten places.²⁸ In Victoria, entrenched disadvantage is highly prevalent in identifiable regions and has been for significant periods.²⁹
- 2.37 The Salvation Army explained some factors that drive the concentration of disadvantage geographically:

²⁴ A D'Addio, *Intergenerational Transmission of Disadvantage: Mobility or Immobility Across Generations?*, OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, no. 52, 2007, p. 26; D Cobb-Clark and T Gørgens, *Childhood Family Circumstances and Young Adult People's Receipt of Income Support*, Youth in Focus Project Discussion Paper Series, no. 7, November 2009, pp. 2, 4; K Hand et al, *Life Around Here: Community, Work and Family Life in Three Australian Communities*, Australian Institute of Family Studies Research Report, no. 19, November 2011, pp. 1, 35.

²⁵ R McLachlan et al, *Deep and Persistent Disadvantage in Australia*, Productivity Commission Staff Working Paper, Canberra, 2013, p. 94.

²⁶ Productivity Commission, *Rising Inequality: A Stocktake of the Evidence*, Productivity Commission Research Paper, August 2018, Canberra, p. 5.

²⁷ D Cobb-Clark and T Gørgens, *Childhood Family Circumstances and Young Adult People's Receipt of Income Support*, Youth in Focus Project Discussion Paper Series, no. 7, November 2009, p. 24.

²⁸ Logan Together, *Submission 37*, p. 4.

²⁹ Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA), *Submission 16*, p. [2].

In regional and rural areas there is often not the availability and opportunities of a vibrant job market compared to city areas. Housing costs to live in the city have become unaffordable, and as a result many people have been forced to the regional areas in search for cheaper housing. However, this also means that there are fewer job opportunities in these areas. For people on low incomes, this creates further financial burdens and imposes additional barriers for those seeking work in the inner city areas due to the cost and availability of public transport, increased fuel and vehicle costs, and longer travel times.³⁰

- 2.38 The National Rural Health Alliance agreed, stating: ‘Disadvantage is more prevalent and persistent in regional and remote parts of Australia ... all the population groups at higher risk of poverty and social disadvantaged are present in greater proportion in rural areas.’³¹

Groups at greater risk of entrenched disadvantage

- 2.39 The Committee heard evidence concerning a range of groups at greater risk of experiencing entrenched disadvantage in Australia, including people living in single-parent families, unemployed people, people with disabilities and Indigenous Australians. According to the Productivity Commission, these groups are particularly likely to experience low incomes, deprivation, and social exclusion. The Commission stated:

For people in these circumstances, there is an elevated risk of economic disadvantage becoming entrenched, limiting their potential to seize economic opportunities or develop the skills with which to overcome these conditions.³²

Indigenous Australians

- 2.40 The Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory emphasised the multi-causal nature of intergenerational welfare dependence in Indigenous communities, stating:

To the extent that a link between long-term parental welfare receipt and a child’s future need for social assistance exists, it is much more likely to be driven by parental circumstances outside of a person’s control, such as

³⁰ The Salvation Army, *Submission 10*, p. 7.

³¹ National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA), *Submission 36*, p. 1.

³² Productivity Commission, *Rising Inequality: A Stocktake of the Evidence*, Productivity Commission Research Paper, August 2018, p. 5.

disability, geographic location or single parent status, than circumstances that could be linked to personal choice, such as engagement with employment.³³

2.41 The Committee's attention was drawn to prevalence of disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people³⁴, including:

Disproportionately high level of disadvantage and prevalence of intergenerational trauma faced by Aboriginal children and families ... Families are dealing with generations of loss, poverty, substance abuse, violence in the home and lateral violence.³⁵

2.42 The Committee heard about unequal health outcomes for Aboriginal children³⁶, often exacerbated by poor access to support services and early childhood education:

Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory are much less likely to enjoy a safe and healthy life than others. These children—especially in remote communities—experience poorer health outcomes, including three times the infant mortality rate, 0-4 mortality rate and low birth weight rate compared to non-Aboriginal children, along with very high rates of hospitalisations for infections. They attain much lower Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) and National Assessment Planning Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) scores than the national average, indicating poor readiness for school and predicting lower educational outcomes.³⁷

2.43 Institutional discrimination was identified as a significant factor reducing the 'likelihood of Aboriginal people accessing essential services in areas such as the health system as well as the media, education, welfare and criminal justice systems and in the provision of public housing.'³⁸

2.44 The Cape York Institute highlighted inappropriate welfare service delivery as a contributing factor to ongoing disadvantage. Mr Pearson stated:

We have a massive industry of programs and services for disadvantaged families, a great proportion of which does very little, in my view, to really break disadvantage ... I think we've reached a stage where the supposed beneficiaries of the service delivery intervention are just on life support, and

³³ Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT), *Submission 33*, p. 2.

³⁴ National Rural Health Alliance, *Submission 36*, p. 1.

³⁵ Barnardos Australia, *Submission 26*, p. 3.

³⁶ Barnardos Australia, *Submission 26*, p. 3.

³⁷ Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APONT), *Submission 32*, p. 2.

³⁸ AMSANT, *Submission 33*, p. 4.

the only active people are the service deliverers. They're the ones with the jobs. They're the ones with purpose, meaning and things to do. The disadvantaged are just clients. You might as well put a barcode on their forehead so that somebody else can receive a payment on their behalf.³⁹

2.45 The Cape York Partnership emphasised:

Government-led welfare and redistribution policies have been dwarfed by the minimal support for structural reform or specific measures that can overcome disadvantage. Passive welfare and the government machinery that force feeds it continues to thrive in our region ... Indigenous agency, development, empowerment and productivity are all prisms by which all public policy objectives and expenditure should be considered at a regional and local level, including an unwavering focus on rebuilding social norms, lifting education outcomes, and engagement with the real economy.⁴⁰

2.46 The Cape York Partnership, describing the overrepresentation of Indigenous Australians in entrenched poverty, stated the problems and the solutions are 'as relevant to the people of Cape York as ... to the people of Macquarie Fields or West Cairns or any other part of Australia where entrenched disadvantage is concentrated and wreaks its havoc street-after-street and year-after-year.'⁴¹

Single parents

2.47 Although a number of groups are particularly likely to experience disadvantage, the Brotherhood of St Laurence, amongst others, identified single-parent households (overwhelmingly female-led) as the most impoverished family type in Australia.⁴²

2.48 The National Council of Single Mothers and their Children (NCSMC) testified that single mother families are over represented in areas of poverty, hardship, deprivation, violence and inequality. This has occurred despite broad periods of prosperity. The NCSMC explained that this situation is

³⁹ Mr Noel Pearson, Director of Policy, Cape York Institute, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 8 November 2018, pp. 39 - 40.

⁴⁰ Cape York Partnership, *Submission 9*, p. 3. See also: AMSANT, *Submission 33*, p. 5; yourtown, *Submission 23*, pp. 13-14.

⁴¹ Cape York Partnership, *Submission 9*, p. 3.

⁴² Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, p. 5; Productivity Commission, *Submission 4*, p. [4]; The Smith Family, *Submission 7*, p. 5; Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW), *Submission 21*, p. 3; PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC), *Submission 31*, p. 2.

exacerbated by cuts to welfare payments, inflexible activity requirements, and problems with the child support system. It estimates it would take four generations to rectify.⁴³

- 2.49 The Public Health Association of Australia agreed that policy responses sometimes exacerbate rather than relieve the ability of single-parent families to meet household expenses.⁴⁴
- 2.50 The lack of predictable, secure, paid work was identified as a significant contributing factor; as was the shortage of affordable, flexible childcare, and unfriendly work practices and conditions.⁴⁵ The Brotherhood of St Laurence noted Australia has one of the lowest employment rates for sole-parents, the vast majority of whom are single mothers.⁴⁶

Other contributing factors

- 2.51 Of the forty-one submissions received, the submissions identified more than eighteen broad categories of factors associated with entrenched disadvantage, ranging from unemployment, poverty, health, disability, experiences of violence and drug and alcohol use, to housing, education, social exclusion, transport, geography, food insecurity, caring roles, and cost and availability of childcare.
- 2.52 Intergenerational welfare dependence was framed as a 'symptom of a more complex problem' by most submissions.⁴⁷ The Salvation Army illustrated this, stating:

Many people who access services at The Salvation Army present with multiple and complex needs, such as physical ailments, mental health issues, family violence, homelessness, addictions, trauma, isolation, low levels of educational attainment and training, and a lack of vocational skills and experience. These barriers often prevent and preclude many Australians from entering the workforce or being able to sustain employment.

Structural barriers such as intergenerational and regional socio-economic disadvantage, housing affordability, labour market changes (specifically casualisation of employment resulting in increasing numbers of the

⁴³ National Council of Single Mothers and Their Children (NCSMC), *Submission 12*, pp. 2-3, 11, 13.

⁴⁴ Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA), *Submission 34*, p. 7.

⁴⁵ AASW, *Submission 21*, p. 3.; BSL, *Submission 22*, p. 10.

⁴⁶ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, p. 10.

⁴⁷ Social Ventures Australia (SVA), *Submission 30*, p. 3; Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), *Submission 29*, pp. 1-2.

underemployed), and an income support system that fails to protect people from poverty and impede people from gaining employment.⁴⁸

- 2.53 yourtown noted that barriers exist in many areas, encompassing educational, vocational, contextual, practical, psycho-social, cognitive-motivational, and anti-social elements. yourtown emphasised that people experiencing long-term unemployment are not an homogenous group, with different cohorts facing different barriers and varying experiences of long-term unemployment.⁴⁹
- 2.54 The complexity of intergenerational welfare dependence has implications for policymaking. The Life Course Centre noted:
- Reducing welfare dependence requires attention to both human capabilities and opportunity structures such as education, labour markets, housing, transport and community services.⁵⁰

Barriers to employment

- 2.55 The Committee received evidence on the difficulties faced by people experiencing entrenched disadvantage in finding suitable employment, with submissions identifying a number of compounding factors including: location, transportation, appropriate and flexible employment opportunities, support to maintain employment, and parenting responsibilities.
- 2.56 The Smith Family noted ‘most families [experiencing entrenched disadvantage] live in areas where there are limited economic opportunities and high levels of unemployment and underemployment’.⁵¹ This was supported by evidence from the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association that disadvantage was more prevalent in growth corridors that are often far from places of work.⁵²
- 2.57 This problem is exacerbated by limited transportation options, particularly in rural, regional, and outer-metropolitan areas; and in instances where operating a vehicle is unaffordable.⁵³ A study by Edith Cowan University

⁴⁸ The Salvation Army, *Submission 10*, p. 3.

⁴⁹ yourtown, *Submission 23*, pp. 11-12.

⁵⁰ LCC, *Submission 11*, p. 3.

⁵¹ The Smith Family, *Submission 7*, p. 5.

⁵² VAADA, *Submission 16*, p. [3].

⁵³ The Salvation Army, *Submission 10*, p. 7; Australian Psychological Society (APS), *Submission 14*, p. [4].

has found ‘for people without a car, public transport can increase travel time and complexity by a significant multiplier.’⁵⁴

- 2.58 A lack of entry-level employment opportunities within the Australian labour market was identified:

In May 2018, there were eight unemployed or underemployed people for every job vacancy. When employed people changing jobs are added to the figure, the number applying for each vacancy doubles. Entry-level jobs have therefore become less common, creating more competition for limited positions. The vast majority of new jobs created in Australia now require a vocational or university qualification. Jobseekers with the lowest qualifications (secondary education to Certificate II or III) are the least attractive, from an employer perspective.⁵⁵

- 2.59 Further, submissions noted there could be a lack of flexibility in entry-level positions and these types of positions did not always accommodate the needs of people who are long-term unemployed and experiencing entrenched disadvantage. Often significant support is required for employers to persist with someone experiencing entrenched disadvantage and making the transition to work. The Salvation Army testified:

We find that for some longer term entrenched people who are unemployed sometimes it takes about three or four goes for them to get a job that they can actually hold down for longer than four months, because they’re still in the process of trying to understand what it means to work, what it means to be responsible, what it means to show up every day, what it means when they’ve had a problem to just not storm out and walk out, which is the way their lives have been conditioned.⁵⁶

- 2.60 The Committee heard that the quality of employment was also important.⁵⁷ It notes the Productivity Commission’s finding that while ‘paid employment can be a route out of a state of disadvantage, it does not guarantee an

⁵⁴ L Green et al, *Submission 17*, p. [3].

⁵⁵ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, pp. 9-10; ACOSS, *Faces of Unemployment*, September 2018, p. 15.

⁵⁶ Captain Stuart Glover, National Head of Community Engagement, The Salvation Army, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 13.

⁵⁷ APS, *Submission 14*, p. [2].; I Goodwin-Smith and C Hutchinson, *Beyond Supply and Demand: Addressing the Complexities of Workforce Exclusion in Australia*, Australian Centre for Community Services Research, Flinders University, 2014, pp. 15-16.

absence of recurrent disadvantage as some jobs, particularly low-skilled jobs, are low-paid and hours of available work not assured.⁵⁸

2.61 In addition to limited entry-level employment opportunities, the Salvation Army identified parenting responsibilities to be a significant barrier to finding work.⁵⁹ The Brotherhood of St Laurence, drawing on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics stated, 'access to affordable and good quality child care enables women's workforce participation. Caring for children is the main reason women report for not looking for a job with more hours.'⁶⁰

2.62 Attitudes towards childcare and availability of suitable services influence parents' participation in paid work. The Australian Institute of Family Studies found a variety of childcare-related issues could affect employment decisions, particularly of single parents:

- parents may be unwilling to accept jobs that compromise their own values about the best way to care for their children;
- shortage of locally available childcare, or of childcare that parents believe is of suitable quality;
- unwillingness to leave young children in the care of others;
- availability to take children to and from school;
- access to supervision of older children before and after school; and
- ability to fit work in with care responsibilities, especially a lack of flexibility in low-paid, low-skilled jobs.⁶¹

2.63 However, the Life Course Centre suggested that helping disadvantaged parents to gain education and employment could be an important first step in breaking the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage only if the employment creates a better environment for children in the family:

...not all employment is good employment. Our research on parents in insecure employment or employment that requires very long hours of work shows that children aged 4-9 years fare worse on social, emotional and

⁵⁸ R McLachlan et al, *Deep and Persistent Disadvantage in Australia*, Productivity Commission Staff Working Paper, Canberra, 2013, p. 135.

⁵⁹ The Salvation Army, *Submission 10*, p. 4.

⁶⁰ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, p. 10.

⁶¹ K Hand et al, *Life Around Here: Community, Work and Family Life in Three Australian Communities*, Australian Institute of Family Studies Research Report, no. 19, November 2011, p. 1; also discussed in VAADA, *Submission 16*, p. [3].

behavioural development outcomes than similarly aged children with parents in secure employment with shorter work weeks.⁶²

Health and family welfare

- 2.64 Evidence presented to the Committee identified health, in broad terms, as a cause, consequence and compounding factor in the persistence of entrenched disadvantage.⁶³ Experience of trauma is often cited as a precursor to a range of issues that contribute to entrenched social disadvantage.⁶⁴ The Committee also heard that poorer health outcomes are experienced by people in rural, regional and remote Australia, and by Indigenous Australians.⁶⁵
- 2.65 Health has a significant impact on the ability to find employment and exit poverty. The Smith Family wrote:
- Being in a household where no member of working age is working or a household where at least one member has a disability or long-term health condition, significantly reduces the likelihood of exiting poverty and increases the risk of falling back into poverty after an exit.⁶⁶
- 2.66 The National Rural Health Alliance described the need for welfare support as an outcome of inequalities in social determinants of health.⁶⁷
- 2.67 Mental health is increasingly recognised as a significant barrier to participation in the labour force.⁶⁸ The Department of Social Services *Valuation Report* found the number of people with reported

⁶² LCC, *Submission 11*, p. 6.

⁶³ R McLachlan et al, *Deep and Persistent Disadvantage in Australia*, Productivity Commission Staff Working Paper, July 2013, p. 130; L Green et al, *Submission 17*, p. [3]; Queensland Advocacy Incorporated (QAI), *Submission 19*, p. 8; AMSANT, *Submission 33*, p. 3; PHAA, *Submission 34*, p. 3.

⁶⁴ yourtown, *Submission 23*, pp, 6, 8; Anglicare, *Submission 1*, p. 1; Catholic Social Services (CSS), *Submission 18*, p. 3; Barnardos Australia, *Submission 26*, p. 3; AMSANT, *Submission 33*, p. 3.

⁶⁵ NRHA, *Submission 36*, p. 1; Barnardos Australia, *Submission 26*, p. 3.

⁶⁶ The Smith Family, *Submission 7*, p. 5.

⁶⁷ Mr Mark Diamond, Chief Executive Officer, National Rural Health Alliance, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 21 November 2018, p. 31.

⁶⁸ The Salvation Army, *Submission 10*, p. 4; I Goodwin-Smith and C Hutchinson, *Beyond Supply and Demand: Addressing the Complexities of Workforce Exclusion in Australia*, Australian Centre for Community Services Research, Flinders University, 2014, p. 2; yourtown, *Submission 23*, p. 11.

psychological/psychiatric conditions in receipt of working age welfare payments has grown steadily over the last five years.⁶⁹

- 2.68 Several submissions discussed the incidence of family violence, which has a 'profound impact on physical and mental health. It can lead directly to serious injury, permanent impairment, disability or death.'⁷⁰
- 2.69 The use of alcohol or other drugs was raised as one risk factor for families associated with socio-economic disadvantage and repeatedly involved in child protection.⁷¹ The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association warned that in growth corridors, where disadvantage is more prevalent, there may be 'significant challenges in accessing the various support services providing little leverage to address various issues.'⁷²
- 2.70 The Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory warned, however, of conflating welfare receipt and anti-social behaviour, including alcohol and drug misuse. It stated:

This perspective is reductive and inaccurate and fails to acknowledge the dynamics present in many of these communities and regions, including a lack of viable labour market, poor education, severe health problems and high levels of trauma and other complex social issues.⁷³

- 2.71 The Public Health Association of Australia described several essential elements for the climb out of poverty and welfare dependence, with health (in its broadest sense) one of many factors to be overcome. The compounding nature of problems to be overcome was illustrated by the following statement:

First, people must be aware that alternatives or options exist for a particular issue they are facing. Second, they must believe that those alternatives are available. Third, they must know the means of reaching for alternatives. Fourth, they must have access to those means of reaching for alternatives. Fifth, they must be able to access them. Finally, they must be able to achieve

⁶⁹ The authors of the report, PricewaterhouseCoopers, stated the steady increase could be due to increased awareness of mental health, and also reflect a tightening of the Disability Support Pension eligibility criteria. Department of Social Services, *Valuation Report*, 30 June 2017, p. 33.

⁷⁰ Engender Equality, *Submission 13*, p. 5.

⁷¹ GCYP, *Submission 6*, p. 4; yourtown, *Submission 23*, p. 7.

⁷² VAADA, *Submission 16*, p. [3].

⁷³ AMSANT, *Submission 33*, p. 3.

and maintain change. Then, do all of that again across each of the other issues which you have identified as needing to change.⁷⁴

- 2.72 Research has shown children are particularly sensitive to parent health and welfare during the early years of life. Families facing issues including poor mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence, can be less able to provide the nurturing environment required for child learning.⁷⁵ A 2011 study found more than thirty per cent of children aged 4-5 residing with a parent who has poor mental health, are classified in the bottom 15 per cent of the overall development domain.⁷⁶
- 2.73 The Committee heard that research has found disadvantage becomes intergenerational when women with social and health challenges, or those living in poverty, have a baby with health problems. 'This can lead to developmental disadvantage, leading to learning disadvantage. Learning disadvantage often leads to labour market and income disadvantage.'⁷⁷
- 2.74 Factors of disadvantage, including poor parental mental health and substance abuse have a strong association with increased risk of child abuse and neglect.⁷⁸
- 2.75 Children who have experienced trauma, neglect or abuse in their early years have a higher likelihood of developing ongoing behavioural and learning problems, substance abuse, poorer mental and physical health, and poorer labour market outcomes.⁷⁹
- 2.76 There are also many instances of children taking on roles as parental carers due to parent mental health, disability, or alcohol and drug issues. In such cases:

These additional responsibilities can cause isolation and stress, and impact on children's abilities to go to school, do their homework, spend time with

⁷⁴ PHAA, *Submission 34*, p. 4.

⁷⁵ yourtown, *Submission 23*, p. 4.

⁷⁶ R McLachlan et al, *Deep and Persistent Disadvantage in Australia*, Productivity Commission Staff Working Paper, July 2013, p. 99.

⁷⁷ GCYP, *Submission 6*, p. 3; also discussed in AASW, *Submission 21*, p. 3.

⁷⁸ GCYP, *Submission 6*, p. 2; Barnardos Australia, *Submission 26*, p. 3.

⁷⁹ R McLachlan et al, *Deep and Persistent Disadvantage in Australia*, Productivity Commission Staff Working Paper, July 2013, p. 100; yourtown, *Submission 23*, p. 8; APONT, *Submission 32*, p. 2.

friends or get a job. Children may experience a loss of hope to be able to fully participate in education, impacting on entering the workforce in the future.⁸⁰

- 2.77 Experiences of family violence in childhood are known to have profound negative life-long and intergenerational impacts. Experiences of family violence can severely impair children’s physical health, learning, cognition, and social and emotional development.⁸¹
- 2.78 Research has also pointed out, however, that not all children exposed to adversity early in life experience long-term effects. A 2012 study found ‘children vary tremendously in their response to adverse childhood experiences, there is no single path from early adversity to poor social, emotional, cognitive, and mental health outcomes.’⁸² yourtown stated ‘...good parenting can protect children growing up in disadvantaged settings.’⁸³

Education and early childhood development

- 2.79 Submissions to the Committee highlighted three key points with regard to education and entrenched disadvantage:
- poor or incomplete education is a significant contributor to unemployment and entrenched disadvantage;
 - regardless of aspirations for themselves or their children, people experiencing entrenched disadvantage face difficulties engaging in education; and
 - a crucial way to help people trapped in intergenerational disadvantage is to provide access to quality education.
- 2.80 Drawing upon HILDA (Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia) data, the Smith Family wrote ‘those with low levels of education (Year 11 and below) are less likely to exit poverty and are at greater risk of falling back into poverty if they do exit.’⁸⁴
- 2.81 Witnesses raised concerns that current Job Network arrangements do not support the completion of Certificate I and Certificate II qualifications,

⁸⁰ The Salvation Army, *Submission 10*, p. 4.

⁸¹ Engender Equality, *Submission 13*, p. 5.

⁸² Hertzmann, 2012, quoted in R McLachlan et al, *Deep and Persistent Disadvantage in Australia*, Productivity Commission Staff Working Paper, Canberra, 2013, p. 102.

⁸³ yourtown, *Submission 23*, p. 4.

⁸⁴ The Smith Family, *Submission 7*, p. 5.

which is often a necessary step towards completion of higher educational qualifications. Further, participation in some job training programs is impeded by mutual obligation requirements.⁸⁵

2.82 The time-sensitive nature of education was emphasised by Social Ventures Australia, ‘an individual’s lifetime earning capacity is largely determined by the age of 18 and education is one of the most important contributors.’⁸⁶

2.83 This was supported by evidence from Save the Children who stated:

We know the non-completion of school or failure to gain other post-secondary qualifications substantially increases the risk of young people not making a successful transition into full time employment. Lack of qualifications means that workers are more likely to be unskilled with flow on effects including: higher unemployment rates, higher take up of welfare benefits and larger participation rates in labour market programs.⁸⁷

2.84 Submissions noted disadvantage and vulnerability start early: ‘The first five years of a child’s life, particularly the first one thousand days, are crucial to their development and can shape other outcomes through life.’⁸⁸

2.85 There is significant variation in attendance of children at childcare across families and communities in Australia:

Although 91 per cent of children in families where two parents are employed attend some form of preschool program, only 68 per cent of children where neither parent is employed attend. Further, children in single parent households are more likely to attend preschool if the parent is employed (80 per cent), than if the parent is not employed (68 per cent).⁸⁹

2.86 The Brotherhood of St Laurence noted ‘while some children attend day care as infants, many do not engage with Early Childhood Education and Care until age three or four (if at all). By the time they start preschool and then school, they are already lagging behind their peers.’⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Ms Wendy Field, Head of Policy and Programs, The Smith Family, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 8 November 2018, p. 6; Anglicare, *2017 Jobs Availability Snapshot*, p. 18.

⁸⁶ SVA, *Submission 30*, p. 10.

⁸⁷ Save the Children, *Submission 28*, p. 1.

⁸⁸ Save the Children, *Submission 28*, p. 3; issue also discussed in Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, p. 3.

⁸⁹ R McLachlan et al, *Deep and Persistent Disadvantage in Australia*, Productivity Commission Staff Working Paper, Canberra, 2013, p. 103.

⁹⁰ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, p. 6.

2.87 Research has highlighted the importance of early childhood education:

- It can shape children's development and can be particularly important where family environments are troubled. These settings also have the potential to provide positive adult-child interactions and social networks for families.
- Access and quality can be a potential barrier to parental participation in the workforce.⁹¹

2.88 The Productivity Commission has identified several studies, including the *Longitudinal Study of Australian Children*, which point to the role of preschool in improving children's readiness for school and their performance. Quality early childhood education, especially for children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, has the potential to provide a strong start to a good education and academic success.⁹²

2.89 Despite universal access, there are lower levels of participation amongst vulnerable groups and children from disadvantaged backgrounds are more than twice as likely to be developmentally vulnerable at the start of school.⁹³ Some barriers to participation include availability of transport, housing transience, poor inclusiveness practices, lack of awareness of services, reluctance to engage for cultural or personal reasons, and government 'activity test' requirements.⁹⁴

2.90 Research from Edith Cowan University noted the lack of financial resources means that children at primary school level experiencing entrenched disadvantage can often not participate in extra-curricular activities. Without access to such activities, children have a lesser chance of 'seeing their futures as being different from the model provided by their parents and community.'⁹⁵

2.91 yourtown showed this is compounded by school attendance and education is likely to suffer when families experience multifaceted disadvantage, including financial hardship, poor housing/overcrowding or homelessness,

⁹¹ K Hand et al, *Life Around Here: Community, Work and Family Life in Three Australian Communities*, Australian Institute of Family Studies Research Report, no. 19, November 2011, p. 1.

⁹² R McLachlan et al, *Deep and Persistent Disadvantage in Australia*, Productivity Commission Staff Working Paper, Canberra, 2013, pp. 103-104.

⁹³ SVA, *Submission 30*, p. 10.

⁹⁴ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, p. 7.

⁹⁵ Lelia Green et al, *Submission 17*, p. [6].

family conflict or dysfunction, mental health issues or drug and alcohol use.⁹⁶

- 2.92 Parent education levels also affect their child/ren. The *Youth in Focus* study found that educational attainment correlates with intergenerational receipt of income support. Overall, low-income families tend to have a low level of education; less educated parents tend to have less educated children who have a higher likelihood of becoming unemployed. A person's access to, and participation in, higher education can increase life opportunities, especially in the case of children from low socio-economic backgrounds.⁹⁷
- 2.93 Life Course Centre research has found certain groups, 'such as young mothers who are not in employment, education or training, are more likely to experience disadvantage with flow-on effects for their children.'⁹⁸ It further found, 'achieving a university degree reduces the negative effect of parental joblessness, suggesting that parental joblessness is most harmful for Australians who leave education before earning a university degree.'
- 2.94 However, Save the Children cited OECD research that found, 'an individual's chance to do better than their parents in education can depend on ranking on the social ladder and a parent's level of educational attainment. For example, children only have a 13 per cent chance of attaining tertiary education if their parents did not attain upper secondary education.'⁹⁹
- 2.95 Save the Children further noted:

The level of parental educational attainment also goes to networks and attitudes. Unskilled young people may not have much access to friends or relatives who know about training options, limiting the knowledge of pathways available. They may be deterred from further schooling. For example, a study was undertaken on attitudes of parents to education, finding that the educational aspirations of students and parents is the most important factor in explaining gaps in SES student completion. While low SES students at age 15 were less likely to want to complete school, only 58 per cent of

⁹⁶ yourtown, *Submission 23*, p. 9.

⁹⁷ D Cobb-Clark and T Gørgens, *Childhood Family Circumstances and Young Adult People's Receipt of Income Support*, Youth in Focus Project Discussion Paper Series, no. 7, November 2009, p. 4; R McLachlan et al, *Deep and Persistent Disadvantage in Australia*, Productivity Commission Staff Working Paper, Canberra, 2013, p. 19.

⁹⁸ LCC, *Submission 11*, pp. 4, 6.

⁹⁹ Save the Children Australia, *Submission 28*, p. 2.

students classified as low SES said their parents wanted them to go onto further schooling – compared to 73 per cent for high SES students.¹⁰⁰

2.96 The Smith Family explained the flow-on effects of poor access to education:

Australian children from low socioeconomic backgrounds are at risk of poor educational outcomes from their first year of school. This risk increases as students move through school as highlighted by the data below:

Early school years: A third of students (32.6 per cent) from Australia's most disadvantaged areas are developmentally vulnerable in one or more key areas in their first year of school. This compares to 15.5 per cent of children from the least disadvantaged areas.

High school years: Around three in five Year 5 students (59.6 per cent) whose parents did not complete Year 12 achieve above the national minimum reading standard on NAPLAN compared to 94.0 per cent of students who have a parent with a university degree. There is a similar gap in other areas of performance, for example, in Year 9 numeracy.

Post-school years: Six out of 10 students from the lowest socioeconomic backgrounds complete Year 12 or equivalent, compared to around nine in 10 of those from the highest socioeconomic backgrounds.¹⁰¹

2.97 Education as a factor, though, is rarely isolated. The Life Course Centre explained that families relying heavily on government assistance are more likely to struggle to invest time and money in their children. 'Children from these families have worse educational, socio-emotional, and behavioural outcomes, and the lack of parental investments can explain part of this gap.'¹⁰²

Availability of support

2.98 Many submissions to the inquiry highlighted a lack of support and resources available for people living in situations of entrenched disadvantage, with poverty identified as a significant barrier.¹⁰³ Social Ventures Australia, drawing upon their experience in the sector, said: 'we are ... acutely aware

¹⁰⁰ Save the Children Australia, *Submission 28*, p. 3.

¹⁰¹ The Smith Family, *Submission 7*, p. 7.

¹⁰² LCC, *Submission 11*, p. 12.

¹⁰³ NCSMC, *Submission 12*, pp. 2-3; Barnardos Australia, *Submission 26*, p. 3; NRHA, *Submission 36*, pp. 1-2.

of the challenges existing social service systems face—including service fragmentation, inadequate funding arrangements, inability to address complex needs and a lack of tailored and intensive support.’¹⁰⁴

2.99 The Australian Institute of Family Studies stated:

It is widely agreed that poverty is not only about low income, but also about deprivation. Family disadvantage means, more generally, a lack of access to resources enabling a minimum style of living and participation in [the] society¹⁰⁵

2.100 yourtown put forward that parents who are living in poverty, have mental health problems, and who are young are most likely to struggle with parenting, hampering their ability to play the necessary role in shaping their child and the opportunities in life the child will have. The submission stated:

There is universal acceptance of the importance of parenting on childhood development. Parents are not only a child’s first teacher, they are their first caregiver ... Secure attachment in the early years positively impacts on a child’s later development and life chances, with insecure attachment negatively affecting educational attainment as well as social and emotional developments.¹⁰⁶

2.101 yourtown further noted that parents faced a ‘procedural madness’ of service support systems hampering access to appropriate community services and a positive wider environment.¹⁰⁷

2.102 Some evidence emphasised the need for tailored support to meet people’s unique circumstances. yourtown research showed young people have different experiences of long-term unemployment and understanding this is critical for program design. For instance:

Young men, who have a higher rate of long-term youth unemployment than their female counterparts, told us that not having a driver’s licence, limited transport, low literacy and numeracy, anger management issues, unstable accommodation, and offending history were more important barriers to employment. Young women, on the other hand, told us that they more often experience a lack of available jobs, low self-esteem and mental health issues as employment barriers.

¹⁰⁴ SVA, *Submission 30*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁵ AIFS, *Submission 24*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ yourtown, *Submission 23*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ yourtown, *Submission 23*, p. 5.

First Australian people ranked a lack of qualifications as the main barrier to employment, whilst young people with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds rated difficulties in accessing social and institutional support due to their residency or citizenship status as a principal work barrier. The top issue for young people in regional and remote areas was the lack of jobs, whereas young people metropolitan cities were more likely to view limited work experience, low work skills, and having no car as barriers to employment.¹⁰⁸

Impact of the welfare system

2.103 As discussed later in this report, the Committee heard that, overall, the welfare system in Australia provides adequate support for most people when they need it. However the Committee also heard evidence that the current welfare system is not well structured to respond to the more complex needs of Australians experiencing entrenched disadvantage. In some circumstances, aspects of the system may be reducing the effectiveness of welfare assistance.

2.104 Improving the welfare system does not always mean simply increasing the funding. Logan Together, while identifying shortcomings in current welfare arrangements, emphasised it is not always an issue of the amount of funding to social service providers:

We already spend a phenomenal amount of money on human services in communities like Logan and all around the country. We're doing some work with Boston Consulting Group at the moment. Their estimate across the states, territories and Commonwealth of the bill on human services—not welfare but human services—is that we spend about \$43 billion a year. In our own city, if you ask the question, 'How much do we spend on child and family related issues?' we think the answer's about \$200 million. So we're spending extraordinary amounts of money.

The Department of Social Services did a micro case study on the community of Roebourne, in WA: 1,400 people; \$42,000 a head. This is not welfare spend. This is not payments. This is services: \$42,000 for every man, woman and child. And nothing's got better in the last 15 years.¹⁰⁹

Insufficient level of payment

¹⁰⁸ yourtown, *Submission 23*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁹ Mr Matthew Cox, Director, Logan Together, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 18.

- 2.105 The Committee received evidence describing disadvantage that has arisen as a result of ‘structural’ reforms in welfare policy, such as moving recipients to a lower level of social security payments, without addressing underlying causes of disadvantage.¹¹⁰
- 2.106 Many submissions noted the insufficiency of current welfare payments, particularly for people experiencing entrenched disadvantage and dependent on payments for long periods of time.¹¹¹ The Life Course Centre stated, ‘families who heavily rely on government assistance are more likely to struggle investing time and money in their children.’¹¹²
- 2.107 Catholic Social Services stated that people ‘on welfare payments do not receive sufficient income to live a frugal but dignified life.’¹¹³ The Australian Association of Social Workers stated material deprivation was inevitable for people living on welfare payments.¹¹⁴
- 2.108 Of particular concern to some submitters is the policy of moving parents onto the lower Newstart Allowance once the youngest child turns eight, at a time when the costs of raising a child increase. The National Council of Single Mothers and Their Children stated, ‘the pain and the distress are palpable when they cannot quarantine their children from hardship and financial distress and the ramifications.’¹¹⁵
- 2.109 Evidence was also heard about effective marginal tax rates, which can be as high as 70 per cent. Catholic Social Services stated that to overcome the effective marginal tax rate, people on Newstart had to find a full-time job.¹¹⁶ This is not a typical path for people who have been long-term unemployed.

Conditionality

¹¹⁰ AMSANT, *Submission 33*, p. 3.

¹¹¹ UnitingCare, *Submission 20*, p. 5; Anglicare, *Submission 1*, p. 1; GCYP, *Submission 6*, p. 2; SYC, *Submission 15*, p. 2; Jesuit Social Services, *Submission 27*, p. 2; APONT, *Submission 32*, p. 4; AMSANT, *Submission 33*, p. 3; NRHA, *Submission 36*, p. 2.

¹¹² LCC, *Submission 11*, p. 12.

¹¹³ CSS, *Submission 18*, p. 2.

¹¹⁴ AASW, *Submission 21*, p. 4.

¹¹⁵ NCSMC, *Submission 12*, pp. 3, 7; Ms Terese Edwards, Chief Executive Officer, National Council of Single Mothers and Their Children, *Committee Hansard*, Adelaide, 9 November 2018, p. 1; PHAA, *Submission 34*, p. 7.

¹¹⁶ Joe Zabar, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Catholic Social Services Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 21 November 2018, pp. 17, 24.

- 2.110 For several decades various governments have used conditionality as part of delivering welfare support to Australians. Conditionality, also referred to as ‘mutual obligation’, means that people receiving welfare must also meet conditions, such as applying for a certain number of jobs, or participating in training. This is a highly contested area of policy delivery.
- 2.111 Several submissions questioned the effectiveness of conditionality requirements for people receiving welfare payments—pointing to a lack of evidence to support their efficacy, and the potential to contribute to deeper poverty.¹¹⁷
- 2.112 Commenting on a place-based welfare conditionality trial in Shepparton, FamilyCare wrote there was little evidence of sustained, positive outcomes and ‘for a significant minority of participants, welfare conditionality made their personal circumstances worse.’¹¹⁸
- 2.113 FamilyCare stated ‘conditionality measures create additional challenges for people whose lives are already complex and prone to crisis.’¹¹⁹ Further, conditionality removes choice, has the potential to ignore the impact of trauma, and can be insufficiently sensitive to service user needs. For instance, service providers were required to make conversations about employment central in their interactions with people who were too young to have ever been in a work environment; rules required parents to give priority to activities other than caring for their children. Service providers that participated in the survey agreed that positive outcomes had occurred in spite of compulsory conditionality, not because of it.¹²⁰
- 2.114 The Salvation Army described that mutual obligation requirements can ultimately force people into short term, low paid, unstable and insecure temporary jobs rather than focusing on training with a view to gaining meaningful employment:

It is questionable whether increased conditionality is an effective measure to reduce welfare dependence, and unclear whether it produces sustained and positive outcomes ... “benefit sanctions do little to enhance people’s

¹¹⁷ APS, *Submission 14*, p. 3; UnitingCare, *Submission 20*, p. 6; The Salvation Army, *Submission 10*, p. 13; The Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, p. 4.

¹¹⁸ FamilyCare, *Submission 5*, p. [2].

¹¹⁹ FamilyCare, *Submission 5*, p. [7].

¹²⁰ FamilyCare, *Submission 5*, pp. [8-10].

motivation to prepare for, seek, or enter paid work". For some income support recipients, it made their personal and financial circumstances worse.¹²¹

2.115 Engender Equality spoke of the impact on women of conditionality:

Reducing resourcing to families through increased conditionality, or compulsory income management by removing access to cash will increase incidences of violence, the vulnerability of women to the impact of family violence and abuse, as well as increase children's exposure to violence in the home.¹²²

2.116 The Brotherhood of St Laurence noted the current compliance focus of employment services meant providers were diverting resources from front-line assistance. The result is an erosion in satisfaction of staff and jobseekers. 'Coercive activation measures have generally failed ... to improve outcomes for disadvantaged jobseekers.'¹²³

2.117 Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the Northern Territory was similarly opposed to conditionality measures that are contributing to disadvantage, instead urging a focus on facilitating improved educational outcomes, skills training and generating employment opportunities. The organisation noted CDP participants have more onerous obligations than participants in jobactive.¹²⁴

2.118 The Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance of the Northern Territory stated:

Empowerment and control over life circumstances are fundamental determinants of health and wellbeing which are undermined when people are subjected to highly onerous compliance and quarantining mechanisms. This is evidenced by the increasing numbers of people who are choosing to disengage entirely from the Community Development Program (CDP), rather than being subject to the program's onerous and discriminatory compliance measures. The result of this disengagement is further entrenched poverty and disadvantage due to reduced resources in communities with already high levels of need.¹²⁵

Committee comment

¹²¹ The Salvation Army, *Submission 10*, p. 13.

¹²² Engender Equality, *Submission 13*, p. 6.

¹²³ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, pp. 11-12.

¹²⁴ APONT, *Submission 32*, p. 3.

¹²⁵ AMSANT, *Submission 33*, p. 3.

- 2.119 A significant amount of evidence presented to the Committee identified the complex interrelationship of factors that contribute to entrenched disadvantage. The Committee recognises the resilience shown by many Australians experiencing entrenched disadvantage.
- 2.120 There is no single cause or path to welfare dependence and entrenched disadvantage, and therefore there is no 'silver bullet' solution. This complicates the policy responses available to governments.
- 2.121 The Committee heard a variety of experiences associated with conditionality, with 'mutual obligation' requirements challenging some welfare recipients, particularly depending on their geographical location, availability of suitable jobs, health, wellbeing and personal capabilities.
- 2.122 The Committee recognises that given the range and complexity of issues involved, addressing intergenerational welfare dependence requires targeted, early and sustained interventions.
- 2.123 The Committee understands that if a child's parents are long-term unemployed or unwell, or a child does not participate in early learning opportunities, or if the family is living in long-term poverty, there is a greater risk of poor outcomes for the child. However, the Committee considers that comprehensive and targeted programs that assist families through difficult periods can improve a child's chances of avoiding entrenched disadvantage. The principles underlying successful programs are discussed further in Chapter 3.

3. Principles for successful programs

Overview

- 3.1 Chapter 2 discussed the complex and multi-faceted nature of entrenched disadvantage.
- 3.2 Based on evidence received during the inquiry, Chapter 3 sets out two overarching principles the Committee considers are essential to deliver successful programs.
- 3.3 These principles are the use of *place-based* programs and *wrap-around* services. Evidence of programs that successfully demonstrate these principles in welfare programs are included in this chapter.

Place-based programs

Benefits of a place-based approach

- 3.4 The Committee received evidence that place-based community programs are an effective way to improve entrenched disadvantage. A place-based approach is one that reflects an understanding of the community and its people, and the particular circumstances that exist in that community.
- 3.5 The place-based approach is tailored to the people living in the area, and assesses what they currently have and what they need to improve their situation for themselves and their families. It offers a customised response rather than 'one-size-fits-all' program.

- 3.6 Place-based approaches use the collective impact model¹ of several groups working together to assist people on welfare support to achieve their goals. Ideally, a place-based model engages with the community and leverages off existing resources in that community. A key function of place-based programs is ensuring that services are coordinated in a way that is beneficial to the recipients.
- 3.7 The Department of Social Services (DSS) noted that ‘place-based approaches are required when addressing complicated or complex problems where the disadvantage is concentrated and the characteristics of the place contribute to entrenched problems and/or intergenerational cycles of disadvantage’.²
- 3.8 Many submissions agreed that place-based programs are necessary to deliver successful and sustainable outcomes. The Aboriginal Medical Service Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) recommended place-based programs as a key reform for reducing disadvantage in remote regions. AMSANT noted the benefits of this approach, particularly by increasing opportunities to gain employment:
- Place-based and community driven job creation and employment supports [are required] in remote areas, with a particular focus on transition to work for young people.³
- 3.9 Mr Glenn Jessop, General Manager of the Jesuit Social Services, agreed that place-based programs were effective in assisting people from very disadvantaged backgrounds:
- We know that in areas of disadvantage people experience long-term unemployment associated with a bunch of other things such as high rates of child protection involvement, mental health inpatient admissions and criminal justice involvement—the list will go on, but I think you get the picture. In that context, we call for local place based solutions.⁴
- 3.10 Logan Together stated that community level action, or place-based community leadership and collaboration infrastructure, is necessary to plan and deliver coherent long-term change strategies:

¹ The approach of the collective impact is where organisations work together to solve social problems and use collaborative leadership and focus on collective goals.

² Department of Social Services (DSS), *Supplementary Submission 3.3*, p. [1]

³ Aboriginal Medical Service Alliance NT (AMSANT), *Submission 33*, p. 2.

⁴ Mr Glenn Jessop, General Manager, Jesuit Social Services, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 21 November 2018, p. 18.

We need to invest in powerful local “backbone” organisations that can coordinate partners across the health, education and social services sectors – and the community itself – to drive local strategies.⁵

3.11 Supporting the continuity of quality service providers is important for effective place-based service delivery. Service providers that are based in the community, or that have already established a rapport with the community, are an important factor in successful welfare programs. This is well recognised in regions supporting Indigenous specific programs.

3.12 Professor Shelley Mallett, from the Brotherhood of St Laurence commented:

One of the things that the Brotherhood is very committed to is enabling small locally based organisations to thrive in their communities and to be competitive in grants and tenders and such because they know their communities, they're embedded and they have local networks. We think that that's crucial because it has flow-on effects and positive benefits in the community. People who live in the community can work in the settings but they can also leverage their networks to help them do other things.⁶

3.13 Place-based programs also support and create links between welfare providers and the broader community. In its submission, AMSANT highlighted the need for critical partnerships between schools, parents and the community:

Evidence from research examining schooling and education has found that projects characterised by a high degree of Indigenous involvement and control produced significant benefits for participants, and that engaging parents in children’s learning was of critical importance (Closing the Gap Clearinghouse (AIHW, AIFS 2013). Of equal importance is the need to develop partnerships between the school, the family and the community. Opportunity should be provided for parents and communities to participate in the governance of schools through Aboriginal Parents Groups or community controlled school boards. Embedding culture into educational approaches can be a positive and enabling factor, and a form of early intervention in preventing future ill-health.⁷

Multi-generational services

⁵ Logan Together, *Submission 37*, p. 2.

⁶ Professor Shelley Mallett, Director, Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 33.

⁷ Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT, *Submission 33*, p. 5.

- 3.14 A place-based program can also deliver a multi-generational service that engages parents and children at the same time. A multi-generational approach provides an opportunity to strategically align resources and efforts—federal, state, local and community—with the purpose of preventing and tackling developmental vulnerability in children living in locations of disadvantage.
- 3.15 The Brotherhood of St Laurence described the importance of establishing Integrated Family & Community Hubs to address entrenched disadvantage:

A variety of early years and family hubs already exist across Australia, which could be built on and their reach and impact strengthened by leveraging multiple funding streams, taking a multigenerational approach and incorporating strong community engagement in their design and operation. Some promising innovations include Doveton College and Tasmania's Child & Family Centres.⁸

- 3.16 Ms Nicole Rees from the Brotherhood of St Laurence added that:

There's emerging evidence, but it's really still being tested in Australia, that bringing together supports that address both the needs of children and the needs of parents at the same time can have a multiplier effect and is more effective than working in isolation on particular aspects. Bringing together high quality early-learning pathways to economic participation for parents, building parents' capacity as their child's first teacher, and enhancing a family's community connections and social participation are all things that, when you bring them together, can have powerful impacts.⁹

- 3.17 Mr Cox of Logan Together also commented on the success of the multi-generational approach:

I think that's where you get to the child and family centres in Tasmania. They run effectively a supported playgroup. There's an intentional program of learning for kids and adults.¹⁰

- 3.18 The Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY program) is an example of a successful multi-generational approach. HIPPY is federally funded and runs in 100 communities around Australia, half of

⁸ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, p. 15.

⁹ Ms Nicole Rees, Senior Manager, Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 28.

¹⁰ Mr Matthew Cox, Director, Logan Together, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 24.

which have high concentrations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

- 3.19 HIPPY is a home-based parenting and early childhood learning program that works with families with young children aged 4 and 5 years old in disadvantaged communities.
- 3.20 The Committee heard from Ms Lizzie Adams, the CEO of Goolburri Aboriginal Health Advancement in Toowoomba, about the merits of the HIPPY program that the service delivers in conjunction with the Brotherhood of St Laurence:

In Toowoomba we take them to the park, we take them wherever they want to go and feel comfortable, because that's how you get people to engage. It's not about saying, 'This is how we do it.' Part of HIPPY is when they get their tutor or their mentor who teaches the parents how to be the first teachers of their children, so the parents are going into study for the first time. I would agree with everybody around the table that it is our young, single mums who have that struggle.¹¹

- 3.21 The Committee also heard from UnitingCare about its successful Newpin program. Newpin builds on the skills of parents as well as assisting parents with personal development and is a successful program run for combating intergenerational welfare dependence.
- 3.22 Ms Claerwen Little, National Director of UnitingCare Australia informed the Committee:

First, it's preventative in that it prevents harm being suffered by children. This preventative investment is economically prudent. It's more cost-effective to prevent harm to a child than to redress the consequences of that harm in later life. It's also morally preferable. The second feature of the Newpin program is that it focuses on developing skills. Parents engage in parenting groups and personal development programs and have positive and engaged supervised experiences with their children. This helps them build effective parenting skills and strengthens family relationships.¹²

Child and Family Centres/hubs and schools

¹¹ Ms Lizzie Adams, Chief Executive Officer, Goolburri Aboriginal Health Advancement Company, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 29.

¹² Ms Claerwyn Little, National Director, UnitingCare Australia, *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2018, p. 38.

- 3.23 One specific type of successful multi-generational service is designated child and family centres. The Committee received evidence about the value of Child and Family Centres/hubs. These centres can strategically align resources and services from federal, state and local governments and the community to assist people requiring access to various services.
- 3.24 These centres are often set up within existing schools. Because these centres have multiple purposes, they are regarded as a part of the community and open to all, and not just somewhere where people that are having difficulties go to get assistance.
- 3.25 The Brotherhood of St Laurence informed the Committee that a variety of Child and Family Centres already exist across Australia. Its submission suggested that:
- The hubs could be built on and their reach and impact strengthened by leveraging multiple funding streams, taking a multigenerational approach and incorporating strong community engagement in their design and operation. Some promising innovations include Doveton College and Tasmania’s Child & Family Centres.¹³
- 3.26 The Brotherhood of St Laurence further commented that:
- ... a majority of these centres had a positive impact on parents’ use and experiences of services and supports for young children. Parents found the Centres welcoming, respectful and inclusive places that were helping them develop positive child, family, school and community connections.¹⁴
- 3.27 In addition, the Brotherhood of St Laurence stated that these centres result in:
- Improved understanding and confidence to access local services (increased service networks)
 - Enhanced parenting skills
 - Increased employability
 - Parents in work at Centres eg Empowering Parents Empowering Communities program facilitated by the parents and supervised by practitioners

¹³ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, p. 15.

¹⁴ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, p. 23.

- Effective use of volunteers eg workers and community volunteers co-visiting families visitors to Child and Family Centres are welcomed and met by a community members
- Progress towards breaking down silos between different services with the aim of partners such as Child Health & Parenting Nurses seeing themselves as part of a transdisciplinary team at the Centre.¹⁵

3.28 The Salvation Army discussed the benefits of collaborative services within the community and highlighted the following Communities for Children model as a positive example:

... Learning For All workshops which promote a culture in which children and families participate in and belong to a learning community, which includes early Childhood Education and Care services and Primary Schools, and community learning spaces. Schools teams are more aware and better resourced to support children and families; and families are adequately resourced and prepared for learning spaces.¹⁶

3.29 The Salvation Army has had great success delivering early intervention and prevention programs through placed-based, integrated service delivery in partnership with other service providers. It highlighted a place-based program being run in South Australia for families and children at risk of abuse or neglect. The program evaluation stated:

The community hub strategy is based on evidence that in socio-economically disadvantaged communities, coordinated approaches across sectors can improve social and educational outcomes for children in the pathway to school and families can receive more comprehensive parenting support within a 'one stop shop' approach.¹⁷

Case studies

3.30 Evidence to the Committee identified three case studies that demonstrate a place-based approach.

Case study 1 - Logan Together project

3.31 Logan Together is one example of a place-based initiative bringing local services together in a coordinated way to deliver a collaboration of critical services to people in need in Logan with a long-term focus.

¹⁵ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, pp. 23-24.

¹⁶ The Salvation Army, *Submission 10*, p. 5.

¹⁷ The Salvation Army, *Submission 10*, p. 10.

- 3.32 Logan Together is a 10 year community movement that started in 2015 to improve the lives of the children and families in Logan. It is a collaboration between the community, service providers, community organisations, government partners and the business community.
- 3.33 Mr Matthew Cox, Director, Logan Together, informed the Committee that ‘out of 315 000 people in Logan city, about 15 000 kids aren’t doing as well as we would like. Of these 15 000 children, 5 000 – 6000 kids aren’t doing well.’¹⁸
- 3.34 Logan Together has agreed on a ‘roadmap’ and vision with all of its stakeholders. The roadmap outlines the 10 year plan to help 5,000 more Logan kids thrive by age 8. It plans to do this using five focus areas: Ready to have kids; good start in life; on track at aged 3; on track at aged 5 years; on track at aged 8 years.¹⁹
- 3.35 Logan Together initially worked with State and Commonwealth Government partners to attempt to identify all relevant social investment supporting child and family wellbeing. Mr Cox explained the ‘exercise was difficult to achieve given the lack of integrated information systems, however some useful findings resulted. In particular, preliminary data showed that funding for family and child wellbeing in Logan added up to approximately \$222.7 million.’²⁰
- 3.36 Logan Together is operating on a budget of \$1.7 million in the 2018-2019 financial years, jointly funded by Commonwealth, State and local governments, and philanthropic organisations.²¹
- 3.37 Mr Cox discussed the challenges of delivering programs in areas of entrenched disadvantage. Working in isolation without effective communication and collaboration between agencies can result in considerable duplication of programs, increased service delivery costs, and inefficient use of resources:

We need to do stuff about how playgroup and kindergarten and prep and school will join together and how health services and paediatric services and disability services come into that pipeline – critically importantly, in a non-stigmatising environment. As soon as you put a sign that says, ‘Broken people,

¹⁸ Mr Cox, Logan Together, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 17.

¹⁹ See website < <http://loganttogether.org.au/the-roadmap/>> accessed 17-01-19

²⁰ Logan Together, *Submission 37*, p. 8.

²¹ Mr Cox, Logan Together, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 22.

come through this doorway,' you get no customers. You need to have a sign that says, 'Whole community welcome,' then you get your customers.'²²

Case study 2 - Doveton College

- 3.38 The Doveton College model was identified as an example of a place-based success story.²³
- 3.39 Doveton College began in 2009 with the Victorian state government, the Federal Government and the Colman Foundation agreeing to establish a unique partnership to plan, build and operate the new facility. The initiative was required to revitalise schooling in a disadvantaged area. Five local schools were closed and one Doveton College was opened as a school that provided integrated community services.
- 3.40 Doveton College has an early learning centre and prep to year 9 school at its centre. It is an example of Australia's first fully integrated education service offering child and family services.
- 3.41 The benefit of using a school as the place-based centre as the community hub is successful mainly because everyone in the community finds the school to be accessible.
- 3.42 Doveton College developed as a result of the community realising that an intervention project was needed in an area to assist with families and children living with entrenched disadvantage who needed support services in health and education.
- 3.43 Some advantages of providing an integrated education service are listed on the Doveton College website. They include:
- Creates strong links between early years services and school
 - Better collaboration and co-ordination between service agencies
 - Families have quicker, more efficient access to services
 - Clearer referral pathways for families and service agencies
 - Enables ongoing intensive support for vulnerable families
 - Early intervention improves child and family health
 - Builds neighbourhood capacity through volunteerism, community hub structure and programs

²² Mr Cox, Logan Together, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 20.

²³ Mr Cox, Logan Together, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 25., Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, p. 15.

- Increased adult presence at the College encourages parental involvement in the school.²⁴

3.44 Mr Cox from Logan Together commented on one of the successful aspects of Doveton College, that it implements a multi-generational approach which assists adults to complete studies as well as children:

... last year they had more adult graduates than child graduates. They had 200 adults who went through adult learning programs— English as a second language certificate II, III, IV, those sorts of programs. They've got social enterprises run by parents. We can do it, and it works. If you go to Challis or you go to Doveton, you can see everything we're talking about working at the school level. What we're trying to do is lift that up to a city of 300,000 people. There are 42 schools in Logan. Not all of them need a Doveton College model, I might add. Maybe 10 do. We can see everything we're talking about really working—no nonsense; it really is working. We can see it at a school level. We can see it at a child and family level, and at a centre level in Tasmania. If we can lift it up to a community level and then do it in a handful of places in each jurisdiction, that's not fantasy. There is a credible plan for human development, human capital, for the country.²⁵

Case study 3 - Tasmanian Child and Family Centres

- 3.45 The Tasmanian Government has progressively opened twelve Child and Family Centres since 2009 in communities with high service needs. The Centres provide a single entry point to universal, targeted, and specialist early years services and supports for parents and children from pregnancy through to age five years.
- 3.46 The Centres are located at or near primary schools to support smooth transitions to school. A Strategic Framework guides local priorities for the community and their service partners. Strong community engagement was central to the design and implementation of the Child and Family Centres and the provision of all interventions to families.
- 3.47 Dedicated training equips staff and community members to authentically partner and work together. The framework of engagement employed in the development of the Child and Family Centres viewed parents and community members as co-workers, co-designers, co-researchers, and co-

²⁴ Doveton College website < <http://www.dovetoncollege.vic.edu.au/about-doveton/who-we-are/>> accessed 18-01-18.

²⁵ Mr Cox, Logan Together, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 25.

producers with the intention of bringing lived experience and practice wisdom together.²⁶

- 3.48 Each Centre has approximately three full-time staff funded by the Tasmanian Department of Education: a centre leader, a community inclusion worker and an early childhood specialist (areas with a higher concentration of Aboriginal families also have an Aboriginal engagement worker).
- 3.49 Services and supports in the Centres are provided by state and local government, non- government organisations and community members. While they vary according to local needs, they typically cover:
- early learning programs (eg early literacy programs, supported playgroups, toy library, adjunct care, Early Education & Care services are co-located at 3 Centres);
 - support for transition to formal schooling through partnerships with schools and Launching into Learning;
 - child health and early childhood intervention services (eg speech pathology, community paediatricians at some sites);
 - family health services (eg Child Health & Parenting Nurse, family planning, midwifery services, antenatal programs);
 - parenting programs;
 - adult education (eg literacy education, art workshops, Get Active programs);
 - family support services (eg outreach services, counselling, transport to appointments); and
 - pathways to employment.²⁷

Wrap-around services

- 3.50 The second principle identified by the Committee as a key element of successful welfare programs is the provision of wrap-around services. Wrap-around services are individualised, co-ordinated and take a holistic approach. These services consider an individual's needs and work collaboratively with other support services to deliver a coordinated response to improve that individual's circumstances. Wrap-around services can assist with a crisis, but generally work towards building long-term capabilities for individuals and families.

²⁶ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, p. 23.

²⁷ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, p. 23.

Benefits of a wrap-around approach

3.51 The Committee received evidence on the benefits of developing wrap-around services. These services are often delivered by larger community not-for-profit organisations with significant experience in service delivery for disadvantaged Australians. Wrap-around services require the provider to have strong connections with a variety of service sectors such as healthcare, education and training, and employment.

3.52 Ms Kim Brooklyn from UnitingCare West discussed the benefits of an employment wrap-around program that is being run by UnitingCare in Queensland:

We started off with 14 people. We have employed all of those. We have 12 people still working for us, three years later. There were supports around them. There was the education and training. There were supports from our people services but also from our staff, around buddying and supporting people into the employment place. We tried to have a culture that was really inclusive, and I think it was really well demonstrated by the fact that we still have 12 of those 14 people working for us. It's a really exciting program.²⁸

3.53 Save the Children told the Committee about one of their successful wrap-around programs:

One of the things that we know from our work at Save the Children is that no organisation alone can work with these families. It's very important, for those families who are experiencing complex needs and multiple risk factors, that you work as a group, a service system, to wrap around these families to ensure they get the services that they need and, indeed, transition between the services that they need. No family stays static, so the service system needs to be able to flex and wane around the child and the families. The Play2Learn program is primarily funded by the Department of Social Services through the Communities for Children initiative and directly through Children and Parenting Support. We have done quite a lot of work in terms of the return on investment for that. Over 12 months, we found that the social return on investment ratio was one to four, so we're fairly proud of that.²⁹

²⁸ Ms Kim Brooklyn, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, UnitingCare West, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 21 November 2018, p. 45.

²⁹ Ms Heather Finlayson, Save the Children Australia, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 2.

- 3.54 Ms Wendy Fields, Head of Policy and Programs, The Smith Family, described how they provide wrap-around support services to people in need:

Our family partnership coordinators work with the family to articulate what the issues are. That's not always at the point of crisis. It's ideally at the point of crisis, but we're there in the long-term to work with the family around understanding what the issues are and how they might get the support that they need in that community. So it's a support-and-referral model. It's not a case management model. It's a partnership-and-coordination model.³⁰

Co-designed programs

- 3.55 Wrap-around services benefit from being designed in collaboration with all the stakeholders. These stakeholders may include individuals, service providers, and government organisations.
- 3.56 Co-design facilitates collaboration between agencies working to improve the wellbeing of people who are struggling with housing, education and employment and other complex issues. Co-design increases the likelihood that cohorts or individuals receive programs that are tailored to their needs.
- 3.57 Social Ventures Australia (SVA) provided an example of where a co-designed program enabled a participant to gain valuable skills and work experience. The program was a SVA Industry Employment Initiative designed with service delivery partners. The program delivered wrap-around support for job seekers such as homelessness, and or drug and alcohol related issues, in addition to assisting with work ready skills:³¹

Bill participated in a three-week bespoke training program co-designed by the employer and the IEI. This program helped build his confidence, taught him industry-based content that was relevant to the role on offer and included a personal presentation and grooming module which ensured that he met the five-star standards of the hotel. It's the first real support, Bill says, that he received during his period of unemployment. His prior experience with job agencies had him doing little more than applying for jobs. 'It's 100% better. I'd rather do (training) than spend a month with no job,' he says.³²

Case studies

³⁰ Ms Wendy Fields, Head of Policy and Programs, The Smith Family, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 8 November 2018, p. 4.

³¹ Social Ventures Australia, *Submission 30*, p. 16.

³² Social Ventures Australia, *Submission 30*, p. 16.

- 3.58 The Committee identified two case studies that show programs that provide wrap-around services.

Case study 4 - Sticking together

- 3.59 SYC is a not-for-profit transition organisation that provides support for people experiencing homelessness and disconnection from their community and employment. SYC has multiple funders represented by service contracts with federal and state governments, local government partnerships, projects funded by philanthropists, charities and corporate partners.
- 3.60 SYC's Sticking Together project supports young people to develop work readiness skills and capabilities to enable them to 'stick' in work. It is a coaching model that was developed in collaboration with the Queensland University of Technology and The Australian Centre for Social Innovation and co-designed with young people themselves.³³
- 3.61 The Sticking Together Project utilises an intensive coaching model to build rapport with participating young people and their employer(s) over a 60-week period. In addition to employment-related skills, support is provided by the coach in non-vocational skills development and overcoming other barriers to employment a young person might face, including home, health and relationship challenges. Support is provided when the young person is in work and during periods of unemployment. Support is also provided to employers to help them manage the employment relationship and 'stick with' the young person.
- 3.62 The findings were positive and resulted in sixty-six per cent of participants not requiring welfare benefits by the end of the program.³⁴

Case study 5 - Empowered communities

- 3.63 Empowered communities is an Indigenous designed and led model and aims to increase Indigenous ownership and give Indigenous people a greater say over decisions that affect them. It brings Indigenous leaders and communities into a more balanced partnership with Government and corporate organisations. Empowered communities was launched in August 2013.

³³ SYC, *Submission 15*, p. 3.

³⁴ SYC, *Submission 15*, p. 4.

- 3.64 Empowered communities are currently running in the following eight regions around Australia including urban, regional and remote communities: Cape York, Queensland; Central Coast, New South Wales; East and West Kimberley, Western Australia; Goulburn-Murray, Victoria; Inner Sydney, New South Wales; North East Arnhem Land, Western Australia; NPY Lands, Central Australia.
- 3.65 The Committee heard from Mr Robert Ryan, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, about Empowered Communities:

At Empowered Communities we are looking at joint decision-making in a number of regions, with a view that it would expand across all the regions. In inner Sydney and the East Kimberley and Cape York, they're already starting, and that is a process where government works with the Empowered Communities leaders, and the Empowered Communities leaders actually set up community panels, so they are informed themselves by the community. They get all the data that government has and have that available, but they then make their own decision.

The view is, hopefully, that there is then a joint decision that goes to the minister. But sometimes we anticipate that won't be the case. The department will have a different view, and then the minister ultimately makes the decision. But he has committed to a 75 per cent weighting on the advice that he'll get from EC leaders, which gives the department only 25 per cent to play with. It's early days, but it seems to be a very successful way of doing exactly that—making sure that the department gets a level of understanding about how the community views these things and assesses them—that we would probably struggle to get otherwise.³⁵

- 3.66 In its submission, the Cape York Partnership stated:

Indigenous people must be the principal actors driving their own development through local (place-based) development agendas across Cape York. This is the only way to address the problem of intergenerational welfare and entrenched disadvantage. Indigenous agency, development, empowerment and productivity are all prisms by which all public policy objectives and expenditure should be considered at a regional and local level, including an unwavering focus on rebuilding social norms, lifting education outcomes, and engagement with the real economy.³⁶

- 3.67 The submission continued to outline the success of this approach:

³⁵ Mr Robert Ryan, Assistant Secretary, Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 17 October 2018, p. 8.

³⁶ Cape York Partnership, *Submission 9*, p. [3].

In Cape York we are now applying these principles to everything we do and we can see the change happening before our eyes. Local groups have formed and are engaged, have a clear vision and are focused on outcomes. Local people want local development agendas that address short, medium and longer term priorities in every community and for these agendas and plans to become the driver of progress as stable and intergenerational blueprints.

The momentum, however, is really on a knife's edge and Cape York communities are at a critical juncture for their future development pathways and for their very survival.³⁷

Committee comment

- 3.68 The Committee received evidence demonstrating the benefits of place-based and wrap-around services for supporting people out of disadvantage and into job readiness and employment. The Committee believes the approaches identified in the case studies are working well and should be continued.
- 3.69 The Committee supports place-based services that connect with the community and assist with the coordination of services for people living in specific areas. By tailoring the assistance to the local community needs, service providers that are connected with local social services and the community are able to deliver continuous and longer term support for people trying to improve their parenting skills, or get training and skills for long-term employment.
- 3.70 Targeted, wrap-around support services are also essential. This is especially important to effectively engage children and families where the barriers to education and employment are complex and multi-faceted. The Committee believes this style of program delivery will assist to reduce duplication of services and improve the effectiveness of welfare programs.
- 3.71 The Committee is impressed with the innovative and coordinated approach of the Logan Together model. The Committee recognises that this project is planned to run for ten years in order to deliver significant positive changes for approximately 6 000 young children growing up in Logan. The Committee encourages Logan Together to meet its targets in or before 2025 and is encouraged by the work of the Department of Social Services in developing new flexible funding arrangements for such projects.
- 3.72 The Committee notes several models of service provider coordination that are currently being assessed by the Department of Social Services. These

³⁷ Cape York Partnership, *Submission 9*, p. [3].

include Logan Together which has created a community hub, Doveton College model which is based around a local school, and the various family and community centres in different states and territories.

- 3.73 The Committee was impressed with the program Sticking Together delivered by SYC Adelaide, to support people on welfare support into sustainable employment. Appointing mentors or coaches for participants to help guide them through the process of finding a job and sticking with it is critical in assisting participants to complete the employment program.
- 3.74 The Committee sees merit in the Australia Government encouraging collective investment for service providers to deliver supported employment programs like Sticking Together.
- 3.75 The Committee recognises that communities are able to best help themselves when service providers collaborate and become invested in delivering streamlined and coordinated services.

Recommendation 1

- 3.76 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government continue to prioritise funding for place-based and wrap-around services that can demonstrate evidence of successful programs for people living with entrenched disadvantage.**

4. Focus areas to address disadvantage

- 4.1 Chapter 3 focused on the two over-arching principles that are fundamental to the delivery of successful programs for people living with entrenched disadvantage. This chapter discusses when to target welfare assistance to maximise its impact. The Committee heard that timely, focused interventions are both most beneficial and most cost effective.
- 4.2 This chapter focuses on when intervention and prevention can be best targeted. The first part of this chapter discusses the times over a life course that welfare assistance is most beneficial, and the second part discusses the expenditure areas that are, broadly, the most useful in preventing disadvantage becoming entrenched.

Life course

- 4.3 The Committee received evidence that highlighted the importance of transition phases that occur in each person's life. Life changes such as getting married, divorced, becoming a parent, starting and leaving school, getting or losing a job, or having an illness can be opportunities to provide targeted welfare that prevents entrenched disadvantage.

Pre-natal and parenthood

- 4.4 The Committee heard that a successful start to life, even from the point of conception, has a disproportionately beneficial impact. In a report by the Department of Social Services, *Stronger Outcomes for Families* 2018, it states:

Learning for children occurs long before they first step into an early childhood education centre or a school. It happens during the first years of a child's life,

with their parents and families teaching them critical sensory, motor learning, mental, physical and social capabilities. Shifting the long-term trajectories of children can be most effective during this prenatal and early childhood period as the foundations for development are established.

For example, in a child's first three years of life, their brain grows from approximately 25 per cent to 80-90 per cent of adult size. This period is also one of intense change for families, as they commit to learning new approaches and adapting to the changes in family dynamics a new child brings.

Competing demands can place significant time and resource pressures on families. However, there is a significant positive impact on the outcomes for children when families commit to creating a stimulating learning environment and parents are engaged in their education. Skills acquired from families form the basis for skill development later in that child's life.

Parents and families have the most direct and lasting impact on children's learning outcomes. Creating an environment that allows children to learn and parents being positive learning role models help children to have the capacity to learn and be ready for school. Our services can assist to build parents skills, education and confidence to ensure their children are school ready and have the capacity to learn.¹

- 4.5 This view was reinforced by Ms Kim Brooklyn of UnitingCare West who commented:

Certainly there is evidence around prenatal conditions around brain development, let alone the cognitive capacity post birth.²

- 4.6 The report *Fair progress, economic mobility across generations around the world 2018*, stated that:

Maternal disadvantage associated with the socioeconomic status (SES) of mothers related to differences in education, income, and other circumstances such as race and marital status leads to poorer health among the children at birth through four key channels: poor health behaviours during the prenatal period; greater exposure to harmful environmental factors; lower access to

¹ Department of Social Services (DSS), *Stronger outcomes for families 2018*, p. 9.

² Ms Kim Brooklyn, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, UnitingCare West, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 21 November 2018, p. 43.

medical care, including family planning services; and poorer maternal health, including nutrition.³

- 4.7 Professor Ribar from the Life Course Centre commented that the entry into parenthood is a critical phase requiring support:

There are lots of things that you can paper over in your relationship when there's no child present that somebody has to respond to once a child is there, and lots of couples find that their relationship deteriorates for a while right around the birth of the first child. So that's actually a family relation intervention point. One of the surprising findings from other countries is that nurse visitation programs often not only help somebody to be a better parent but help couples to be better couples.⁴

- 4.8 Ms Penny Wright, Guardian for the Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People, raised the importance of programs identifying mothers who are pregnant and at risk. Ms Wright commented on the merits of a program that recently combined resources from several areas to create the Bumps to Beyond program. She said the following support was critical to new mums, especially if specialised support services were required:

... mental health, drug and alcohol support, medical services and everything—to support young women who attended from when they first had their pregnancies confirmed and to walk alongside them and support them right through until the baby was born and perhaps afterwards and beyond.⁵

- 4.9 Further, Ms Wright stated:

What I do know is that they recommend that resourcing and funding appropriate supports for families at risk of entering the child protection system antenatally, before the child is even born, and during infancy is crucial for a child's development and wellbeing. They say that early intervention can reduce disorders that develop during pregnancy and if harm can be prevented early—and an obvious one would be FASD, but there are lots of others of course including nutrition—the cognitive, social, emotional and physical

³ A. Narayan, R Van der Weide, *Fair progress? Economic Mobility across Generations around the World*, The World Bank, 2018, p. 174.

⁴ Professor David Ribar, Chief Investigator, Life Course Centre (LCC), *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 8 November 2018, p. 33.

⁵ Ms Penny Wright, Guardian, Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People, *Committee Hansard*, Adelaide, 9 November 2018, p. 16.

impacts can also be prevented and can have a lasting lifetime effect on families.⁶

- 4.10 Logan Together commented there was a lack of women accessing ante natal care. Logan Together identified this as an area of concern and as a problem to be addressed:

Ninety per cent of kids have no health checks before school. Two years ago 12 per cent of women had little or no antenatal care. With half of that cohort—half that 12 per cent—about 300 of the 600 women who get little antenatal care their first episode of health care was when they turned up to give birth. This is the territory we're in at the moment—doing the things that are indisputable in terms of what makes the difference for kids, but getting them to people.⁷

Parents as first teachers

- 4.11 Parenting programs have an important role to play in promoting positive child development. The principles of positive parenting are based on providing a safe, engaging and positive learning environment for children, and recognising that raising children is a shared parental responsibility.
- 4.12 Quality parenting and nurturing for children provides a positive outlook for each child's life chances. Caregivers need education, time and support to ensure a child's good health and wellbeing.
- 4.13 Research points to the critical importance of parents as first teachers. Early intervention programs have been developed to address early disadvantage. The Department of Social Services (DSS) informed the Committee that young parents were a priority group as education and employment options were disrupted for young mothers. DSS stated:

Having a baby at a young age can disrupt education and increase the barriers to finding and keeping a job. This can lead to long-term welfare dependency and poorer life outcomes for young parents and their children. It is important to help young parents for their wellbeing and the wellbeing of their children.⁸

- 4.14 In its submission the Life Course Centre highlighted this issue:

⁶ Ms Wright, Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People, Committee Hansard, Adelaide, 9 November 2018, p. 16.

⁷ Mr Matthew Cox, Director, Logan Together, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November, 2018, pp. 23-24.

⁸ DSS, *Try Test and Learn Fund, Young Parents*, 2016, p. 1.

Life Course Centre research shows certain groups, such as young mothers who are not in employment, education or training, are more likely to experience disadvantage with flow-on effects for their children. Social interventions that improve opportunities for young mothers have the potential to be doubly advantageous by also improving the opportunities for their children. Early interventions in life course pathways are key to preventing and reducing life-long and intergenerational disadvantage.⁹

4.15 In addition, the Life Course Centre research also found that ‘more educated parents spend more time with children than less educated parents and moreover, that educated parents tailor their time with children to favour activities that are particularly important at different developmental stages – a finding that has been termed the “developmental gradient”. This provides strong evidence that parenting practices shape socio-economic outcomes and the transmission of (dis)advantage, with important implications for understanding social stratification processes, as well as ways of intervening to improve outcomes for children.’¹⁰

4.16 In a report from 2016 the Department of Social Services discussed some statistical findings of risks for young parents:

Statistics show that children of young parents are more likely to grow up without a father, be of low birth weight, have lower levels of emotional support and cognitive stimulation, show lower academic achievement later on including a higher risk of repeating a grade at school, and be less prepared to enter school. They also have a greater risk of socio-emotional problems, have higher rates of foster care placement, be more likely to be incarcerated at some time during adolescence, have lower educational achievement or leave school early be a teen parent themselves and be unemployed or underemployed as an adult.¹¹

4.17 DSS is running a program over 24 months that supports Expecting and Parenting Teens with a \$4 million budget across Australia. There are targeted areas in Victoria, Tasmania, Northern Territory, NSW and Queensland along with a nationwide online program.¹²

⁹ Life Course Centre (LCC), *Submission 11*, p. 4.

¹⁰ LCC, *Submission 11*, p. 6.

¹¹ DSS, *Try Test and Learn Fund, Young Parents*, 2016, p. 2.

¹² DSS website <<https://www.dss.gov.au/review-of-australias-welfare-system-australian-priority-investment-approach-to-welfare-try-test-and-learn-fund/supporting-expecting-and-parenting-teens>> viewed 19 February 2019.

Positive Parenting Program (PPP)

- 4.18 Positive parenting programs also have a crucial role to play in promoting positive child development. According to Professor Matt Sanders of the Life Course Centre, children who are raised in a positive parenting environment do better at school, make friends more easily and are less likely to have emotional and behavioural problems as they age.¹³
- 4.19 Making such programs easily accessible to all families can improve the knowledge, skills and confidence of parents; empowering them to participate in the planning, decision-making and example-setting that impacts on their children.
- 4.20 For example, the *Every Family* project is a current Life Course Centre study examining the effectiveness of the Triple P - Positive Parenting Program in 38 disadvantaged communities in Queensland:

Triple P has been extensively evaluated around the world and found to produce more consistent and better parenting and child outcomes. However, our study is innovative because we are interested in how well Triple P works in highly disadvantaged communities, and we also want to see whether there are community level effects of a widespread program rollout. In particular, if you get a certain level of community 'saturation' of the program, do benefits spill-over to families who don't directly receive the parenting program, and can we see these benefits reflected in better outcomes at the community level?¹⁴

- 4.21 Professor Baxter noted the benefit of the Triple P Parenting program being tiered intervention:

It's a tiered level of intervention, which can be as little as a pamphlet in a mailbox right through to very targeted interventions with very difficult children. So I don't think it has to be costly. Once basic infrastructure is in place, it can be rolled out. The Queensland government has made Triple P available to any family that wants to take it up in Queensland, so it's being rolled out across the state, but not every family will go along to a seminar or have service providers come into their home. Some might just read a pamphlet or look at something online. If middle-class families who might just need a bit of reassurance can have a phone number that they can call if they've got

¹³ LCC, *Submission 11*, p. 7.

¹⁴ LCC, *Submission 11*, p. 10.

questions, that can be quite cost-effective, and, tiered in that way, it can be universal. Not everybody needs the same sort of intervention.¹⁵

Education

- 4.22 Receiving a quality education is an important contributor to avoiding entrenched disadvantage. Evidence received from submissions and transcripts supports the role of education as an important predictor of an individual's future employment, income, health and welfare outcomes.
- 4.23 Educational attainment is strongly correlated with parental educational achievement. In its submission, Save the Children commented that:
- ... an individual's chance to do better than parents in education can depend ranking on the social ladder and a parent's level of educational attainment. For example, children will only have a 13 per cent chance to attain tertiary education, if their parents did not attain upper secondary education while they would be four times more likely to attend university if at least one parent had attained tertiary qualifications.¹⁶
- 4.24 At the same time, parental engagement in their child's education is very important to the child's educational success. The Smith Family noted that research points to the fact that 'you don't need to be Einstein to be involved in your children's education.'¹⁷
- 4.25 Research by Nobel Economist James Heckman and his colleague Flavio Cunha (2007), shows that efforts aimed at improving the educational outcomes of disadvantaged young people are most cost effective when they involve balanced long-term support across a young person's life:
- Investment distributed over the first two decades of a child's life, produces more adult skills than the same level of investment focused on one part of a young person's life, for example the early years or adolescence. A sustained and early intervention approach is also far more cost effective than remedial efforts aimed at preparing adults for the workforce.¹⁸

¹⁵ Professor Janeen Baxter, Director, Life Course Centre, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 8 November 2018, p. 35.

¹⁶ Save the Children Australia, *Submission 28*, p. 2.

¹⁷ Ms Anne Hampshire, Head of Research and Advocacy, The Smith Family, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 8 November 2018, p. 5.

¹⁸ *Improving the educational outcomes of disadvantaged young Australians: The Learning for life program*, The Smith Family Research report 2016, p. 14.

- 4.26 The Committee heard that there are times during an individual's education when targeted assistance is particularly effective. These are discussed below.

Preventing early school leaving

- 4.27 Improving educational outcomes for all individuals on income support has been identified as key in that it provides better future employment options. Early intervention is critical, particularly to avoid early school leaving and ensure that a young adult stays in formal education as long as possible.

- 4.28 Save the Children commented that:

To improve social mobility and avoid inequality of opportunity, interventions to support this outcome need to occur throughout a child's life from early education, to formal education and to deter early school leaving. We know the non-completion of school or failure to gain other post-secondary qualifications substantially increases the risk of young people not making a successful transition into full time employment. Lack of qualifications means that workers are more likely to be unskilled with flow on effects including: higher unemployment rates, higher take up of welfare benefits and larger participation rates in labour market programs.¹⁹

- 4.29 The Smith Family also addressed the importance of supporting disadvantaged young people to remain engaged in education:

Australian children from low socioeconomic backgrounds are at risk of poor educational outcomes from their first year of school, and this risk increases as they move through school. The clearest pathway to breaking cycles of intergenerational disadvantage is to support children and young people to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours that set them up for participating in the complex employment market of the 21st century.²⁰

- 4.30 The Committee received numerous examples of early intervention programs being run throughout Australia. The Smith Family reports that '[s]eventy per cent of the children we support live in a household where there is no adult in the labour force.'²¹

- 4.31 The Smith Family highlighted its Learning for Life program which supports 43 000 children:

¹⁹ Save the Children Australia, *Submission 28*, p. 1.

²⁰ The Smith Family, *Submission 7*, p. 9.

²¹ Ms Hampshire, The Smith Family, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 8 November 2018, p. 1.

The Learning for Life program is a scholarship not a welfare payment and the agreement articulates a shared commitment to the student's participation in education including compliance requirements on both parties. The scholarship takes the children right through to the completion of year 12 and onwards to tertiary education where possible. This is a long-term initiative that can support a person for 17 years or more. The current Advancement Rate is 69.2 per cent, or close to seven in 10 students.²²

- 4.32 The Learning for Life program right through to completion has a success rate of 80 per cent:

So for our young people who are on our Learning for Life scholarship program, four out of five of them are in work or study 12 months after leaving the program.²³

Transitioning into higher education

- 4.33 The Committee heard evidence about the challenges of transitioning from Year 12 into higher education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- 4.34 The Smith Family discussed the importance of supporting students to move into higher education. This support service is especially important in families where the parents have not had a tertiary education:

Our experience is that it's really challenging for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to stay engaged in tertiary education without the right supports and that they struggle to understand how to access those supports, even with that support in place. So our partnerships with tertiary institutions are around us inserting them – so supporting them to engage with the support network that's actually available to them, because there are good support networks in universities but the kids struggle to access.²⁴

- 4.35 The Committee was interested to hear evidence about support programs assisting young people to transition into TAFE colleges. Ms Field from The Smith Family said:

There are particular issues with the TAFE system across Australia at the moment – a legacy of, I suppose, recent policy and funding arrangements. But we're in discussion with a number of TAFEs around how we support disadvantaged kids to get beyond year 1 of TAFE, because their dropout rates

²² The Smith Family, *Submission 7*, p. 11.

²³ Ms Hampshire, The Smith Family, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 8 November 2018, p. 7.

²⁴ Ms Field, The Smith Family, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 8 November 2018, p. 6.

are shocking at this point in time. So again it's working side by side to help young people to access the supports that are actually available in those institutions if they can find the right entry door.²⁵

Relocating interstate and the education system

- 4.36 Children are also at risk of slipping through the cracks due to a lack of data sharing about their education when they move interstate.
- 4.37 Families who are struggling to make ends meet may relocate interstate to get family support, for work, to look for more affordable housing or to escape from family violence.
- 4.38 Moving schools, changing curriculum and losing social networks can be disruptive for children. Educational information does not always transfer to the new school. For example, the Committee heard that low school attendance rate data is not provided to inter-state schools.
- 4.39 The Smith Family noted that 20 per cent of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients have high levels of mobility as well as many families from low socio-economic backgrounds. Ms Hampshire provided some possible reasons for high mobility:

... for low-income families, it's often because of rental pressure or the like, family breakdown or domestic violence, and that's very problematic for children because it interrupts the educational journey – not only the learning journey but the social journey.²⁶

- 4.40 Currently Australian States and Territories do not share data tracking for education attendance and achievement:

So, if you are a student in New South Wales, you might have attendance data and achievement data, but, if you then move to WA, that doesn't go with you. It's one of the recommendations which has been agreed by COAG since 2009. It's been reinforced in the recent Gonski review. It is an important foundational piece we would advocate, both so that individual students can be tracked but also so that we can actually assess any of our public policy interventions which aim to influence attendance or achievement.²⁷

Employment

²⁵ Ms Field, The Smith Family, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 8 November 2018, p. 6.

²⁶ Ms Hampshire, The Smith Family, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 8 November 2018, p. 7.

²⁷ Ms Field, The Smith Family, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 8 November 2018, p. 8.

- 4.41 Employment is one of the key routes out of poverty. Employment provides economic, social and health benefits. The Committee received evidence about the supports necessary for individuals and families living with entrenched disadvantage when trying to gain employment.
- 4.42 Australian Government data shows that it is more likely than not, that a person who has grown-up in a parental welfare dependent family, will become welfare dependent themselves. In Australia, by the age of 25 years, 90 per cent of children who experienced childhood in a family of very high parental welfare dependence will have interacted with the welfare system in their own right.²⁸
- 4.43 There are multiple factors for why a young person struggles to find employment. Although the intergenerational correlation does not necessarily indicate causation, it may be that young people who have not been exposed to employed adults during childhood have a limited understanding of how to secure and keep work.
- 4.44 Policy makers in many OECD countries have used parental joblessness, where children live with parents who are not employed, as a key indicator of severe childhood disadvantage. In Australia, parental joblessness is a leading cause of childhood poverty.²⁹
- 4.45 Ms Anne- Marie Mioche, Chief Executive Officer, CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes described to the Committee the challenges of living Wilcannia and Forbes and looking for work:

Where we work, co-design with the community is the place I would start. Our best programs are ideas that have come out of the community; they know what the solutions are. I think that applies to future employment opportunities or any government policy that looks to lessening welfare dependency. So that is probably the first element, I would say. Where we operate, often there are no jobs. If government is going to be serious about ending welfare dependency in those areas, then you have to create jobs.

In our case, that means we often have to employ people who have no skills, no CV, no experience of what it is like to be in a workplace and sometimes not even a birth certificate. We give them a job and then we start the process of training and so on. By giving someone a job, you are creating a sense of hope, a sense of purpose and a sense of having a future in an organisation. Schemes

²⁸ Department of Social Services, *Parental Welfare Dependence Data: Valuation Report*, 30 June 2017

²⁹ LCC, *Submission 11*, p. 5.

like the CDP, where people's benefits are cut if they don't participate, don't create a sense of hope.³⁰

Young parents

- 4.46 Life Course Centre research shows certain groups, such as young mothers who are not in employment, education or training, are more likely to experience disadvantage with flow on effects for their children.³¹
- 4.47 Analysis of the Paid Parental Leave Scheme introduced in 2011 showed that the success of paid parental leave in keeping mothers in the labour force and in their previous employment is dependent on the availability of good and affordable childcare.³²
- 4.48 Supporting parents to maintain labour force attachment when their children are very young through provision of paid parental leave, supporting men to share care, and ensuring high-quality childcare is available for children when parents return to work, is instrumental in keeping as many parents as possible in the labour force.
- 4.49 Not everyone looking for employment is ready or has the capacity to work full-time. A more flexible labour market and working arrangements accommodating personal circumstances, work readiness and family commitments is needed. Young parents need different work options; for example supported volunteering, part-time and full-time employment.

Long-term unemployed

- 4.50 The Committee heard that an important area of targeted assistance is for the long-term unemployed. After a lengthy period of unemployment, individuals face additional barriers to employment. These include loss of skills, loss of confidence, and resistance from employers.
- 4.51 The Salvation Army stressed the need for additional subsidies and realistic incentives for employers to address existing barriers to employment. For example, additional financial assistance for income support recipients to access education and training, coverage of transport costs to training and work, subsidising of housing in higher employment areas, increased benefits

³⁰ Ms Anne- Marie Mioche, Chief Executive Officer, CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 21 November 2018, p. 19.

³¹ LCC, *Submission 11*, p. 4.

³² LCC, *Submission 11*, p. 5.

and flexible arrangements for quality childcare may alleviate some of the practical challenges people experience when looking for work.³³

- 4.52 The Salvation Army stated that assisting people who have been out of work for long periods of time need longer term support:

For us, a response from government through job-service providers and people and support is to that local, individualised, longer-term casework. You mentioned mentoring before. We find that for some longer term entrenched people who are unemployed sometimes it takes about three or four goes for them to get a job that they can actually hold down for longer than four months, because they're still in the process of trying to understand what it means to work, what it means to be responsible, what it means to show up every day, what it means when they've had a problem to just not storm out and walk out, which is the way their lives have been conditioned.³⁴

Availability of entry level jobs

- 4.53 In order for a person to gain employment there must be jobs available. The 2017 Jobs Availability Snapshot, commissioned by Anglicare, shows that there has been good growth in full-time employment in Australia for some time. However people who face barriers to employment need to be supported by the right programs to access these jobs.

- 4.54 Anglicare's Snapshot report demonstrates that there are many more people in Australia applying for entry-level work than there are jobs suitable for them:

What we can say is that the central finding is borne out - that there is consistently many more jobseekers needing entry-level jobs than there are suitable jobs available.³⁵

- 4.55 Mr Roland Manderson, Anglicare continued to explain this barrier into the workforce:

There are more people who need the jobs than there are jobs available, and there are other people who could get other jobs but are also applying for the same low-skill entry-level jobs because it suits them, because they're at university or whatever else. In the city it might seem that there are more jobs

³³ The Salvation Army, *Submission 10*, p. 7.

³⁴ Captain Stuart Glover, The Salvation Army, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 13.

³⁵ Anglicare, *Submission 1*, Attachment Jobs Availability Snapshot 2017, p. 13.

around; the reality is that people who are excluded from the workforce ... are still going to find it hard whether they're in the city or country.³⁶

Committee comment

- 4.56 The Committee is supportive of welfare programs that target those who need it most, at the times that it can be of most help. The Committee notes again the complexity of the many compounding factors that contribute to disadvantage. As discussed in the previous chapter, in many cases an individualised person-centred response is the most effective, including follow up support for an extended period of time. The Committee considers that these responses should be provided at life phases of key risk.
- 4.57 The Committee considers that young parents who have had their education and employment prospects disrupted to have a child should be provided with ongoing and targeted wrap-around services. These wrap-around services should provide individuals with support and pathways into further education, work readiness skills, childcare assistance and employment pathways.
- 4.58 The Committee recognises the importance of providing pregnant women with appropriate levels of social support and healthcare. However it is also important to ensure young parents have links with the education and employment sector. This will give options for further study and work as their children grow.
- 4.59 The Committee understands that transitioning people who have been receiving long-term welfare support requires significant resources to enable individuals to transition into successful long-term employment. Finding the right job in the right location with employment availability are just some of the challenges that need to be overcome.
- 4.60 The Committee is concerned with the research that demonstrates that there are not enough low skilled jobs available throughout Australia. The Committee recognises that the digital transformation of the economy has eroded many low skilled jobs. The Committee believes it is critical to provide further training and support to certain cohorts and upskill them into available long term jobs.
- 4.61 Long-term funding for education support is critical for supporting children out of welfare support and into employment. The Committee commends The Smith Family's commitment and long-term strategy to assist children to

³⁶ Mr Roland Manderson, Angicare, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 21 November 2018, p. 3.

obtain year 12 certificates and transition into further education or vocational training.

- 4.62 Data sharing between states and territories will enable some children to be better supported rather than falling through the cracks as parents move inter-state. The Committee was informed that currently school attendance records are not shared between states and territories.
- 4.63 The Committee believes this basic data should be shared between all states and territories. This will enable the Australian Government to provide better targeted services to children in need.

Recommendation 2

- 4.64 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government immediately work through COAG to implement the agreed COAG recommendation from 2009 that all educational data sets including school attendance records should be shared between all states and territories.**

Target areas

- 4.65 As well as times during a person's life where welfare assistance can have the most impact, the Committee heard that there are also certain areas of expenditure where assistance can provide multiple benefits. These three areas – housing, healthcare and financial literacy – are discussed further below.

Housing

- 4.66 Affordable and safe housing for people in receipt of welfare is a critical component of wellbeing. Suitable housing is an essential precursor to further education, training or employment.
- 4.67 During the inquiry the Committee received evidence that highlighted the fact that housing instability is a barrier for people receiving long-term welfare support.
- 4.68 The Salvation Army commented that 'housing is a very integral part of relieving the cycle of poverty. This means access to affordable and

sustainable housing. Without housing, getting people out of this cycle is almost impossible, so it's a major issue...'³⁷

4.69 SYC highlighted the prevalence of homelessness and housing instability for those on long term welfare support:

For SYC, we seek to work with individuals and families prior to a crisis point. If this is not possible, we often work with a young person experiencing homelessness, from this crisis point to become stable and secure in their life. Only then can we begin to work towards independence. SYC's ultimate goal in working with Australians is to support them to secure private rental accommodation and be self-sufficient because they have employment.³⁸

4.70 The Committee heard from SYC about its HYPA Housing model that is providing housing support for young people at risk of homelessness:

Today, the HYPA Housing model provides a young person at risk of homelessness, up to a 24-month lease paid for with rent set at 30 per cent of their income. The compact whilst living in HYPA Housing, other than paying your rent and being a responsible tenant, is that a young person must be engaged in learning, volunteering or working ... Of those that exited, 73 per cent did so into independent housing, with the other 27 per cent going on to public and other supported housing option.³⁹

4.71 The Salvation Army noted in its submission that:

In regional and rural areas there is often not the availability and opportunities of a vibrant job market compared to city areas. Housing costs to live in the city have become unaffordable, and as a result many people have been forced to the regional areas in search for cheaper housing. However, this also means that there are fewer job opportunities in these areas.⁴⁰

4.72 Social Ventures Australia commented:

Those who are disadvantaged by poverty, poor education, unstable employment or poor health are less likely to have secure housing, less likely to transition successfully to the private rental market or home ownership and are at greater risk of homelessness.

³⁷ Captain Glover, Salvation Army, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 9.

³⁸ SYC, *Submission 15*, p. 3.

³⁹ SYC, *Submission 15*, p. 3.

⁴⁰ The Salvation Army, *Submission 10*, p. 7.

In addition, Australia has an inadequate supply of stable, appropriate and affordable accommodation, particularly for those on low-incomes. This has a significant detrimental impact on individuals and families but also on government resources and the economy.

For those in need of stable and affordable housing, it is also necessary to provide holistic and integrated support services focusing on other aspects of people's lives such as education, pre- employment training, mental health issues, drug and alcohol problems, and/or domestic and family violence.⁴¹

4.73 Further evidence received from Engendering Equality stated that:

Family violence is a leading cause of homelessness. In 2015-16, 38 per cent of all people requesting assistance from specialist homelessness agencies were escaping family violence. This included 31 000 children aged under 14 and 66 000 women (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2017).

Women are often forced to choose between whether to stay in an abusive relationship or to become homeless. Risks of homelessness to people facing increased hardship will force women to stay in unsafe environments or go into situations that may be a risk to their safety and wellbeing.⁴²

Healthcare

4.74 Ensuring individuals and communities can thrive and meet their full potential is linked to good health from birth. As discussed earlier, children's lifelong development and outcomes in education, income, health, and wellbeing are closely aligned with their parents' situations. The Public Health Association of Australia commented:

The effect of social determinants of health is seen at the beginning of life. The chance of a child dying before the age of 5 years is linked with parents' income—the lower the income, the higher the mortality in the Americas. Reducing rates of child poverty is a high-priority policy in many OECD countries.⁴³

4.75 Geographical location is linked to poor health outcomes within Australia. Children living in rural and remote areas of Australia are up to five times as

⁴¹ Social Ventures Australia, *Submission 30*, p. 18.

⁴² Engendering Equality, *Submission 13*, p. 8.

⁴³ Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA), *Submission 34*, p. 7.

likely as children living in urban areas to have challenges with their developmental health and greater difficulty getting the support they need.⁴⁴

- 4.76 The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) commented that food security and knowledge regarding good food nutrition play an important role on individual's health and wellbeing:

Food insecurity is an indicator of poverty, and low income is an indicator of vulnerability to household food insecurity. Household food insecurity is also tightly linked to poorer health status. It is a robust predictor of health care utilisation and costs incurred by working-age adults, independent of other social determinants of health.

Good nutrition is crucial and begins before birth with adequate nourishment of mothers. Mothers and children need a continuum of care from before pregnancy, through pregnancy and childbirth, to the early days and years of life. Children need safe, healthy, supporting, nurturing, caring, and responsive living environments.⁴⁵

- 4.77 During a public hearing, Mr Malcom Baalman, PHAA, told the Committee:

We are of the view, with poverty being a driver of people remaining in this trap, that the current levels of social welfare are not adequate to help them escape from that trap, separate from whether they are adequate to help them to have just an ordinary day. We inserted into the discussion a particular example of food insecurity.⁴⁶

- 4.78 The Department of Health is working to ensure that policy and planning decisions appropriately consider the potential implications on health, which can have important linkages with welfare dependency. The Department of Health is increasing access to health services for all Australians through:

- the Stronger Rural Health Strategy, which is focused on improving the health of people living in rural, regional and remote Australia
- developing a National Rural Generalist Pathway – a medical training pathway that will attract, retain and support doctors in regional, rural and remote areas of need
- preventative health initiatives that reduce inequality and incidences of preventable diseases in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Royal Far West Annual Report 2017-18, p. 3.

⁴⁵ PHAA, *Submission 34*, pp 5; 7.

⁴⁶ Mr Malcolm Baalman, PHAA, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 21 November 2018, p. 10.

⁴⁷ Joint Departmental Submission, *Submission 3*, p. 10.

- 4.79 The Brotherhood of St Laurence highlighted the variable quality of maternal and child health across Australia, and argued that strengthening the universal platform of maternal and child health could better assist families in the earliest stages of their children's life.⁴⁸

Financial literacy

- 4.80 Many people on welfare are suffering financial hardship. These people can also be at risk of financial exploitation. Improving people's financial literacy and strengthening economic independence was raised several times throughout the inquiry as an important learning outcome for some people receiving welfare support.
- 4.81 The Committee heard that providing education and tools on financial management and debt can provide benefits that reduce the effect of several factors underpinning entrenched disadvantage.
- 4.82 The Life Course Centre told the Committee it was useful to run the financial literacy programs for disadvantaged mothers through the maternal and child health clinics. Not only could multiple services be provided at once, but there was also less stigma attached to entering maternal and child health clinics.⁴⁹
- 4.83 The Salvation Army has also identified the value of delivering its financial literacy program, Moneycare:

The Salvation Army's Moneycare program delivers financial counselling, financial capability services, financial literacy/capability education and training and no interest loans. Moneycare has had considerable success in recognising and supporting people in vulnerable circumstances. Most clients that we work with are also dealing with multiple and complex issues. Our practice is to deliver holistic, integrated, wrap-around services that not only seek to address the current crisis, but also work towards building longer term capability and resilience. Our services are focused on people who are in vulnerable circumstances most at risk of financial and social exclusion and disadvantage. Moneycare supports people to overcome debt and provides education and tools to relieve some of the pressures arising from debt and financial hardship.

Some positive feedback from an individual who participated in the program. I was in a very overwhelming situation. Thank you for helping and guiding me

⁴⁸ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, p. 4.

⁴⁹ Dr Anna Zhu, Life Course Centre, *Committee Hansard*, 8 November 2018, p. 35.

through this difficult time. I was in a very bad place until I came to The Salvation Army's Moneycare, as I was so worried about my financial circumstances. I couldn't eat or sleep as I was worried all the time. Now that everything has been sorted and with your help I am able to manage my payments. Thank you." – Moneycare client feedback.⁵⁰

4.84 Ms Mioche, Catholic Care Australia also raised the high need for financial counselling services and the problem of predatory sales tactics:

Since working out west, one of the things that has surprised me is the shonky-type people who go into these communities and sell them things on hire purchase. You just wouldn't even think it would happen, because there is not much money there. It's a really common problem and then there are other dodgy practices. One of the points which I noted in your terms of reference was around financial stress or manageability. One of the things with people who are ready to go to work is to ensure that they are financially secure and stable—in other words, they don't have overwhelming debt.⁵¹

4.85 UnitingCare highlighted the overwhelming need for financial counselling that exists in Western Australia for people living in entrenched disadvantage:

... we are the co-leader of the Financial Counselling Network with Anglicare WA and we have 15 organisations working in partnership and collaboration delivering financial counselling services to the community. We are working with people who have long-term, entrenched issues. The case example I gave you came from one of our partners.

We are really quite focused not just on helping families address their immediate financial issues but on how to connect them to different types of supports to enable them to better manage their income. We turned away 5½ thousand people last year because we just couldn't provide the services to everybody, but by and large people just don't have enough income.⁵²

4.86 Through the Financial Wellbeing and Capability Activity, the Government provides support to individuals, families and communities to improve their ability to manage their financial affairs, and meet immediate needs in times of financial crisis. The Government invests around \$100 million per year in emergency relief, financial counselling, financial capability and

⁵⁰ The Salvation Army, *Submission 10*, p. 9.

⁵¹ Ms Mioche, Catholic Care Wilcannia-Forbes, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 21 November 2018, p. 21.

⁵² Ms Brooklyn, UnitingCare West, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 21 November 2018, p. 42.

microfinance. These services provide assistance to manage serious debts, build basic budgeting and financial literacy skills, and access to saving and credit options, which support people on low incomes and/or income support recipients.⁵³

Committee comment

- 4.87 Although there are many potential target areas for welfare assistance, the Committee wishes to emphasise the importance of housing, healthcare and financial literacy. The Committee considers that assistance in these areas will have a multiplying effect in preventing and addressing entrenched disadvantage.
- 4.88 The Committee acknowledges the significant importance of good quality healthcare for all Australians. The Committee considers that place-based principles for service delivery are important when designing healthcare programs for disadvantaged communities. Successful delivery of health programs and services relies on close collaboration and co-ordination.
- 4.89 Providing financial literacy support program to people on long term welfare support is extremely valuable. The Committee was pleased to hear about the success of many of the programs throughout Australia delivering these services.
- 4.90 The Committee understands that people living on welfare support want to improve themselves and their financial circumstances. The Committee encourages the continuation of these services.
- 4.91 The Committee believes that providing financial literacy education empowers participants to take control of their own future, and this empowerment will have positive flow on effects.
- 4.92 Appropriate housing—especially for families with children—was raised as a critical issue. The Committee recognises the importance of having good housing available for people in need during a crisis. Acceptable housing and food security are precursors to ensuring successful further assistance with education and employment.
- 4.93 The Committee was impressed with the HYPA Housing model that supports young people at risk of homelessness into stable housing and education or employment. The Committee encourages community service

⁵³ Joint Departmental Submission, *Submission 3*, p. 6.

providers to look into delivering a similar housing support model to HYPA Housing, for young people at risk.

- 4.94 Throughout the inquiry the Committee was made aware of the challenge of finding secure affordable housing in Australia. The Committee was also concerned about the lack of available emergency housing throughout Australia.

Recommendation 3

- 4.95 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government works with state and territory governments to ensure immediate increases in funding for emergency relief housing and ongoing low cost housing throughout Australia.**

5. Steps towards successful implementation

- 5.1 As described in Chapter 3, welfare programs and services across Australia have demonstrated successful outcomes when they are designed and implemented based on the principles of:
 - place-based initiatives, specific to the community's needs, and
 - providing wrap-around services.
- 5.2 The Committee received evidence explaining how these principles can significantly improve outcomes for disadvantaged communities or cohorts, and can provide long-term solutions for reducing intergenerational welfare dependence.
- 5.3 The Committee also received evidence on a number of trials of place-based models (Chapter 3), highlighting the importance of features such as community leadership, effective coordination, access to data and evaluation.
- 5.4 This chapter reviews the evidence on how to successfully implement welfare programs. This is based on the principles in Chapter 3 and the focus areas in Chapter 4.
- 5.5 This chapter describes important 'pre-conditions' that influence the success of programs designed to address entrenched disadvantage, at the community and individual level.
- 5.6 This chapter discusses the importance of coordinated, longer-term funding arrangements, strategic direction and strong leadership from government, growing capacity and leadership within communities, and the importance of data in informed decision making and reviewing program outcomes.

Longer-term and more flexible funding agreements

- 5.7 Welfare and employment program service providers that receive government funding raised the issue of short-term funding cycles, and the impact the funding cycle has on being able to invest in long-term initiatives.¹
- 5.8 The Department of Social Services told the Committee that initiatives are often evaluated ‘very quickly and we don’t take account of [that] longer-term’² and ‘we often look for proxy measures ... in the short-term rather than being able to have the time to look [at outcomes] in the long term’.³
- 5.9 Save the Children Australia highlighted the importance of building trust in a community that receives a service. Save the Children Australia commented that efforts to successfully address intergenerational disadvantage benefit when services are delivered by organisations that are embedded within the community. This builds trust and effective working relationships with recipients and other support services. Ms Finlayson commented that ‘in some of these remote communities it really takes three to five years to build trust and for the communities to understand that you are committed and will stay there’.⁴ Save the Children stated that longer-term commitments are stymied by shorter-term government funding.⁵
- 5.10 Several submissions spoke of the need for long-term commitments across government, community and business sectors, supported by appropriately long-term funding arrangements. Jesuit Social Services stated a long-term commitment of 20 years is required to address complex, entrenched disadvantage.⁶

¹ Ms Finlayson, Director of Impact Measurement & Australian Programs, Save the Children Australia. *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, Wednesday 7 November 2018, pp 6-7.

² Dr Reddel, Group Manager, Department of Social Services (DSS), *Committee Hansard*, Canberra Wednesday 17 October 2018, p. 10.

³ Mr Phil Brown, Branch Manager, DSS, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra Wednesday 17 October 2018, p. 10.

⁴ Ms Finlayson, Save the Children Australia. *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne Wednesday 7 November 2018, p. 7.

⁵ Ms Heather Finlayson, Save the Children, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, pp. 6-7.

⁶ Jesuit Social Services (JSS), *Submission 27*, p. 2; Mr Joe Zabar, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA), *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 21 November 2018, p. 20.

- 5.11 The Productivity Commission agreed that longer-term and less prescriptive contracts would mean greater stability for providers and for the people who receive the services, recognising the time it takes to build up trust and benefit from an investment.⁷
- 5.12 Some submissions spoke of inflexibilities in funding arrangements that limit the type and nature of interventions service providers can offer. The Salvation Army stated:
- More flexible funding arrangements with the scope to deliver innovative services targeted to meet local need are required. Developing more effective and coordinated approaches to support families will in turn reduce duplication, create shared vision and values, provide best value for money, and promote improved and more sustained outcomes for families.⁸
- 5.13 Catholic Social Services Australia, commenting on prescriptive contracts and short-term funding, recommended an increase in the default contract lengths to seven years, with appropriate exceptions for trials, and adequate safeguards in case of failure by providers.⁹
- 5.14 Social Ventures Australia, commenting on programs offered by SYC, reflected on the appropriateness of short-term metrics written into contracts for jobactive:
- The outcome metrics that are built into those contracts are 13- and 26-week employment outcomes. I think SYC would say that that might not be the right metric for young people who are overly exposed to seasonal work and who often cycle in and out of jobs via what's called the sampling effect—figuring out what type of role might be suited them. They might have five different jobs per year, for example, but, if cumulatively over the year they're increasing the number of hours that they spend engaged, that's a great proxy for future life outcomes, and 12-week outcomes and 26-week outcomes might not be able to gauge the granularity of change over time.¹⁰
- 5.15 CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes gave evidence about the potentially negative consequences of multiple contract providers not being locally based:

⁷ Ms Anna Heaney, Assistant Commissioner, Productivity Commission, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, pp. 47-48.

⁸ The Salvation Army, *Submission 10*, p. 13.

⁹ CSSA, *Submission 18*, p. 2.

¹⁰ Ms Casey Taylor, Manager of Impact Investing, Social Ventures Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Sydney, 8 November 2018, p. 15.

We used to be the only provider of social services in that part of the world because essentially there isn't a market. Now we have national organisations. We have organisations we have never heard of. Most of them are drive-in drive-out. Unfortunately, it seems that the government doesn't look at that when assessing tenders. Look at Wilcannia. There are 66 services and 65 of them are drive-in drive-out. We are the only organisation that has an office in that town. We are not even funded to have an office; it is just part of our values that we have a community hub. But it is actually really hard for us to keep it together because there is no funding. I can understand that government wants the best bang for their buck. But sometimes some of the decisions don't make sense. They don't know the local communities and they don't take things into account.¹¹

- 5.16 The Committee heard that competitive tender processes for funding support services sometimes favour larger organisations over grassroots organisations 'because of their economies of scale, professional backing'.¹²

Committee comment

- 5.17 The Committee recognises the complexities associated with funding arrangements. There must be a balance between ensuring accountability and effective use of resources, and allowing flexibility that can result in successful program outcomes.
- 5.18 The Committee heard that inflexible funding can relate to the timing of programs (roll out and reporting), scope of program activities, mode of delivery of programs, and evaluation timeframes. Inflexible arrangements can limit service provider ability to be innovative in their service delivery.
- 5.19 Shorter-term funding contracts (often described as less than five years) and project cycles were consistently identified as limiting the ability of service providers to make long term commitments. The Committee recognises this is significant, and considers that short-term funding has a detrimental impact on the quality of welfare programs. The Committee considers that creating intergenerational change can require planning and implementation on 'intergenerational time frames' in order to support families through key transition periods (20+ years).

¹¹ Ms Anne-Marie Mioche, Chief Executive Officer, CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 21 November 2018, p. 20.

¹² Ms Hefren-Webb, Deputy Secretary, Department of Social Services (DSS), *Committee Hansard*, Canberra Wednesday 17 October 2018, p. 7.

5.20 The Committee also noted the concerns of some witnesses over funding criteria that potentially (inadvertently) favour larger organisations at the expense of smaller, locally connected service providers. The Committee recognises the important role of locally connected organisations in successful delivery of welfare programs, and the benefits of engaging these organisations.

Recommendation 4

5.21 The Committee recommends that funding arrangements for welfare-related programs are reviewed, with a view to avoiding short-term funding cycles. Three to five year agreements, with annual extensions subject to meeting agreed performance measures, would assist with funding certainty, while ensuring progress and satisfactory outcomes are achieved.

Recommendation 5

5.22 The Committee recommends that funding agencies work with service providers to ensure accountability for expenditure of public funding in a way that allows programs to be flexible and responsive to local conditions.

Data and evaluation

5.23 Accurate data is required to determine where intergenerational welfare dependence occurs, priority areas for action and measuring the outcomes of programs.

5.24 Data that is relevant to understanding intergenerational welfare dependence, and informing programs with place-based, wrap around, dimensions include:

- demographics of welfare recipients;
- employment, housing and educational status;
- health and wellbeing data; and
- interactions with child protection and the justice system.

5.25 Longitudinal data can show how a person, cohort (group with similar characteristics or circumstances), or community progress or change over time.

- 5.26 The Committee received evidence highlighting the importance of comprehensive data relating to welfare and other payments and programs. Tracking data and evaluation outcomes were described as necessary to allow informed decision making, measuring progress and outcomes, and demonstrating accountability.¹³
- 5.27 Ms Finlayson from Save the Children Australia described three layers of data used by that organisation to measure long term change:
- 1 who is participating
 - 2 program [evaluation] data
 - 3 long-term data such as publicly available health, education and early childhood data to analyse whether programs are making a difference that is sustainable over periods of time.¹⁴
- 5.28 Taylor Fry identified challenges in the Australian context (in a comparison with New Zealand) in terms of data linkage:
- ... linkage projects ... in Australia tend to be piecemeal ... and slow ... approvals, including ethics applications and linkage, mean that six months to a year is not uncommon before a project can start ... Commonwealth data can only be linked by one of the five authorised linkage authorities, and restrictions are often significant. For instance, it is generally difficult for state governments to access Commonwealth data or link it to their services.¹⁵
- 5.29 The Joint Departmental Submission described the Australian Government's work on developing evidence, through the Data Integration Partnership for Australia, which 'provides funding and an overarching framework across ... data assets, data integration and analytics units, aimed at addressing challenges to achieve better national outcomes through better policies and programs'.¹⁶
- 5.30 The Joint Departmental Submission outlined the longitudinal studies supported and funded by the Australian Government, including:
- the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey;

¹³ Ms Finlayson, Save the Children Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 6.

¹⁴ Ms Finlayson, Save the Children Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 6.

¹⁵ Taylor Fry, *Submission 40*, pp 11-12.

¹⁶ Joint Departmental Submission, *Submission 3*, p. 3.

- the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC);
 - the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC);
 - Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY); and
 - Building a New Life in Australia (BNLA).
- 5.31 Data from the surveys can be used to track the effects of policy¹⁷ by identifying trends or significant changes to individual or cohort progress or circumstances in relation to changes in welfare programs and policy.
- 5.32 The Australian Government also supports the triennial Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) program that collects developmental data on children in their first year of school, potentially helping to inform how ‘long-term welfare dependency affects children’s developmental vulnerability and readiness for school’.¹⁸

Using data to inform decision making: the Priority Investment Approach

- 5.33 The Department of Social Services (DSS) described the Priority Investment Approach (PIA) as a ‘whole of population actuarial microsimulation model that forecasts future lifetime costs of the Australian welfare system’.¹⁹ That is, a national-scale, long term costing of welfare programs. The PIA uses data to estimate and compare predicted welfare costs in different scenarios, such as maintaining current payments or implementing programs to increase employment in certain groups.
- 5.34 The PIA methodology begins with an actuarial valuation to estimate the ‘future liability’ of current income support claims. That is, a calculation of the cost of those people continuing to receive welfare payments and assistance over their lifetime. The PIA aims to reduce welfare costs by introducing targeted interventions to help people reduce their need for welfare payments. Interventions are prioritised based on their projected return on investment (savings relative to costs).²⁰
- 5.35 The transition to an investment approach to welfare programs was one recommendation in a review of Australia’s welfare system, *A New System for*

¹⁷ Joint Departmental Submission, *Submission 3*, p. 3.

¹⁸ Joint Departmental Submission, *Submission 3*, p. 3.

¹⁹ DSS, *Supplementary Submission 3.1*, p. [3].

²⁰ Taylor Fry, *Submission 40*, p. 2.

Better Employment and Social Outcomes (the McClure Review) in 2015.²¹ An investment approach could reduce future costs associated with long-term income support dependence by targeting investment to initiatives that will build self-reliance.

5.36 Following the McClure Review, DSS has commissioned three actuarial valuation and analysis reports: the Baseline Valuation Report, 2016, and 2017 Valuations.

5.37 The 2017 Valuation provides insights into how the current Australian population is likely to use welfare into the future, and quantifies the long term financial commitments associated with the current welfare system. The analysis identified:

- factors driving lifetime cost and annual expenditures
- changes to cost over time
- the impact of changes to the system
- how different groups of people contribute to overall cost, and
- factors that explain different levels of welfare payment utilisation.²²

5.38 The Joint Departmental Submission stated that the:

PIA allows the identification of particular cohorts at risk of long-term welfare receipt. Cohorts identified to date include: young people moving from study directly to employment payments, young parents, young carers, Newstart Allowance recipients aged 50 years and over, migrants and refugees on working age income support, working age carers on Carer Payment, and at-risk young people receiving income support.²³

The Priority Investment Approach (PIA) uses 17 years' worth of social security and other population data, and economic data and forecasts, to allow projections showing how particular groups of people are likely to interact with the social security system over their future lifetime based on the current system settings.²⁴

²¹ DSS, *A New System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes – Interim Report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform to the Minister for Social Services*, February 2015.

²² DSS, *Final Report 2018, Valuation Report*, July 2018, p. 2.

²³ Joint Departmental Submission, *Submission 3*, pp 1 - 2.

²⁴ Joint Departmental Submission, *Submission 3*, p. 2.

5.39 DSS acknowledged that limitations on access to data is affecting the Department's ability to introduce targeted initiatives through a Priority Investment Approach:

... we are actively working with all the departments ... to see how we can bring these things together to get a more granular picture of individuals as they transition through the system.²⁵

5.40 DSS advised the Committee that enhancements to PIA modelling will include 'new data variables, such as Australian Bureau of Statistics' Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) in 2018 ... [and] the potential addition of new data sources, such as data from other Commonwealth or state governments using linked data sources currently under-development'.²⁶

5.41 Recent analysis from the PIA suggests an increased likelihood of children to end up requiring welfare support if their parents received welfare for significant periods of time during their childhood. The analysis includes:

... an "intergenerational welfare" variable, which identifies the proportion of a recipient's childhood (up to the age of 15 years) spent in the care of a parent receiving income support [and] ... shows young people aged 22 to 24 years whose parents or guardians received income support payments for over 80 per cent of their childhood are 2.9 times more likely to be on income support payments today, compared to those with no parental income support history.²⁷

5.42 Taylor Fry reported that in New Zealand, a combination of welfare reforms and Priority Investment Approach, including a targeted approach focusing on assisting specific cohorts or communities, has been 'generally successful in reducing long-term welfare costs'.²⁸

5.43 DSS is working with other agencies to establish protocols, regulatory frameworks and data infrastructure to allow appropriate data sharing and analysis. DSS is working through the Data Integration Partnership for Australia (DIPA) 'to maximise the use and value of the Government's data assets ... [and] create new insights into important and complex policy questions'.²⁹ The PIA analysis currently uses 17 years of data.

²⁵ Mr Nathan Williamson, Deputy Secretary, Department of Social Services, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, Wednesday 19 September 2018, p. 2.

²⁶ DSS, *Supplementary Submission 3.1*, p. [7].

²⁷ Joint Departmental Submission, *Submission 3*, p. 2.

²⁸ Taylor Fry, *Submission 40*, p. 2.

²⁹ DSS, *Supplementary Submission 3.1*, p. [3].

- 5.44 Further to the DIPA, the National Data Commissioner ‘will provide oversight and regulation of Australia’s new national data sharing and release framework, including monitoring and reporting on the operation of the framework and enforcing the accompanying legislation’.³⁰

Examples of Priority Investment Approach interventions

- 5.45 The Australian Government is working towards a more targeted approach, describing the Try, Test and Learn (TTL) Fund as ‘trailing new or innovative approaches to assist some of the most vulnerable in society into stable, sustainable employment’, using insights from the PIA.³¹
- 5.46 The Life Course Centre described the TTL as ‘an ongoing commitment to co-designing, developing, improving and learning from innovative ideas about how to address issues of disadvantage and welfare dependency ... an example of providing the evidence-based evaluations essential for effective policy design and implementation ... preferably over long periods to assess potential “fade out” effects’.³²
- 5.47 The SYC Sticking Together Project also targets young people experiencing disadvantage. SYC explained that in their experience:
- ... multi-faceted support is crucial. In addition to employment-related skills, support is provided by the coach in non-vocational skills development and overcoming other barriers to employment ... including home, health and relationship challenges. Support is provided when the young person is in work and during periods of unemployment. Support is also provided to employers to help them manage the employment relationship and ‘stick with’ the young person.³³
- 5.48 SYC’s Sticking Together Project involves intensive coaching with participants and their employer(s) over a 60-week period. The timeframe is based on the NZ Benefit System Performance Report, which identified 14 months as the optimal time to work with vulnerable people to help them move away from the welfare system. The pilot project ‘supported 100 young people experiencing disadvantage, who on average had been unemployed

³⁰ Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Public Data Current Initiatives*, <https://www.pmc.gov.au/public-data>, accessed 24 January 2019.

³¹ Joint Departmental Submission, *Submission 3*, p. 2.

³² Life Course Centre (LCC), *Submission 11*, p. 11.

³³ SYC, *Submission 15*, p. 4.

for over two years ... 66 per cent of young people who completed the pilot are now completely of welfare benefits'.³⁴

Measuring program success

5.49 Ms Finlayson, Save the Children Australia, described the benefit of using data to evaluate programs to assess whether progress is being made over time:

... how [to] use publicly available data over a period of years to see if the work ... is indeed shifting the needle for certain cohorts that we're working with ... We're looking at health data, education data and early childhood data such as AEDC so that we can see if the changes that we think we are making are sustainable over periods of time ... If we really want to make a difference for these children and young people, how do you actually ensure that whatever is funded is contributing to shifting the needle over a long period of time and that allocation is made to ensure that that evaluation can actually take place?³⁵

5.50 The importance of suitable timeframes for evaluation of initiatives, allowing enough time for program outcomes to be demonstrated was recognised in conjunction the issue of longer term funding cycles (see also 5.8 and 5.14).

5.51 The Life Course Centre described the important role of comprehensive longitudinal data in developing reliable evidence on disadvantage and the impact of welfare programs:

To better understand intergenerational welfare dependence requires linked longitudinal administrative data that combines State and Commonwealth data. Analyses of these data is critical if we are to move beyond anecdotal evidence to understand the causes and consequences of disadvantage, and develop effective interventions to address it ... [T]he establishment of the National Data Commission is an important step in this direction. We strongly encourage governments to continue cooperating and collaborating to provide integrated data infrastructure across states and jurisdictions that enable high quality analyses of intergenerational welfare dependence and policy solutions³⁶

5.52 In Australia, more extensive actuarial analysis will be possible when longer term data series are available, enabling measurement of intergenerational

³⁴ SYC, *Submission 15*, p. 4.

³⁵ Ms Finlayson, Save the Children Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 6.

³⁶ LCC, *Submission 11*, p. 13.

benefit receipt. Taylor Fry pointed out that ‘longitudinal welfare data series in New Zealand extends back to 1993, whereas the equivalent data extends to 2001 in Australia ... [the NZ data] makes it easier to measure ... intergenerational benefit receipt, since it is possible to calculate who had parental benefit receipt for a large portion of the current beneficiary population’.³⁷

Committee comment

- 5.53 The Department of Social Services has begun implementing the priority investment approach to welfare. This approach relies on data analysis to identify groups at particular risk of long-term welfare dependence, and then focuses interventions to address their specific challenges.
- 5.54 The Priority Investment Approach aligns with the principles identified in Chapter 3 – allowing for targeted, place-based initiatives that would address entrenched disadvantage through co-designed, inter-generational, wrap around services.
- 5.55 The Committee recognises the value of this approach, and supports the ongoing work of departments to enable data consolidation and sharing to allow more detailed analysis, and the establishment of the office of the National Data Commissioner.
- 5.56 The Committee understands that Australia’s longitudinal surveys are comprehensive, but datasets are not yet sufficiently long-term to inform analysis of intergenerational welfare trends.
- 5.57 The Committee believes that as trials of this approach mature, it will be possible to identify a series of points in the life of a person where if certain benchmarks are not being met, a range of interventions are automatically offered, in advance of any crisis point being reached.
- 5.58 The Committee agrees the PIA focus should be on achieving successful outcomes for people experiencing disadvantage, including those receiving welfare over long periods, in addition to reducing future welfare funding liabilities.

Recommendation 6

- 5.59 The Committee recommends the continuation of comprehensive longitudinal data collection by state, territory and Australian**

³⁷ Taylor Fry, *Submission 40*, p. 11.

Governments, to enable informed decision making on the Priority Investment Approach.

Recommendation 7

5.60 Success of the Priority Investment Approach should be measured not just by reductions in welfare expenditure, but also by improved outcomes for welfare recipients.

Recommendation 8

5.61 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government continue to streamline data sharing protocols and arrangements with states and territories.

Recommendation 9

5.62 The Committee recommends that funding agreements with social service providers build in meaningful requirements for program evaluations or progress reports, and avoid imposing evaluation requirements that result in 'proxy' measures being reported to meet administrative timeframes.

Coordinated funding

5.63 The Committee notes the complexity of Australia's funding programs, arrangements and coordination challenges. This was demonstrated by thirteen agencies contributing to a Joint Departmental submission, with each agency having responsibility for some aspect of welfare programs or payments:

The Australian Government has a large number of payments and programs in place to support families to find pathways out of intergenerational welfare dependence and broader disadvantage. These payments and programs are designed to break the cycles of disadvantage, to collect the evidence on what works, and to support families and communities to build the opportunity, human capital (education and health), and capability (the skills and access to resources) to change children's and families' outcome trajectories and increase their capacity for self-reliance.³⁸

³⁸ Joint Departmental Submission, *Submission 3*, p. 3.

- 5.64 As outlined in the Committee's Discussion Paper, the administrative category 'social security and welfare' is used for budget papers.³⁹ In 2016-17, spending in this category represented 35 per cent of the Australian Government's expenses. In dollar terms this was around \$158.6 billion in 2016-17, and forecast to grow to \$191.8 billion by 2019-20. This expenditure includes income support payments (pensions and allowances, including Newstart), family payments, paid parental leave pay, child care fee assistance, aged care services, disability services, payments and services for veterans and their dependents.⁴⁰
- 5.65 The Department for Jobs and Small Business (DJSB) is responsible for a large number of employment programs and financial incentives throughout Australia, such as Jobactive, ParentsNext and the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS).
- 5.66 The NEIS provides assistance to help people create their own job, with the support of Entrepreneurship Facilitators. The DJSB has allocated an additional \$17.7 million for new Entrepreneurship Facilitators in 20 additional locations (from January 2019).⁴¹
- 5.67 The Committee received evidence on the need to coordinate funding and welfare related programs from all levels of government at the community level. Some submissions provided details of communities and individuals facing multiple funding sources, primary contact people and overlapping services or conditions.⁴²
- 5.68 Further issues raised were: the often siloed nature of assistance, a lack of coordination between jurisdictions, and sometimes contradictory program aims and outcomes, affecting program delivery and ability of people to access assistance.⁴³
- 5.69 The Australian Institute of Family Studies stated:

³⁹ House of Representatives Select Committee on Intergenerational Welfare Dependence, *Discussion Paper*, August 2018, Canberra.

⁴⁰ M Klapdor and D Arthur, 'Welfare – What Does it Cost?', *Parliamentary Library Briefing Book*, August 2016.

⁴¹ Department of Jobs and Small Business, *Supplementary Submission 3.5*, p. [8].

⁴² Australian Institute of Family Studies, *Submission 24*, p. 8; The Accountable Income Management Network, *Submission 39*, pp 5 -6.

⁴³ See programs described by: SVA, *Submission 30*, p. 24; Barnardos Australia, *Submission 26*, p. 4. See also Mr Zabar, Catholic Social Services Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Canberra, 21 November 2018, p. 17.

These findings about the challenges for families with complex needs being able to access the support they need echo numerous other reports which highlight fragmented and siloed service systems. Australia's current service systems involve multiple jurisdictions and levels of government, with services for families being delivered through health, education and human services portfolios. However, research and other reviews consistently show that the current systems are characterised by a fragmented approach with little coordination and a poor understanding of what is most effective.⁴⁴

5.70 Logan Together testified:

So we're already spending the money, but it is spent in this chaotic meteor shower of hundreds of different interventions from different levels of government, different government departments, different programs within departments within governments, and different streams within programs within departments of government. We did a count, and we can find 105 child and family investments in Logan that we could count, and it's almost certainly an undercount.⁴⁵

5.71 The Brotherhood of St Laurence also raised the issue, stating:

The interplay of federal, state and local government efforts, and the disconnect between Early Childhood Education and Care, child and family services, employment policies and programs, and place-based measures create a fragmented landscape that lacks an effective mechanism to connect families with the supports they need. In some instances this dissonance entrenches disadvantage (eg the Early Childhood Education & Care activities test is reducing access to early learning for vulnerable children who have the most to gain; low social security payment rates are plunging families into poverty; increasing welfare conditionality is marginalising some families or missing opportunities to support others (eg Parents Next is a limited offering)).⁴⁶

5.72 Logan Together characterised the current approach as the 'spray and pray' approach:

You spray human services out there, and you pray it's made a difference. We know it doesn't. We know those sorts of highly pixilated, atomized, random acts of kindness into the community are actually pretty good at resolving

⁴⁴ AIFS, *Submission 24*, p. 8.

⁴⁵ Mr Matthew Cox, Director, Logan Together, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 18.

⁴⁶ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, p. 4.

people's immediate crisis issues. They are really lousy at stitching together into a system that grows kids up well.⁴⁷

- 5.73 The consequence is duplication of services and a lack of funding to focus on prevention rather than crisis relief:

One lady had 26 service interventions active in her life on the day someone checked, including five that thought they were the case coordination agency.⁴⁸

- 5.74 yourtown noted:

The complexity and interdependency of the challenges that confront disadvantaged children and young people means more effective collaboration between all stakeholders is critical. However, whilst this is well known, effective collaboration is extremely difficult to execute in practice owing to a host of intra- and inter-organisational factors such as competing priorities, funding, ways of working and IT and data systems, compounded by the number of stakeholders involved in a child's journey to adulthood.⁴⁹

- 5.75 Logan Together noted coordination is key to getting things done:

We haven't really put into the field a single new idea or certainly not an idea that we haven't known for about 40 years. A little bit of the brain science is about 10 years old. That's about the only new stuff. But we've basically known what we're trying to do for about 40 years. What we haven't done as a society is do it for kids who live in some parts of cities like mine, and that's the project. The project is getting it done. It's not a knowing problem; it's very much a doing problem.⁵⁰

Committee comment

- 5.76 The Committee recognises the complexity of current arrangements and large number of agencies delivering and funding Australia's welfare programs.
- 5.77 The Committee acknowledges that a significant amount of funding is spent on human services by all levels of government, and recognises that fragmented services, programs and payments can contribute to poor outcomes in some circumstances. The Committee commends the Department of Social Services for actively working to address this issue.

⁴⁷ Mr Cox, Logan Together, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 20.

⁴⁸ Mr Cox, Logan Together, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, p. 21.

⁴⁹ yourtown, *Submission 23*, p. 15.

⁵⁰ Mr Cox, Logan Together, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, 7 November 2018, pp. 17-18.

- 5.78 The Committee was pleased to hear about efforts to coordinate welfare programs and services. The Committee also noted the opportunity to expand coordination efforts, ensure resources are used efficiently, establish a shared vision and ‘plan’ for each community, and grow community engagement and effective cooperation between governments, service providers and community organisations.
- 5.79 The Committee supports monitoring at the federal level to identify the best opportunities to coordinate programs across departments, and recognises that significant work is required to coordinate services between levels of government.

Recommendation 10

- 5.80 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government improve its coordination with state and local programs, to ensure expenditure achieves the best possible outcomes, and avoids duplication.**

Building community capacity

- 5.81 The Committee received evidence of various community-based initiatives and models for addressing intergenerational welfare dependence.⁵¹ Leadership from within a community is important for mobilising support, maintaining momentum for change, and growing community capacity and resilience over time.
- 5.82 Fostering and drawing on local leadership was described by a number of inquiry participants as an important contributor to successfully overcoming entrenched disadvantage.⁵²
- 5.83 Save the Children Australia identified the importance of community leadership and support for programs: ‘[it] really does require a community-led approach, because you need the whole community to actually be behind some form of change and a purpose’.⁵³
- 5.84 Save the Children further described the importance of community leadership in the context of their work with Indigenous communities: ‘we

⁵¹ FamilyCare, *Submission 5*, p. 1; Cape York Partnership, *Submission 9*, p. [3]; SYC, *Submission 15*, pp 4 – 5.

⁵² Logan Together, *Submission 37*, p. 1; Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, p. 16.

⁵³ Ms Finlayson, Save the Children Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, Wednesday 7 November 2018, p. 4.

would only go into a community after being asked by community members. We're very strong on self-determination for communities ... as an outsider you can't actually know everything. Recruiting from community is our attempt to better understand what is actually happening ... the history and aspirations of community leaders'.⁵⁴

- 5.85 Co-design was recognised throughout this inquiry as one of the principles shaping successful intergenerational welfare dependence initiatives. Community participation in program design is an important element of building capacity and growing local commitment to overcoming disadvantage.
- 5.86 Locally focused and driven programs are important in addressing concentrated local disadvantage.⁵⁵ The Brotherhood of St Laurence described the correlation of child vulnerability with 'place-based disadvantage ... children in the most disadvantaged areas [are] more than four times as likely to be developmentally vulnerable as [those] in the least disadvantaged areas'.⁵⁶
- 5.87 The Brotherhood of St Laurence specifically recommended 'interventions should be matched to community readiness and designed to strengthen community capacity to mobilise for change'.⁵⁷
- 5.88 Associate Professor Philip Mendes suggested that co-design processes include locally focused and driven actions 'informed by community development principles ... engaging with [affected] community members ... and ensuring that the local community plays a key role in both defining the causes of the problem, and identifying potential policy solutions'. This should also involve collaboration between affected individuals and non-government services that currently work with the disadvantaged groups.⁵⁸
- 5.89 Logan Together identified eight important features of successful place-based, life course models for addressing entrenched poverty, disadvantage and welfare dependency:

⁵⁴ Ms Finlayson, Save the Children Australia, *Committee Hansard*, Melbourne, Wednesday 7 November 2018, p. 5.

⁵⁵ Logan Together, *Submission 37*, p. 10; Cape York Partnership, *Submission 9*, p. [3].

⁵⁶ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, p. 14.

⁵⁷ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, p. 15.

⁵⁸ Associate Professor Philip Mendes, Acting Head of the Department of Social Work, Monash University, *Submission 2*, p. 6.

- 1 Take a long-term, whole-of-population approach at the place level.
- 2 Identify high-leverage change strategies across the health, education, social services sectors and the community itself.
- 3 Embed these strategies in an inter-generational, life-course or “cradle to career” framework that focuses on key phases in human development from birth (indeed pregnancy) forward.
- 4 Create strategic coordination capability (a Backbone Team) and local level governance and collaboration arrangements (collective impact approaches) to deliver the strategies.
- 5 Include local people and local leaders in all aspects of planning and decision making.
- 6 Focus on capability building as well as service delivery.
- 7 Establish an authorising environment that allows local initiatives to be quickly supported and responded to by very senior stakeholders where required.
- 8 Coordinate investment and reform systems to support roll out.⁵⁹

5.90 The Cape York Partnership demonstrates principles of community-determined local development agendas, ‘including an unwavering focus on rebuilding social norms, lifting education outcomes, and engagement with the real economy’.⁶⁰ The Cape York Partnership further described its ‘structured Opportunity System’ where people would be guaranteed opportunities in return for assuming welfare reform responsibilities and obligations ... the government will provide access to opportunity, and the individual and family will agree to live under those commitments’.⁶¹

Committee comment

5.91 The Committee supports initiatives that address entrenched disadvantage through growing local leadership capacity, and incorporate community input into the program design including priority setting, action planning, and implementation.

5.92 Community capacity building, through fostering leadership and opportunities to contribute to programs is important to the principle of co-design, and generates multiple broader benefits, such as building

⁵⁹ Logan Together, *Submission 37*, pp 6 – 7.

⁶⁰ Cape York Partnership, *Submission 9*, p. [3].

⁶¹ Cape York Partnership, *Submission 9*, p. [3].

community self-sufficiency, resilience, improving social cohesion, participation and sense of wellbeing.

- 5.93 In promoting place-based approaches, the Committee cautions against policy and contracting approaches that eschew existing local grassroots organisations in favour of larger outside contractors whose services are considered narrowly to be better value for money. Innovative approaches such as Social Venture partnerships could be considered as a means of building capacity in local organisations while delivering programs locally.

Recommendation 11

- 5.94 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government supports programs that build local leadership capacity, and incorporate local input in identifying and implementing solutions to entrenched disadvantage.**

Recommendation 12

- 5.95 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government adopt a set of principles similar to those suggested by Logan Together for addressing entrenched poverty, disadvantage and welfare dependency.**

Strategic government leadership

- 5.96 The Australian Government needs to use an evidence-based, long-term, strategic and responsive approach to addressing and overcoming intergenerational welfare dependence.
- 5.97 Successful services and programs improve the quality of life and opportunities for Australian people, and can significantly reduce the burden of welfare expenditure. The Australian Government can provide leadership on the direction, goals, priorities and parameters for programs to address intergenerational welfare dependence.
- 5.98 Central leadership can enable and guide programs that reduce intergenerational welfare dependence, while ensuring they are delivered effectively. The Committee received evidence including examples of partnerships between state and local government and organisations from other sectors (charity, not-for-profit or private businesses).⁶²

⁶² Ms Wendy Field, Head of Policy and Programs, The Smith Family. *Committee Hansard*, 8 November 2018, Sydney, p. 3; Ms Anne Hampshire, Head of Research and Advocacy, The Smith

- 5.99 'Top-down' leadership can set criteria for funding and programs and assist government and community stakeholders with coordination and objective-setting. National-level leadership can provide strategic direction, including identifying and funding national priority projects.
- 5.100 Anglicare Australia described their preference for the Australian Government's role to identify and analyse successful initiatives and how key elements could be transferred, while recognising local differences and personal complexities 'promoting the information ... but not expecting that it's lifted off the shelf ... enabling and designing quite complicated conversations about what has worked and why ... and then cross-fertilising those ideas'.⁶³
- 5.101 The Australian Government's strategic leadership role includes the responsibility to ensure the adequacy of welfare support payments, so they do not result in further entrenched disadvantage.
- 5.102 A significant number of inquiry participants from organisations in the welfare sector, individuals and their representatives advocated for leadership from the Australian Government in reviewing payments and conditions associated with the Newstart allowance (also discussed in Chapter 2). In particular, the policy of moving single parents to Newstart payments once their youngest child turns eight is described as causing significant hardship and additional circumstances of poverty and disadvantage.⁶⁴

Committee comment

- 5.103 The Committee greatly appreciates the willingness of individual witnesses to share details of difficult personal circumstances associated with disadvantage, the level of welfare payments, and the impact various conditions associated with different welfare programs have had on the wellbeing and prospects of themselves and their families.

Family. *Committee Hansard*, 8 November 2018, Sydney, p. 5; Professor Mendes, Monash University, *Committee Hansard*, 7 November 2018, Melbourne, p. 66.

⁶³ Ms Kasy Chambers, Executive Director, Anglicare Australia. *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2018, Canberra, p. 2.

⁶⁴ Public Health Association of Australia, *Submission 34*, p. 7; National Council of Single Mothers and their Children, *Submission 12*, p. 10; The Salvation Army Australia, *Submission 10*, p. 6; Ms Chambers, Anglicare Australia. *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2018, Canberra p. 3; Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Submission 22*, p. 5.

- 5.104 Although the majority of people will use welfare payments for a short period of time as they quickly secure employment, a small number experience entrenched disadvantage and will be reliant on welfare payments for longer periods of time.
- 5.105 The Committee acknowledges the adage that ‘the best form of welfare is a job’, but recognises there are sometimes barriers to people taking up suitable available jobs locally or further afield. Nevertheless, there is good evidence that programs can assist both unemployed people and employers fill available positions, or develop sustainable business opportunities.
- 5.106 The Committee received significant evidence about poverty leading to entrenched disadvantage. Many inquiry participants explained the poverty experienced as a result of welfare payments and associated limitations they experienced in attempting to participate in the jobseeker market. In particular, the policy of moving single parents to the lower-rate Newstart allowance when the youngest child turns eight, is reported to be creating financial crisis for single parents (and their children) who have not yet been successful in finding suitable work.
- 5.107 The Committee recognises that the Australian Government can add value throughout the life of welfare programs by monitoring progress towards achieving objectives, through effective and timely evaluation and reporting.

Recommendation 13

- 5.108 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government provides strategic leadership of welfare programs, based on national priorities and knowledge of best practice approaches.**

Recommendation 14

- 5.109 The Committee recommends the Australian Government review the effects of government policy, including the adequacy of payments, on young people and single parent families in the 46th Parliament.**

Recommendation 15

- 5.110 The Australian Government consider changing the point at which single parents move to Newstart Allowance; from when their youngest child turns eight to when their youngest child turns twelve. This should be in conjunction with continued efforts to increase the participation of parents in the workforce.**

Recommendation 16

5.111 The Committee recommends that the Australian Government encourage employers to investigate opportunities associated with social investment organisations; including encouraging employers to make operational changes that would facilitate opportunities for single parents to enter the workforce, such as part-time or job-sharing arrangements.

Mr Russell Broadbent MP

A. List of Submissions

- 1 Anglicare Australia
- 2 Associate Professor Philip Mendes
- 3 Joint Departmental Submission
 - 3.1 Supplementary to submission 3
 - 3.2 Supplementary to submission 3
 - 3.3 Supplementary to submission 3
 - 3.4 Supplementary to submission 3
 - 3.5 Supplementary to submission 3
- 4 Productivity Commission
- 5 FamilyCare
 - 5.1 Supplementary to submission 5
- 6 Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People
 - 6.1 Supplementary to submission 6
- 7 The Smith Family
- 8 Carers NSW Australia
- 9 Cape York Partnership
- 10 The Salvation Army, Australia
- 11 Life Course Centre
- 12 National Council of Single Mothers & their Children
 - 12.1 Supplementary to submission 12
- 13 Engender Equality

- 14 Australian Psychological Society
 - 14.1 Supplementary to submission 14
- 15 SYC
- 16 Victorian Alcohol & Drug Association
 - 16.1 Supplementary to submission 16
- 17 Lelia Green, Kylie J. Stevenson & Kelly Jaunzems, Edith Cowan University
- 18 Catholic Social Services Australia
- 19 Queensland Advocacy Incorporated
- 20 UnitingCare Australia
 - 20.1 Supplementary to submission 20
- 21 Australian Association of Social Workers
- 22 Brotherhood of St Laurence
- 23 yourtown
 - 23.1 Supplementary to submission 23
- 24 Australian Institute of Family Studies
- 25 Mr Scott Drummond
- 26 Barnardos Australia
- 27 Jesuit Social Services
- 28 Save the Children
 - 28.1 Supplementary to submission 28
- 29 Australian Council of Social Service
- 30 Social Ventures Australia
- 31 PricewaterhouseCoopers
- 32 Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the Northern Territory
- 33 Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT
- 34 Public Health Association of Australia
 - 34.1 Supplementary to submission 34
- 35 Ms Sue Carlyon
- 36 National Rural Health Alliance

- 37 Logan Together
- 38 *Confidential*
- 39 Accountable Income Management Network
- 40 Taylor Fry
- 41 Uniting Communities

B. Hearings and witnesses

Wednesday, 19 September 2018

Parliament House, Canberra

Department of Social Services

- Mr Nathan Williamson
- Dr Tim Reddel
- Ms Allyson Essex

Department of Education and Training

- Ms Kelly Pearce
- Ms Mary McDonald

Department of Jobs and Small Business

- Ms Benedikte Jensen
- Ms Carmel O'Regan

Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

- Mr Peter Arnaudo
- Mr Troy Sloan

Productivity Commission

- Mr Jonathan Coppel
- Ms Mary Cavar
- Ms Nina Davidson

Wednesday, 17 October 2018

Parliament House, Canberra

Department of Social Services

- Ms Elizabeth Hefren-Webb
- Mr Tim Reddel
- Mr Phil Brown
- Mr Tristan Reed
- Dr Susie Kluth

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

- Ms Deborah Lewis
- Mr Paul Denny
- Mr Robert Ryan
- Mr Shane Johnson

Wednesday, 24 October 2018

Parliament House, Canberra

Department of Education and Training

- Ms Kelly Pearce
- Mr David Pattie
- Mr Dom English
- Ms Fiona Lynch-Magor

Wednesday, 7 November 2018

Victoria Parliament House Annex, Melbourne

Save the Children

- Mr Cameron Wiseman
- Ms Georgia Goldsworthy
- Ms Heather Finlayson

The Salvation Army

- Mr Stuart Glover
- Major Brad Halse

Logan Together

- Mr Matthew Cox

Brotherhood of St Laurence

- Dr Shelley Mallett

- Ms Nicole Rees
- Ms Elizabeth Adams

Australian Psychological Society

- Ms Emma Sampson
- Dr Susie Burke

Productivity Commission

- Ms Anna Heaney
- Mr Jonathan Coppel
- Ms Mary Cavar
- Ms Nina Davidson

Victorian Alcohol & Drug Association

- Mr Sam Biondo
- Mr David Taylor

Australian Association of Social Workers

- Dr Sebastian Cordoba
- Ms Angela Scarfe

Private capacity

- Associate Professor Philip Mendes

Thursday, 8 November 2018

Sydney Commonwealth Parliament Offices, Sydney

The Smith Family

- Ms Wendy Field
- Ms Anne Hampshire

Social Ventures Australia

- Mr Patrick Flynn
- Mr Nick Perini
- Ms Casey Taylor

PricewaterhouseCoopers

- Ms Christa Marjoribanks
- Ms Rosi Winn

Australian Council of Social Service

- Dr Peter Davidson
- Ms Charmaine Crowe

Barnardos

- Ms Deirdre Cheers
- Ms Melanie Andrews

Life Course Centre

- Professor David Ribar
- Professor Janeen Baxter
- Dr Anna Zhu

Cape York Partnership

- Mr Noel Pearson
- Ms Zoe Ellerman

Friday, 9 November 2018

SYC – 135-139 Currie Street, Adelaide

National Council for Single Mothers and Their Children

- Ms Jenny Davidson (via teleconference)
- Ms Terese Edwards
- Ms Fiona Cheminant
- Ms Aradia Sayner
- Ms Juanita McLaren (via teleconference)

Engender Equality (teleconference)

- Ms Alina Thomas

Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People

- Ms Penny Wright
- Ms Jessica Flynn

SYC

- Mr Michael Clark

Wednesday, 21 November 2018

Parliament House, Canberra

Anglicare

- Ms Imogen Ebsworth
- Ms Kasy Chambers
- Mr Roland Manderson

Public Health Association of Australia

- Ms Sharon Friel
- Mr Malcolm Baalman

Jesuit Social Services

- Mr Glenn Jessop
- Mr David Hammond

Catholic Social Services

- Mr Joe Zabar
- *Catholic Care Wilcannia-Forbes*
- Ms Anne-Marie Mioche

FamilyCare (teleconference)

- Mr David Tennant

National Rural Health Alliance

- Mr Mark Diamond
- Dr Joanne Walker

UnitingCare

- Ms Claerwen Little
- Dr Robyn Seth-Purdie
- Ms Kim Brooklyn

Department of Jobs and Small Business

- Ms Carmel O'Regan
- Mr Ali Jalayer
- Ms Robyn Shannon

Australian Institute of Family Studies

- Dr Diana Warren
- Dr Michael Alexander
- Dr Jennifer Baxter

Wednesday, 5 December 2018

Parliament House, Canberra

yourtown (via teleconference)

- Mr John Dagleish
- Mr Brendan Bourke
- Ms Laura Clarke

Queensland Advocacy (via teleconference)

- Mr Nick Collyer