



## SOCIAL CITIZENSHIP, CAPABILITIES AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

In the past two years the Brotherhood of St Laurence has made two significant contributions to the growing debate on the future of Australia. The first has been to promote *inclusive growth* as the cornerstone of future economic development (Smyth 2011). Rather than simply assuming that economic growth will 'lift all the boats', an inclusive growth approach would make sure that a slice of the economic pie was always retained to reduce the exclusion of disadvantaged groups and thus achieve a more efficient economy. Francisco Azpitarte (2012) has shown that current policies have produced increases in incomes across Australian society but are pro-poor in the weakest possible way—the incomes of the poor have grown but nothing like the incomes of the rich, moving us towards an increasingly unequal society. By contrast, inclusive growth would ensure that those at the bottom are given the help they need to contribute to society and it would supply the economic foundation to social policy.

The second contribution, building on the Social Exclusion Monitor, has been to promote a *capabilities approach*. Rather than emphasise the weaknesses of people in need, a focus on people's capabilities examines what they require to become capable of living the lives that they aspire to, and then helps them to get there. Helen Kimberley and colleagues (2012) have been working to take this approach into Brotherhood services, in order that some of the most disadvantaged Australians can achieve their personal potential. The capabilities approach looks into the micro, everyday behaviour for a caring society.

To link these two, the macro and the micro, we are re-examining an exciting concept from the very inception of the welfare state: a new *social citizenship*. By social citizenship we mean the vital ingredient that connects people to society and to the processes of



government. It refers to an active relationship between persons, their communities and the state, balancing rights with obligations, plus the exploration of contexts that facilitate interconnection. For if one thing is true of our globalised, internetted, climate-changing, multicultural world, it is that we are all interconnected.

Social citizenship was first used by TH Marshall (1949), who saw it as the next logical step in the development of the relationship between the citizen and the state. For Marshall the eighteenth century was marked by the growth of civil and legal rights, the nineteenth by political rights and the twentieth would see the achievement of social rights. According to Marshall, social citizenship encompassed rights ranging from the right to 'a modicum of economic welfare and security' to the right 'to share to the full in the social heritage and the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in society' (see Buckmaster & Thomas 2009). While his ideas found some purchase in 1970s Australia, they later became ensnared in a wider debate over entitlements and responsibilities. Further, they were developed in a context that was much less culturally diverse, more gendered and more overtly stratified than we have today; and the idea of social citizenship has moved on since Marshall.

More recently Ruth Lister (2010) has argued that the private domestic sphere should be seen as a form of social contribution within a rethinking

of the work-life balance. In her writing, the capacity to care emerges as both an expression of and a barrier to citizenship. Fiona Williams (2001) argues that care claims emerge from below, while policy is all too often created from above, so that policy can easily become out of touch with social engagement. She urges recognising our interdependence rather than our independence. Both writers are passionately concerned with how we are socially interconnected, how we can build a more humane society which takes into account people's diverse rights and responsibilities. In the current context, they can perhaps be thought of as second wave social citizens.

We are not talking about formal national citizenship, the barrier that marks those who are on the inside with rights from those who are on the outside. Rather, social citizenship denotes a particular form of inclusion within communities, neighbourhoods and the imagined

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community that we all hope to be part of. Instead of connoting vague, passive inclusion, new forms of social citizenship emphasise the active agency of the person, as someone who has a hand in creating their own social circumstances and for whom participation and recognition are a precondition.

This new social citizenship refers to the ways in which people access, maintain membership of and actively participate in society. It includes their cut of the pie, the quality and design of their environments, and issues of personal identity. Thus social citizenship moves the debate beyond rights and responsibilities, important as that is, to embrace multiple contributions of all social actors whatever their circumstances. It moves us from instrumental relationships to a reconsideration of what positive social interconnection might mean.

If work is the historical foundation stone of Australian social policy, with welfare seen as a social investment in the current or future productivity of the population, then social citizenship engages a far wider constituency. Decent work can provide a means to living standards that allow parents to raise families, can supply a meaningful source of identity and can allow people to save for their old age. But its end should be to contribute to social citizenship.

An acknowledgement of social citizenship requires rethinking of productive, place-based policies to put people at the centre, and a promise that the priorities of work are balanced by those of family, connection, neighbourhood and friendship. It forms the glue for a diverse and engaged twenty-first century society.

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## FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

While social policy issues will be central to party politics in this federal election year, it is not easy to identify fundamental differences between the parties in terms of overall policy principles. While the global context is extremely volatile and uncertain and the state of national politics often confusing, our own research suggests a potentially stable political middle ground on which to carry through a much needed renovation of the Australian welfare system.

Two of our major research efforts on the renewal of national social policy have come to fruition this year. Elsewhere in this edition of *Comment* I report on the book outcome of our Inclusive Growth project with the University of Melbourne (see page 12). A second collaboration with the University has produced the remarkable achievement of a themed section in the British journal, *Social Policy and Society*. Its theme is 'risk, transition and the life course'. Contributions by various authors to both these publications point to the need for a national consensus around the reintegration of economic and social policy, with a commitment to equal opportunity for all to master the risks of the contemporary life course and so achieve satisfying lives.

### Next steps in our research agenda

In 2013 we plan to build on these foundations in a Next Steps research agenda. Our front page article by Simon Biggs signals the key concepts informing this work. Much of our research has been about establishing the importance of social policy for the economy. Biggs says we should attend equally to articulating the kind of society we want the economy to serve. Here a renewal of our understanding of social citizenship is central; and related to this an understanding of the capabilities necessary for a flourishing existence across the life course.

This is an immensely exciting project as we seek to give meanings to the kinds of lives people value in Australia today; and in this issue, Ashley Carr outlines a project unearthing the values people attach to later life over and beyond economic security and opportunities to participate in paid work.

The changed world of care and its interface with paid work is a second

site for major policy renewal and Yvette Maker and Dina Bowman point to a current project looking at the challenges of meeting the rising demand for formal care while providing decent working conditions and employment pathways for the care workforce.

Maria Duggan reports on our project locating our policy ideas in the values, future hopes and fears of the Australian community. Preliminary themes from the After Now scenarios project are presented. The finished scenarios will be published in June.

### An important year in youth policy

Other projects highlighted in this issue include the critical matter of youth engagement in education, especially for those alienated from conventional schooling. Sharon Bond and Joseph Borlagdan report from a recent forum convened in Canberra by the Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Youth Connections National Network to discuss the Youth Connections program. In a related article George Myconos emphasises the importance of meaningful outcomes measures of youth re-engagement based on his evaluation of the Brotherhood's Through School to Work programs.

### The Social Exclusion Monitor and a new social policy subject

Our Social Exclusion Monitor continues to provide fresh understandings of the meaning of poverty in Australia today and Francisco Azpitarte reports on the importance of the duration of exclusion and its implications for policy.

Finally, we continue to teach into the Master of Social Policy at the University of Melbourne and in May Dina Bowman and Eve Bodsworth will offer a three-day intensive on Social

Inclusion Policy and Practice. The subject is open to the public.

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### NOTE

Articles written by Research and Policy Centre staff members Simon Biggs, Eve Bodsworth, Dina Bowman and Helen Kimberley appear in *Social Policy and Society*, vol. 12, no.2, April 2013.

### KEEP UP TO DATE WITH RESEARCH NEWS

*Brotherhood Update* is a monthly newsletter which contains updates about reports, working papers, submissions, research events and other news from the Research and Policy Centre. Register to receive the newsletter at

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# THE MISSING DIMENSION

## Chronic disadvantage in Australia

The prevalence and depth of poverty are the two dimensions that have received most attention in academic literature and the media. Although highly relevant, however, the analysis of these two dimensions is not enough to fully characterise people's experiences of poverty. It is now widely accepted that the duration of poverty is another dimension that needs to be considered to capture the negative consequences of deprivation.

Empirical evidence for developed countries suggests a strong link between the time spent in poverty and cumulative disadvantage. Research on the dynamics of poverty (mostly for the United Kingdom and the United States) shows that the probability of climbing out of poverty significantly declines with the duration of the poverty episode (Bane & Ellwood 1986; Stevens 1999). If individuals' functions and capabilities deteriorate over time while they are in poverty, then the severity of deprivation critically depends on the length of time individuals stay poor.

A Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) research project aims to investigate the time dimension of disadvantage to identify those groups that are more likely to be trapped in poverty and therefore to experience the greatest disadvantage. We follow the *spell approach* where the persistence of poverty is measured using information on poverty spells, defined as consecutive periods over which individuals remain in poverty. We consider two measures of disadvantage: an income poverty indicator and the measure of social exclusion jointly developed by the BSL and the University of Melbourne using information from seven different domains (see Scutella, Wilkins & Horn 2009).

Data from the first ten waves of the HILDA survey were used to identify spells of income poverty and social exclusion experienced by Australians between 2001 and 2010. The data include more than 130,000 person-year observations generated by more than 23,000 individuals aged 15 and above. These observations allowed us to create a sample with 10,550 spells of income poverty (defined as below

Table 1 Composition of groups defined by number of spells

Characteristic	Income poverty (below 50% median income)			Social exclusion (sum score ≥ 1.3)		
	No spell (%)	Single spell (%)	Multiple spells (%)	No spell (%)	Single spell (%)	Multiple spells (%)
Male	50.6	47.1	43.1	50.0	49.0	44.9
Female	49.4	52.9	56.9	50.0	51.0	55.1
Age <25 years	31.7	30.2	19.7	32.9	29.1	16.5
Age 25-34 years	22.5	11.0	10.4	21.0	14.8	12.0
Age 35-44 years	19.9	12.6	12.4	19.2	15.0	15.1
Age 45-54 years	14.3	11.8	13.9	14.1	12.9	15.4
Age 55-64 years	6.8	13.4	16.7	7.3	11.8	17.8
Age ≥ 65 years	4.8	21.1	26.9	5.4	16.4	23.2

Note: Characteristics of individuals at the time they were first included in the HILDA sample.

50 per cent of the median equivalent income), and 10,186 spells of social exclusion (defined as a value of over 1.3 on the social exclusion measure).<sup>1</sup>

About one-third of the individuals included in the panel had a spell of income poverty or social exclusion over the ten-year period. The majority of these did not have a second episode of disadvantage; however, about 10 per cent of our sample accumulated two or more spells of disadvantage. As Table 1 shows, the sex and age distributions of those who had multiple spells were quite different from the other groups. Women outnumbered men among those with multiple spells of poverty and social exclusion, representing in both cases more than 55 per cent of the population. Individuals aged under 25 years accounted for the largest share among those with only one spell (about 30 per cent), whereas people above 65 were the largest group among those with multiple spells of income poverty and social exclusion (27 and 23 per cent, respectively).

We used duration models to quantify the effect of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics on the probability of moving out of disadvantage and of falling back into it shortly after exit, and so to identify those groups more likely to experience chronic disadvantage.

Table 2 presents the hazard ratios of these two hazards for different characteristics. For both measures we find that individuals above 65 years of age had the highest risk of long-term disadvantage among all age-groups. For this group, the chances of climbing out of poverty and social exclusion were 46 and 43 per cent lower, respectively, than for the reference group. Interestingly, those above 65 were also more likely to return to poverty after escaping it. The risk is particularly high in the case of income poverty as they had 81 per cent more chance of returning to it than the reference group. Individuals living in households where some members were disabled and people living in households where all members below 65 were out of the labour market were at higher risk of chronic disadvantage. This is because they had less chance of moving out of poverty and also because, once out of poverty, these groups were particularly likely to start a new episode of disadvantage. The possibility of re-entry was especially

<sup>1</sup> In order to create sample groups of similar size for income poverty and social exclusion, for this analysis income poverty is defined as below 50 per cent of median income, and social exclusion as a sum score of at least 1.3 from seven domains. These thresholds are slightly different from those used in regular reporting of the Social Exclusion Monitor.



high in the case of jobless households (hazard ratios 2.23 for income poverty and 1.82 for social exclusion). Having less than Year 12 education and being out of the labour force increased the risk of chronic poverty. These groups had less chance of ending a spell of disadvantage (between 11 and 37 per cent less) and more chance of returning to disadvantage after an exit, especially in the case of social exclusion (86 per cent more than the reference group). Finally, people living alone and public housing tenants were expected to have longer episodes of disadvantage as they were less likely to experience exits from poverty and more likely to return to it after an exit.

**Conclusions**

The analysis of the time dimension is crucial to identify those groups that are at high risk of becoming chronically poor and therefore experiencing severe deprivation. Using HILDA data for the period 2001-10 we are able to quantify the relative risk of being caught in a poverty trap for different groups. We find that people above 65 years of age, individuals living in jobless households or in households with disabilities, poorly educated individuals and people who are out of the labour force for long periods, public housing tenants and people living alone have more chance of staying longer in disadvantage than other groups.

The higher risk of chronic poverty for these groups is caused by the congruence of two factors: a lower probability of ending a spell of disadvantage and a higher risk of starting a new episode. Consequently, policies aimed exclusively at promoting exits from poverty may not be sufficient to prevent chronic poverty. These policies should be combined with actions designed to keep high-risk groups out of poverty for long periods so that the probability of returning to it is definitely reduced.

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*Table 2 Poverty exit and poverty re-entry hazard ratios*

Characteristic	Exit		Re-entry	
	Income poverty	Social exclusion	Income poverty	Social exclusion
<b>Age</b> (Reference: 35-44 years)				
<25 years	1.14	0.90	0.54	0.36
25-34 years	1.25	1.05	0.47	0.49
45-54 years	1.01	0.90	0.84	0.89
55-64 years	0.81	0.89	1.00	1.02
≥ 65 years	0.54	0.57	1.81	1.22
<b>Disability</b> (Reference: individuals in households with no disabled people)				
Disabled people in the household	0.95	0.82	0.99	1.67
<b>Joblessness</b> (Reference: all households except those where all their members aged below 65 are out of the labour market)				
Jobless household	0.76	0.64	2.23	1.82
<b>Education</b> (Reference: secondary education completed with no tertiary)				
Tertiary education	1.21	1.21	0.53	0.50
Less than Year 12	0.89	0.63	1.14	1.86
<b>Employment</b> (Reference: part-time worker)				
Full-time worker	1.34	1.21	0.28	0.37
Unemployed	0.86	1.21	0.97	1.09
Out of the labour force	0.83	0.79	1.07	1.16
<b>Family type</b> (Reference: couple with no kids)				
Couple with kids	0.95	1.16	0.81	0.64
Lone parent	1.02	0.99	1.17	1.14
Single	0.60	0.65	1.50	1.23
<b>Housing</b> (Reference: private renter)				
Outright owner	1.05	1.22	0.86	0.53
Owner with mortgage	1.11	1.11	0.58	0.51
Public housing tenant	0.66	0.56	1.24	0.96

See footnote for definitions

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## COMMUNITY SECTOR AND CARE WORK EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES

All people require care and support at some time in their lives, and many are also likely to provide care to a family member or friend. In Australia, care is generally provided in families, but increasingly people with care needs rely on services provided by formal care providers, who are subject to complex regulatory and funding arrangements. The growing demand for formal care services is associated with factors including an ageing population, changing expectations of family life and greater numbers of women engaging in paid employment.

The care needs of Australians during different phases of life have been the subject of increasing policy interest in recent years, with the announcement of a range of care-related reform packages and three dedicated Productivity Commission inquiries. This interest, which centres on concerns about how to meet the community's current and forecast care needs, provides an opportunity to reconsider the inequalities that paid care workers face, and to propose solutions that would ensure the provision of both high-quality care and decent jobs.

### Conditions of care workers

Australian Government policies concerning care generally deal with only one type of care, such as early childhood education and care (ECEC), disability care or aged care (King & Meagher 2012). Similarly, research and reporting in this area uses a variety of definitions, and either treats the ECEC, disability care and aged care sectors separately, or combines data on these sectors with wider health or community services work (Charlesworth 2012).<sup>1</sup> Consequently, it is difficult to make precise statements about Australia's care workforce as a whole. Nevertheless, several important features are shared by care sectors. Like unpaid family care, all paid care work is dominated by women, who account for around 80 per cent of disability workers, over 90 per cent of

aged care workers and 97 per cent of ECEC workers (Martin & Healy 2010; Martin & King 2008; Productivity Commission 2011c).

Care workers across the care sectors have relatively high rates of part-time or casual<sup>2</sup> employment (Productivity Commission 2011a, 2011b, 2011c). For instance, the majority of direct care workers in aged care and disability care are engaged on a permanent part-time basis and many others are casual employees. Other care workers are employed as agency staff or contractors or are self-employed (King et al. 2012; Martin & Healy 2010; Martin & King 2008).

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*Another factor influencing care workers' pay and conditions is the funding arrangements under which governments engage not-for-profit and for-profit service providers to deliver services.*

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Care workers are more likely than the workforce in general to hold educational qualifications at a Year 12 level or higher, and for non-professional care workers these are most commonly vocational education and training qualifications such as certificates III or IV (ABS 2011; DEEWR 2011; Martin & King 2008).

It is commonly argued that paid care work is undervalued compared with other work requiring similar levels of skill; and the Productivity Commission observed that low pay is common across the ECEC, disability care and aged care sectors (Charlesworth 2012; see, for example, Productivity Commission 2011a). The recent SACS equal pay case, which resulted in the decision of Fair Work Australia (now the Fair Work Commission) to increase award wages for social and community services workers, highlighted the connections between traditionally 'female' employment, lower wages and long-term financial

insecurity for women (and men who work in female-dominated industries). The undervaluation of care work was attributed to a variety of factors, including the 'caring' nature of the work, the industry's history of voluntarism, and the predominantly female workforce (Allebone 2011).

The low-paid and part-time or casual nature of care jobs also reflects a broader Australian trend towards work that is 'insecure'. Insecure work provides uncertain income, entails fluctuating or unpredictable hours, is of uncertain duration, and/or provides fewer safeguards, rights and entitlements (such as sick leave and recreation leave) than permanent employment (IIWA 2012). Sara Charlesworth (2012) has observed that even permanent part-time employment for some care workers has become 'partly casualised', because the industry award covering social and community services workers encourages employers to set low minimum work hours that can easily be increased at short notice and without an obligation to pay above ordinary time rates.

Another factor influencing care workers' pay and conditions is the funding arrangements under which governments engage not-for-profit and for-profit service providers to deliver services (Fair Work Australia 2011; Productivity Commission 2010). The funding is often of short or unpredictable duration, is contingent on service providers meeting considerable compliance and reporting obligations, and may not meet the full cost of providing the services. This means that employers are constrained in their ability to increase wages, improve conditions, or offer more secure or permanent work to their employees (Allebone 2011; Charlesworth 2012; Productivity Commission 2010, 2011b).

### An increasing demand for care services

Expanding and securing a care workforce sufficient to meet the growing demand for formal care services presents several challenges, with relatively high staff turnover in some areas, and an aged care and disability workforce dominated by

<sup>1</sup> ABS (2011) does present data relating to 'community service workers' generally, but distinguishes between 'residential care services', 'child care services' and 'other social assistance services' rather than care work at different life phases.

<sup>2</sup> Casual workers are not entitled to paid leave but receive a higher hourly rate of pay to compensate (ABS 2010).

middle-aged or older workers (King et al. 2012; Productivity Commission 2011b). In its reviews of the ECEC, aged care and disability care sectors, the Productivity Commission identified low pay and limited opportunities for career progression as barriers to attracting and retaining workers.

At the same time, the demand for a professionalised workforce, with more care workers being required to acquire formal qualifications, is increasing the obligations imposed on individual workers and fuelling further demand for workers (Allebone 2011; Productivity Commission 2011c). Finally, the rise of personalised and individual care packages, seen for example in the proposed move from block funding of service providers to funding individuals in the National Disability Insurance Scheme, is likely to bring about changes to the way care service providers operate (Productivity Commission 2011b).

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### *The Productivity Commission identified low pay and limited opportunities for career progression as barriers to attracting and retaining workers.*

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#### **A space for community sector care service providers**

A major challenge for governments, the community and care service providers is how to provide quality services that meet the needs of people with disabilities, parents and children, and frail older people while also providing decent jobs and sustainable livelihoods for workers.

In light of the increasing demand for care services, it is essential that the users are consulted in any redesign of care work to ensure that the services meet their needs and aspirations as well as those of care workers (see Kimberley, Gruhn & Huggins 2012). The community sector is a key site for examining issues of equity, the quality of care services and decent work.

As a provider of services, an employer and an advocate for those who experience disadvantage, the Brotherhood is well placed to investigate the challenges around care work and the care workforce. We are developing activities

including an examination of our use of non-permanent employees, the Workforce Development Initiative in aged care and a care work futures demonstration project.

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# STRENGTHENING THE YOUTH RE-ENGAGEMENT SYSTEM BEYOND 2013

Young people who are not fully engaged in education or employment represent a small but significant minority in Australia. In 2012, 14.5 per cent of 15-19 year olds were not fully engaged in education or employment, but rather were seeking work, not in the labour force or employed part-time (FYA 2012, p. 19).

Over the last three years, Youth Connections (YC), an initiative of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, has sought to address stubborn rates of disengagement through outreach and re-engagement activities, case management and initiatives that build youth service capacity. Given the positive evaluation of YC at national and local levels, the Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) recommends funding to be continued and expanded. Continuity is necessary to provide effective support to young people, sustain the partnerships and service capacity that have been built to date and retain experienced staff. It makes sense to capitalise on the system implemented in 2010, while undertaking further improvements.

YC represents a key component of Australia's youth transition system. With funding due to conclude at the end of this year this, now is the ideal time to reflect on the program's strengths and limitations, and to consider how the array of re-engagement and transitions arrangements might be consolidated into a cohesive system.

Leading this reflection, the BSL and the Youth Connections National Network (YCNN) hosted a roundtable at the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations in Canberra, titled *Strengthening re-engagement and participation of disengaged young people: learnings from the Youth Connections approach*. Professionals from government, education and community sectors engaged with the latest research and policy work.

Keynote speaker Professor Richard Sweet outlined international best practice in youth transition systems. He noted parallels between YC's individualised, holistic and flexible case management approach and the

community-based re-engagement services offered by northern European countries and perceived as exemplars.

## Strengths of YC

Research presented at the roundtable highlighted the following strengths of the YC program.

### Effective re-engagement

Anna Crabb's presentation from dandolo partners' evaluation of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions showed that YC made a measurable contribution to educational participation, both in the numbers of clients and the outcomes obtained (DEEWR 2012). This was reinforced by Dr Joseph Borlagdan and Sharon Bond who reported from the BSL's evaluation of the Peninsula Youth Connections program in Victoria that 85 per cent of clients achieved either a progressive outcome (i.e. movement towards re-engagement) or a final outcome (i.e. re-engagement in study or engagement in work) (Barrett 2012a); and that three months after their exit from the program, 79 per cent were still studying or working.

### Flexible, individualised case management

The intensive, flexible, individualised and sustained case management that YC provides was a key strength according to Youth Connections National Network research (2012) presented by Gerrie Mitra. It enabled the development of trusting relationships that YC clients often lacked outside the program. Clients valued the informal case management format, the persistence and encouragement of their case managers. Evaluations of Youth Connections have shown the benefit of the case management model in re-engaging young people in education, training and employment (dandolopartners 2013; Barrett 2012a, 2012b).

### Integrating a fragmented service system

YC assists young people to navigate a fragmented, often confusing array

## Youth Connections strengths

- ✓ YC is effective in re-engaging young people
- ✓ Flexible, individualised case management works
- ✓ YC integrates a fragmented service system

## Youth Connections enhancements

- +
- Clarify responsibilities and accountabilities for youth engagement and support
- +
- Adopt a preventative approach focused on engagement in the primary and middle school years
- +
- Implement a rapid referral system
- +
- Provide a Career Development Service and links to the workplace

of services to access the support they need. The Peninsula Youth Connections evaluation found that the program links and partnerships with a range of organisations and sectors (e.g. schools, community and government agencies) prevented duplication of services while developing tailored responses that met local needs (Barrett 2012b).

## Developing the re-engagement system

The roundtable identified aspects of the Australian youth re-engagement system that could be strengthened or added to, and a number are listed here.

### Clarify responsibilities and accountabilities for youth engagement and support

The roundtable recommended clarification of youth engagement responsibilities between state and federal governments and schools and the community sector. Professor Sweet described how legislative, administrative and financial



agreements in parts of Europe provide agencies such as schools and municipal youth guidance centres with a mandate to address disengagement (Sweet 2012).

### **Adopt a preventative approach focused on engagement in the primary and middle school years**

The Youth Connections National Network research (2012) found that school difficulties began at 5–10 years for 19 per cent and 10–13 years for 37 per cent of YC participants. The issue of primary school disengagement is also identified in the Peninsula Youth Connections evaluation (Bond 2011). The roundtable confirmed early intervention in primary schools as a key component of an effective youth engagement system.

### **Implement a rapid referral system**

The identification of young people who are disengaging or disengaged depends on school knowledge and willingness to refer; and the roundtable discussion highlighted the need for a timely referral system. As an example of best practice, Danish schools must refer each early school leaver within five days to the municipal Youth Guidance Centre, which is required to prepare an Individual Action Plan within 30 days. Income support is contingent on the young person accepting assistance (Sweet 2012).

### **Provide a Career Development Service and links to the workplace**

The need for a career development system was an identified gap. Young people who are disengaging require ongoing careers guidance from practitioners who understand local education, training and employment opportunities. This is outside the capacity of many schools and Job Services Australia providers, and young people's often negative experiences of JSA were reported in Natalie Lammas' presentation of Australian Youth Affairs Coalition research (2012). International best practice highlights this need for careers guidance. For example in Sweden, youth-specific one-stop-shop guidance centres (Navigator Centres) address young people's skills and broader needs (Sweet 2012). John Dalglish highlighted the importance of providing experience of real jobs, reporting Boystown and Griffith University (2012) research

which showed the benefits of providing support, training and work experience to disengaged young people. The value of exposure to the workplace was echoed in Neil Pharaoh's presentation of the Foundation for Young Australians Worlds of Work program.

### **The Brotherhood's position**

While the BSL supports the Gonski Review's recommendation of additional funding for schools with high numbers of low socioeconomic students, targeted to individual needs, this is no substitute for the comprehensive support that YC provides. Firstly, schools cannot provide the wide range of professional assistance that students with complex needs require, but YC can secure these supports from across the service system. Secondly, while schools have a primary role in preventing disengagement, unlike YC they cannot support young people once they have left. Therefore Youth Connections should continue to be funded with five-year contracts for providers.

Given that the demand for YC exceeds supply and a preventative approach is needed to address disengagement, we call for the school student intake to be uncapped. Additionally, given that one quarter of 20–24 year olds are not engaged in full-time education or full-time work (FYA 2012, p.35) and there is no equivalent service for this cohort, we recommend YC be expanded to support young people up to the age of 24.

Finally, we recommend that YC's role in career planning be strengthened through linkages with careers professionals and networks, and the co-location of any new career service with YC.

In the coming months the BSL will be advocating the continuation and further development of the YC model. With the conclusion of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions it is essential that we develop a strong system that ensures all young people are able to flourish and participate socially and economically.

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## EXPLORING MEANING IN LATER LIFE

### Learning from literature and life stories

What does it mean to grow old in contemporary Australia? In light of the unprecedented growth in numbers of older adults this seems a particularly important question. Yet it has not received the attention it deserves. Instead the debate on the ageing population is fixated on economic costs and productivity measures, on projected care needs, intergenerational inequity, forecasts of growing dependency rates and a doom-and-gloom attitude about what ageing means (see, for example, Katz 1992).

To counter this trend, two current Brotherhood of St Laurence research projects are designed to shed light on the multiple meanings of later life. They both appeal to the possibilities that ageing presents rather than its limitations. The main aim is to spark discussion on what ageing means, both personally and socially.

#### Cultural, social and historical perspectives

The first stage of our study *Meanings of a long life* is premised on the notion that current policy directions limit the ageing experience and an overwhelming focus on ageing as a problem suggests continued work and productivity as the best possible solution (Biggs & Kimberley 2013). Moreover, it is shown that a poverty of meaning currently pervades dominant understandings of later life. Addressing these issues is critical, both for older adults and for society as a whole, if we are to successfully adapt to demographic change.

The working paper (Carr, Biggs & Kimberley 2013) discusses a range of ageing and life-course models to determine what later life means within each. Diverse historical, anthropological, religious, philosophical, psychosocial and cultural perspectives on ageing are drawn upon to create a collage of different meanings applicable to later life. This is by no means a definitive list. What it does provide are some of the possibilities for meaning-making in later life.

One of the study's main suggestions is that we need to move away from the

one-size-fits-all mentality of ageing policy. For example, discussion of Indigenous Australians and ageing provides evidence of the mismatch between policy and the ageing experience. This should encourage us to look at ageing from multiple perspectives. Further, spiritual and philosophical frameworks provide additional evidence on what matters to older adults as they age.

Multiple sources and frameworks of meaning need to be acknowledged if as a society we are to truly value diversity and counter common stereotypes about later life.

The study also found that there is a considerable gap between cultural values and social reality. Cultural frameworks that value older adults do not always translate into real and meaningful social roles in later life. Translating sources of meaning into concrete policy and service outcomes remains a persistent challenge. Future policy and service developments should aim to better incorporate meaningful roles and possibilities for older adults.

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*Cultural frameworks that value older adults do not always translate into real and meaningful social roles in later life.*

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#### Stories to age by

The second part of the research will engage directly with older adults to explore what later life means to them. Focusing on the personal meanings conveyed through storytelling places the experiences of older adults at the centre of this research. It acknowledges that we all have stories that are important to us and that these stories are crucial for communicating what matters in our lives.

Through a series of focus groups, older adults will be asked to discuss what they value in life, what events and experiences they feel are significant and what changes across the life course they think are most important.

Individual interviews will also be conducted. Older adults will be asked to tell their life stories. They will also be provided with the opportunity to review their life story as documented and make further comment on what later life means to them.

The study will provide a voice to this growing segment of the population and further our understanding of self-identity in later life.

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# HOW DO AUSTRALIANS UNDERSTAND THE FUTURE?

## Update from the After Now scenarios

Over one hundred people from across Australia have contributed to the development of the After Now scenarios. In a series of in-depth interviews people reflected on the changing nature of Australian society and imagined possible futures. The themes emerging from the interviews are the raw material of the future scenarios. These themes reflect the disruptive context posed by an impending federal election, shifting geopolitical allegiances, economic and political instability in other parts of the world and personal hopes for and anxieties about the future.

Respondents addressed questions exploring the assumptions behind their views of the future. Do they consider the future to be predetermined or can it be shaped? What kind of future is preferred and how might this be achieved? The relevance of all these questions for the Brotherhood of St Laurence is that the information provided will frame narratives about alternative futures for Australia to support our advocacy for a fairer, prosperous future and inform the policies needed to achieve this.

### Uncertainties and possibilities

In a recent national survey almost two-thirds of Australians felt that 'the future we pass on to our children and grandchildren will not be better than that handed to us' (AusPoll 2011). While a similar picture of unease is revealed through our scenarios interviews, this coexists with high levels of optimism about the future: some 98 per cent of respondents are hopeful.

Emerging themes, proposed by at least 70 per cent of respondents, are presented below.

### Fair go

A 'fair go' is seen as both a core value and a key characteristic of an Australian society that is fundamentally egalitarian compared with elsewhere in the developed world. A wide range of policies are proposed aimed at shoring up the fair go, including investing in early years education and schooling in areas of disadvantage, more strenuous

action to support disengaged young people, the Disability Insurance Scheme, further efforts to address discrimination across the board and tackling poverty among older people. A considerable number of interviewees addressed the need to 'bite the bullet' and to begin a national conversation about wealth redistribution to mitigate disparity between 'the haves and the have-nots'.

The notion of 'shared sacrifice' is a very strong theme. In order to avoid the austerity that is seen to be so damaging of growth and life chances in both the United States and Europe, it is suggested that all must 'do their bit'. This is seen as intrinsically more in keeping with the spirit of the fair go.

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*A 'fair go' is seen as both a core value and a key characteristic of an Australian society that is fundamentally egalitarian compared with elsewhere in the developed world.*

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### Resilience

Most contributors feel that Australia has been good to them and their families and, particularly among migrants including refugees and asylum seekers, there is great appreciation of the safety and stability of society in addition to the opportunities available. At the same time there is concern that forces are bearing down that may undermine these, including increasing consumerism, erosion of neighbourhoods and social connections, increasing insecurity of work, declining standards of educational attainment, new social risks to manage and the impact of climate change. Policies are proposed to create a resilient and adaptive society, including more environmental action and comprehensive action aimed at enabling people to create and grasp new opportunities.

Place has a particular importance in discussions of resilience. Contributors

urged 'visionary' urban planning and management of urban growth to ensure that development of green wedges, the suburban fringe and growth corridors addresses affordability of housing, realises greater opportunities for social and economic participation and mitigates social exclusion and ghettoisation.

### Global citizens

Many of our respondents speak about the successful embrace of multiculturalism and suggest that this is a defining characteristic which makes Australia a great place to live. At the same time some expressed concern in relation to current refugee and immigration policies, considered to be 'selfish'. Linked to this, many people suggested that Australia needs to think about its future role as a global citizen in addressing the movement of people.

Contributors emphasise the importance of redefining the relationship with Asia beyond the current focus on exporting natural resources.

### Next steps

This work suggests that the preferred future for many Australians manifests the principles of fairness and inclusion as well as the pursuit of progress and prosperity. The scenarios will be published in mid 2013.

Further information can be found at [www.bsl.org.au/after-now](http://www.bsl.org.au/after-now).

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## INCLUSIVE GROWTH IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

June this year will see the launch of a new book, *Inclusive growth in Australia: social policy as economic investment*, edited by Paul Smyth and John Buchanan. The book, undertaken in partnership with the University of Melbourne and a number of other scholars, sets out new principles to inform Australian social policy development and proposes key policy applications. The launch comes at a time of profound global policy uncertainty but the Brotherhood of St Laurence believes the inclusive growth approach offers the best available thinking on how to achieve a society which is both economically strong and socially just.

A year ago, the idea of inclusive growth appeared compelling. An international symposium convened by the Brotherhood and the University of Melbourne on welfare and development included contributions from lead researchers at the World Bank and the OECD. It evidenced an emerging global policy imperative around boosting growth while reducing inequality.

For OECD countries like Australia this reflects a social policy paradigm shift from the 'welfare state' to the 'social investment state'. In the former, welfare had come to be understood narrowly in terms of the role the tax and transfer system plays in modifying the inequalities produced by a free market approach to wealth creation. Using these means, different countries might adjust their level of poverty and inequality, with the choice being simply one of national moral taste. Actual wealth creation was thought best left to the free market. The 'social investment' model has fundamentally switched the focus from the tax and transfer system to the economically productive value of social services, especially education and health. Importantly for the Brotherhood, poverty is seen as a public enemy for reasons of economic efficiency as much as social morality.

### Beyond social investment

While extremely important in terms of recovering the productive value of social services, the social investment approach is only half the story.

As the European economic crisis reveals, building up human capital is insufficient if other economic policies are failing. Here the 'inclusive growth' model in development policy helps fill out the paradigm. Growth itself can become futile if it does not serve wider social and environmental goals. Thus poverty and inequality can not only be socially unacceptable and politically disruptive but, if excessive, can slow down economic development itself. Importantly, the 'trickle-down' approach of the Washington consensus is now rejected. But so also is relying on taxes and transfers 'after' growth is achieved. Integrated economic and social policies are needed to establish a broad-based, employment-centred pattern of development which can offer all citizens the means to economic and social participation.

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*Thus poverty and inequality can not only be socially unacceptable and politically disruptive but, if excessive, can slow down economic development itself.*

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Our book synthesises these learnings from both developed and developing economies and applies them to Australia. We show that Australia is experiencing the same trends—if not so extreme—towards greater inequality and social exclusion as witnessed in the United States and the United Kingdom. To tackle the problem through social policy we emphasise the productive value of social services and our traditional Australian aspiration that social services should be a way of giving each individual as a good a chance in life as their neighbour. In economic policy, inclusive growth is shown to honour the old Australian social contract whereby fairly remunerated paid employment is the main game when it comes to social security. Policies to ensure broad-based, employment-rich economic development beyond the mineral boom complete our analysis.

### From framework to action

It is one thing to propose a new policy framework beyond neoliberalism; another thing entirely for it to be enacted. Globally, social policy remains highly conflicted. While, for example, *The Economist* magazine (2012) observes 'the welfare state is flowering in Asia' (consider China, Indonesia and India), in the United Kingdom it is being dismantled. In economic policy, the financial crisis has discredited much of the neoliberal consensus among researchers but in practice much of the conceptual framework endures.

Of course paradigm shifts like this do not occur over night: the Keynesian revolution was a long, drawn-out affair. Nor does a good idea simply trickle down into action. In the end policy is as much about the activity of interest groups and the creation of public opinion. Here at the Brotherhood we see our task as taking the idea of inclusive growth into action.

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### NOTES

*Inclusive growth in Australia: social policy as economic investment*, edited by Paul Smyth and John Buchanan, is to be published by Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

Presentations at the International Forum on Inclusive Growth, Welfare and Development Policy, University of Melbourne, June 2012, are available at <http://articulation.arts.unimelb.edu.au/?p=1800>.





# UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF JUDGMENT DEBTORS

While many Australians benefit from access to credit to meet everyday expenses, risk factors such as poor health, reliance on income support, loss of income, and drug and alcohol problems can expose individuals to 'problem' debt and debt recovery processes including legal action. Court data reveals that each year 30,000 to 40,000 consumers receive 'default judgments' against them in the Victorian Magistrates' Court, often for relatively small debts. In the 2011-12 financial year, default judgment was sought by creditors for debts as low as \$47.60. A 'default judgment' is a court order imposed, usually against the person being sued, without a hearing. This is because they did not provide a defence to court proceedings started by the other party. A default judgment usually requires the defendant to pay the debt in full plus interest, as well as the plaintiff's legal fees. The person who owes the debt is often referred to as the 'judgment debtor'.

The impact of a default judgment on an individual's or family's wellbeing can be severe, particularly for people living on low incomes or experiencing other forms of disadvantage. A default judgment can result in the seizure of the debtor's property, including their home, or ongoing deductions from wages. A default judgment can have long lasting consequences, enforceable for at least fifteen years from the date of judgment. Concerned about the impact of this legal process on disadvantaged consumers, the Consumer Action Law Centre initiated this study which was undertaken by the Brotherhood's Research and Policy Centre, funded by the Victorian Law Council.

## Debts and debtors

The research explored the everyday experiences of 18 individual debtors and analysed court data to identify the characteristics of debtors and creditors. It was found that the most common judgment creditors are local councils in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and in growth areas. Most debtors also live in areas of high disadvantage or in rapidly growing outer suburbs; this is likely a function of housing and financial stress and

raises questions about access to local legal and financial services.

Most default judgments involve modest amounts but they may reflect household hardship. Individuals' debt problems arose from complex intersections of underlying poverty or vulnerability, with unexpected events leading to a drop in income or rise in expenses. Insecure work such as casual and self-employment and unemployment were key factors in creating problem debt. Reliance on income support payments also significantly increased individuals' vulnerability to financial crisis. Other factors were mental illness, disability, family breakdown and family violence, and caring responsibilities.

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*A default judgment can result in the seizure of the debtor's property, including their home, or ongoing deductions from wages.*

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## Navigating the system

The debt recovery process itself was found to be difficult for debtors to navigate, involving multiple regulatory frameworks and negotiations with multiple parties. Vulnerable debtors avoided dealing with problem debts for a range of reasons: because they were unaware of their rights and options; their other problems took priority; or, despite acknowledging the debt, they could not pay due to a very low income and could foresee no change to this in the future. Debtors struggling with mortgage repayments tended to prioritise this debt over all others, unaware that a default judgment from another debt could also jeopardise their home.

Debtors revealed difficulties in negotiating with creditors, particularly if they had multiple debts, and reported many instances of harassment and inappropriate behaviour from debt collection agencies. Some debtors did not respond to the initiation of court proceedings (by filing a defence) because they did not receive notification at all or on time; they

did not understand what they were required to do; or they acknowledged they owed the debt but could not pay. Debtors described experiencing anxiety, depression and relationship problems due to their debt problems and their attempts to navigate the debt recovery process. Individuals often did not seek help because they could not pay and therefore felt there was nothing they could do. Feelings of shame and pride also affected whether interviewees sought help.

These findings are important, as research regarding civil justice is often undertaken from the narrow viewpoint of the court system, whereas 'taking the wide angle view of civil justice problems emphasizes that justiciable problems are very frequently aspects of ... the problems of everyday life' (Currie 2007). Based on these findings, the report makes recommendations about improving access to information, advice and support, as well as changes to default judgment processes to improve justice outcomes.

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## NOTE

The report will be available on the websites of the Consumer Action Law Centre and the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

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## REFERENCE

Currie, A 2007, *The legal problems of everyday life: the nature, extent and consequences of justiciable problems experienced by Canadians*, Department of Justice, Canada.



## RETHINKING OUTCOMES ALONG THE RE-ENGAGEMENT ROAD

*What's most important [about the program]? I could say the ... certificate, but it's not. It's my confidence, my personality ... [It] made me grow as a person ... to get where I am now, successful and with a job, wanting to go further, knowing where I want to go, and planning my steps.*

(Student, BSL CVCAL re-engagement program)

The vast majority of Australia's over 800 re-engagement programs—designed for young people who have dropped out of mainstream schooling and usually provided in non-school, community settings—include a component of formal vocational education and training (VET) (te Riele 2012). However the differing pedagogies and methods of measuring progress combine to make the relationships between VET providers and re-engagement programs complex and at times fraught. Tensions not only impact on the progress of young people in re-engagement programs, but also contribute to the low VET completion rates for 15-19 year olds (Karmel & Woods 2008).

### Applied learning and re-engagement

The importance of the 'applied' learning component to a typical re-engagement program cannot be overstated: it often proves the key to engagement, and to a student's ability to find, or at least prepare, for employment. Yet this concurrent learning process poses significant challenges for young people whose grip on education has been broken because of difficult personal and social circumstances. It should not be assumed that enrolling in a VET course is sufficient to ensure successful educational re-engagement. Indeed the Brotherhood's experience suggests that closer collaboration between VET providers and re-engagement programs is needed.

One area of difference is the respective settings' approaches to outcomes, both formal, quantifiable outcomes with an understood

'currency' (e.g. attendance, graduations) and informal outcomes which are ambiguous and difficult to quantify (e.g. confidence, motivation and engagement).

### Formal and informal outcomes

As the student quoted at the head of this article indicates, those working within a re-engagement framework place considerably more weight on informal outcomes than do their counterparts in vocational training settings (or in mainstream secondary schools). Reviews of re-engagement programs highlight the importance of improvements in a student's sense of security and stability, physical and mental wellbeing, maturity, and capacity to trust and build relationships under adverse conditions, to avoid damaging relationships and behaviours and, in sum, to build resilience (Davies, Lamb & Doecke 2011; Wilson, Stemp & McGinty 2011).

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*A related task is to caution against a narrow conceptualisation of outcomes, and to show that even though formal outcomes may, arguably, be the principal measures, they cannot easily be separated from less tangible outcomes.*

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In terms of evaluation this suggests the importance of reporting on 'non-events': that is, factoring into any assessment of success the reduction in truancy, consumption of alcohol and other drugs, or conflict of various kinds. This particularly applies when the student's previous experience was chaotic, unstable and fraught. In this context 'progress' may include false starts, u-turns, and persistence, even when that progress may seem modest and has not resulted in immediate formal outcomes.

Though these indicators would be evident in a vocational training setting,

the overwhelming emphasis there is on progress through the highly compartmentalised curriculum framed in terms of units of competency, and certificate attainment. By contrast, while re-engagement programs do track indicators such as graduations, attendance, enrolments, exits, 'credits' attained and unit progress, standards of literacy and numeracy, experienced staff recognise that these indicators alone provide a limited understanding of the benefits gained by the young person.

Formal and informal outcomes in many ways exist in a symbiotic relationship; and the informal and less tangible outcomes are pre-conditions to attainment of formal outcomes.

### Demonstrating effectiveness

For service delivery this poses formidable challenges because re-engagement programs are under considerable pressure to prove their effectiveness to funding bodies and, of course, to government and policy makers. A major dilemma confronts these programs: how to convince these stakeholders about the efficacy of their pedagogy and practice, when the lingua franca is one founded on statistically verifiable criteria for success?

The challenge for advocates of re-engagement programs is to impress on the policy-making and wider community that even though applied learning is a key to effective re-engagement, this does not mean that young students with a tenuous grip on education will readily adjust to the very different demands of vocational training. A related task is to caution against a narrow conceptualisation of outcomes, and to show that even though formal outcomes may, arguably, be the principal measures, they cannot easily be separated from less tangible outcomes.

This requires more nuanced frameworks for assessment and evaluation, bringing into view incremental improvements on a wide range of indices. It means paying due regard to context, students' backgrounds and barely perceptible

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## RECENT POLICY SUBMISSIONS

Policy submissions can be accessed on our website at [www.bsl.org.au/Hot-issues/Policy-submissions](http://www.bsl.org.au/Hot-issues/Policy-submissions)

Submissions or statements made by the Brotherhood of St Laurence in the last year include:

- *Pathways to social and economic inclusion*, submission to the Australian Government on employment services from 2015, March 2013
- Submission to the Independent Review of Centrepay, February 2013
- Joint submission to the Essential Services Commission re Energy Retail Code harmonisation, February 2013
- Response to *Grey areas: age barriers to work in Commonwealth laws* discussion paper, November 2012
- Response to Department of Justice discussion paper *Practical lessons, fair consequences: improving diversion for young people in Victoria*, October 2012
- Submission to the Senate Select Committee inquiry on electricity prices, September 2012
- Response to *Grey areas: age barriers to work in Commonwealth laws* (Australian Law Reform Commission inquiry), August 2012
- Towards a fair and decent social security system: submission to Senate inquiry into adequacy of the allowance system for jobseekers and others, August 2012
- Submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Social Security Legislation Amendment (Fair Incentives to Work) Bill 2012, July 2012
- Submission to the Victorian Government consultation *Pathways to a Fair and Sustainable Social Housing System*, July 2012
- Submission to the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers, July 2012
- *Tackling racism at a broader community level*: submission to the Australian Human Rights Commission re national anti racism strategy, May 2012
- Submission to the Inquiry into Dementia: Early Diagnosis and Intervention, May 2012
- Presentation to the Inquiry into Workforce Participation by People with a Mental Illness, February 2012
- Submission re the National Energy Savings Initiative, February 2012
- Submission to the Inquiry into Cybersafety for Senior Australians, February 2012
- *Barriers to effective climate change adaptation*: submission to the Productivity Commission inquiry, January 2012

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signs of increasing resilience even well after the program. This, in turn, requires methods of engaging with past students and ways of establishing causal links between the re-engagement learning experience and the students' post-program lives. In the absence of such frameworks, it will be more difficult for educators in the re-engagement 'sector' to convince policy-makers of the worth of their programs to students and to society.

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### Teaching and Research Aged Care Services (TRACS) project

The Brotherhood of St Laurence has received two-year funding from Department of Health and Ageing to lead a consortium which will create a Centre of Excellence at Sumner House, our residential care facility in Fitzroy. In addition to project partner RMIT University, the Teaching and Research Aged Care Services (TRACS) project will involve several parts of the Brotherhood: the Research and Policy Centre, the Registered Training Organisation, the Centre for Practice Knowledge and Sumner House itself. Sixteen TRACS projects have been funded nationally, with ours being one of three selected in Victoria.

TRACS combine teaching, research, clinical care and service delivery in one location to create learning

environments that support clinical placements and professional development. Features of TRACS include the development of aged care specific curriculum and participation by aged care employees in teaching, learning and research. The Sumner House project will demonstrate a holistic approach to service delivery, training and mentoring that addresses the complex needs of residents.

The intent of the TRACS program is to share the lessons learnt from a variety of models with the wider industry to inform developments in aged services.

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## RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS NEWS

### Caring for carers

**Ashley Carr and Helen Kimberley**

Our action research study of three phases of the Brotherhood of St Laurence pilot program Caring for Carers found what kinds of support were particularly valued by people caring for a spouse or partner with dementia.

Full report *Caring for carers: evaluation of a support program for carers of people with dementia* or the 4-page summary

### Valuing capabilities in later life

**Helen Kimberley, Robert Gruhn and Simon Huggins**

This study examined what the Brotherhood's aged service users value in life, what enables them to lead fulfilled lives and what the services can contribute to this. The capability approach is used as a conceptual framework to consider a new model of aged services which will affirm older adults' human rights and capabilities, especially for those who have been disadvantaged, and ensure that their views continue to shape policies, services and practice.

Full report *Valuing capabilities in later life: the capability approach and the Brotherhood of St Laurence aged services* or the 4-page summary

### Toolkit for gender and culturally responsive services

The Making it Happen project was supported by the Victorian Women's Benevolent Trust and the Brotherhood of St Laurence to encourage gender and culturally responsive services.

*Thinking it through: understanding culturally responsive work and learning services for women*

**Dina Bowman and Loretta Mui**

This report, part 1 of the toolkit, reviews the issues that shape women's participation in employment and education; draws on research with women in public housing in inner-Melbourne suburbs including Fitzroy and Collingwood and with staff at the Centre for Work and Learning, Yarra; and identifies features of responsive services.

*Sorting it out: a framework for culturally responsive work and learning services for women*

**Dina Bowman and Loretta Mui**

This framework, part 2 of the toolkit, enables services staff and program developers to critically reflect on how they are meeting the needs of diverse communities including women with migrant or refugee backgrounds.

### The power to save

**Damian Sullivan and Victoria Johnson**

This study examined the energy savings achieved by Melbourne households under Victoria's Energy Saver Incentive. In the first phase of the scheme, disadvantaged suburbs received a greater share of the total activities but a smaller share of the costlier measures which have higher energy efficiency returns, such as

hot water services, space heating and insulation.

Full report *The power to save: an equity assessment of the Victorian Energy Saver Incentive in metropolitan Melbourne*

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