

Studying the map and plotting a course Strategic directions at the Brotherhood of St Laurence

With the advent of a new Executive Director and in the context of the ever-changing social, economic and political climate the Brotherhood has, over the past several months, reviewed its strategy.

We challenged ourselves to answer some fundamental questions: what sort of organisation we want the Brotherhood to be, what we want it to achieve, over what period of time, and what that means for the way in which we allocate our resources in the immediate future. New strategic priorities have been developed by extensive and intensive consultation within and beyond the Brotherhood.

The plan does not represent a radical departure from the Brotherhood's traditional approach to its work. But, naturally, it does signal change. It realigns our strategy to reflect what we see as the emerging characteristics of poverty in Australia, and it will give greater focus and internal coherence to our work.

Key objectives

Our new strategy commits us to four key objectives for the next three years.

We aim to work not just to alleviate, but to prevent, poverty. We will focus on those people at greatest risk at the four transition stages considered critical to their future well-being:

- the early years – both at home and into school
- the years from school to work and further education

- the periods in and out of work – whether voluntary or involuntary
- retirement and ageing.

We aim to be a national voice on matters of poverty and disadvantage. Our voice will be grounded in service delivery which will focus on geographic regions representative of anticipated disadvantage and poverty.

We seek to ensure that our work reflects an understanding that the remedy to poverty lies in integrating social and economic policy, as a basis for strengthening the capacities of individuals and communities.

We plan to undertake research, service development and delivery, and advocacy, with the objective of addressing unmet needs and translating our learning into new policies, programs and practices for implementation by governments and others.

The focus on four transitions knits together our research and services. It allows us to develop major capacity in these key policy areas and to avoid spreading resources randomly and thinly.

Geography receives greater emphasis in the plan, reflecting our expectation that poverty in Australia will more and more become a feature of life on the outskirts of our major cities and in our rural communities. This emphasis on place also reflects our belief that success in eradicating poverty lies in working with communities as well as individuals.

We are confident our new Strategic Plan involves a contemporary application of traditional Brotherhood values and principles and will focus our efforts for the future.

Tony Nicholson

Executive Director
(03) 9483 1327
tnicholson@bsl.org.au

Contents

Counting children in: current BSL research on socially excluded children.....	4
'Simple principles really': observations about UK integrated early childhood services.....	5
Doing It Differently: strengthening connections for students in years 5–8.....	6
Youth unemployment and skills shortages: seeking place-based solutions in Kingston.....	7
Listening to older people: a preliminary study of social exclusion.....	8
Changes to Australia's detention regime: limited steps towards justice for refugees.....	9
Values, welfare and religion conference presentations.....	10–11
Affordable housing and regional growth: a challenge for planners and policy makers.....	12
Linking culture with social inclusion: perspectives from Europe.....	13
Does Australia's wealth distribution match income distribution?: some insights from HILDA data.....	14

Update

Life Chances and school engagement

School engagement (active participation in school and positive attitudes to school) means young people are more likely to complete school and go on to gain tertiary qualifications. Not only is engagement with school a pointer to later positive outcomes for students, but also it is desirable for the present.

The next stage of the Brotherhood of St Laurence's Life Chances Study will enable us to investigate school engagement for a group of young people we have known since birth.

This longitudinal study commenced in 1990 with 167 children born in inner Melbourne to parents of diverse backgrounds, to explore the impacts of low family income and disadvantage for children over time. Families have been interviewed on six occasions,

most recently in 2002 when the children were aged 11 or 12.

As 11 and 12-year-olds, some children were excluded from participating fully in school activities because of costs; and we predicted this problem would increase as they moved through secondary education.

By the end of 2005 all the children will have reached the age (15) when education is no longer compulsory (although the Victorian Government has foreshadowed raising the age to 16). This is a crucial transition stage when some may consider leaving school.

The next stage of the study will follow up selected children who have grown up in low-income families, as children 'at risk' of early school leaving.

The objectives include:

- to explore their level of engagement with school at the end of compulsory schooling
- to examine the role of education costs and other factors in their experience of school
- to consider their home and social life, including family, friends, recreation and work, in relation to their school engagement
- to explore their career plans.

This follow-up is generously supported by the Bokhara Foundation and a gift of the late Mrs Prue Myer.

Janet Taylor

(03) 9483 1376

jtaylor@bsl.org.au

New advocacy and information resources

Policy commentaries

Social Action and Research staff have compiled Policy Commentaries, briefly outlining the Brotherhood's response to current social policy issues, particularly aspects of welfare reform.

The first four hot topics to be addressed are

- welfare reform and sole parents
- welfare reform and people with disabilities
- effective marginal tax rates and poverty traps
- minimum wages.

The policy commentaries can be accessed on the Brotherhood's website (use the home page Search). Printed copies are also available.

It is planned that these commentaries will be reviewed and revised periodically; and new commentaries will be added as required.

New information sheet

'Caring for older Australians and people with disabilities' is the latest in the occasional series of information sheets called *Understanding our work*, each of which outlines Brotherhood services for a particular age-group or sector. All are available on the website and as printed copies.

Contact:

Library & Information Services

(03) 9483 1388

library@bsl.org.au

Brotherhood Comment is published three times a year by the Social Action and Research Division of the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

The Brotherhood of St Laurence works for the well-being of Australians on low incomes to improve their economic, social and personal circumstances. It does this by providing a wide range of services and activities for families, the unemployed and the aged. It also researches the causes of poverty, undertakes community education and lobbies government for a better deal for people on low incomes.

Published in November 2005 by
Brotherhood of St Laurence
67 Brunswick Street
Fitzroy, Victoria, 3065 Australia
ABN 24 603 467 024

Telephone: (03) 9483 1183

Facsimile: (03) 9417 2691

E-mail: publications@bsl.org.au

From the General Manager, Social Action and Research Transitions, risks and the new social policy

The adoption of the transitions and risks framework in the new Strategic Plan will mean both important continuities and new departures in the work of Social Action and Research. Over the last two years, we have been part of a national movement which has begun to reframe Australian social policy thinking in quite fundamental ways. Now welfare is far less likely to be seen as an economic waste and much more likely as an investment in capacity building for a more inclusive society. A new, more particular agenda is now taking shape. If welfare can be a good investment, in what should we invest? The Strategic Plan enables us to address this question systematically.

The transitions approach offers a way of thinking about the key life cycle transitions involving work, family, education and community. It points us towards integrated policies which support each domain and do not privilege paid work over all else. The concept of risk is also useful in identifying a major

purpose of social investment: to build people's capacities to master risk. Our work on social inclusion and Sen's analysis of 'capabilities' has produced a framework of these risks and capabilities which we can now apply to our four transitions.

If a minimal goal of social policy is to afford everyone equal opportunity, then the new framework will allow us to specify what those opportunities ought to be across the life cycle. It will also enable us to ground our research themes in BSL service experience in the four transition areas.

This issue of *Comment* reflects the new strategy. Articles by Janet Stanley and Catharine Hydon emphasise substantial investment in the early years as a key source of better later life outcomes. In relation to the transition from school to work, the article on 'Doing Things Differently' reports on efforts to join up community supports for disadvantaged schools. On the third key transition 'In and out of work', Martina Böse looks at culture-

based employment programs to reduce social exclusion in Europe, while Eleanor Marsh reports on a City of Kingston initiative designed to create pathways for unemployed young people into with local employment. The challenges associated with ageing and retirement are illustrated from early work on the experience of social exclusion by older Brotherhood clients. Also in this issue, Ecumenical Migration Centre colleagues comment on Australia's present policies regarding people seeking refuge in this country.

A strategic issue for future research will be the significance for welfare of recent debates about values and religion. This *Comment* features summaries of presentations by Kevin McDonald and Tony Nicholson at our BSL conference which scoped these issues.

Paul Smyth
(03) 9483 1177
psmyth@bsl.org.au

Australian Child Poverty Conference

After 14 successive years of economic growth, around half a million children remain living in poverty in Australia.

One in six children is growing up in a family where no parent is in paid work.

The United Kingdom and other European countries are making the eradication of child poverty a national priority.

It's time Australia did too.

Join the Brotherhood of St Laurence for this important conference.

Highlights

- **Kate Green**, Child Poverty Action Group UK – delivering the Sambell Oration
- **Dr Shane Houston**, Assistant Secretary, Office of Aboriginal Health, Family and Social Policy, Northern Territory
- **Dr Garth Alperstein**, Senior Lecturer, School of Women's and Children's Health, University of New South Wales, and Community Paediatrician
- **Launch of the Brotherhood's Social Barometer – Children's Chances** – a new indicator of child poverty in Australia

Economic Growth 3%
Child Poverty 13%
What's going on?

7 December 2005
8.45am – 5.00pm

Dallas Brooks
Conference Centre
300 Albert Street
East Melbourne 3002

To register, visit the website
<www.bsl.org.au/events>
or contact Jacinda Kleidon
(03) 9483 1364

Counting children in Current BSL research on socially excluded children

Social exclusion occurs when people suffer from multiple disadvantages such as low income, poor health, and inadequate housing and transport. One group especially vulnerable to social exclusion is children. This should be cause for concern and action.

Children's issues are commonly overlooked by social analysts. For example, the income poverty of children is not directly measured in national statistics. Children's well-being is subsumed with that of adults, measured by either household data (such as income) or individual adult indicators (such as employment status). The assumption that the child's well-being mirrors the family's or caring adult's well-being often holds, but exceptions exist, such as in the situation of neglect (the prevalence of child neglect and child abuse is also not measured in Australia).

Australia's children

Even with limited data, we know that while most children in Australia are doing well, many grow up with considerable disadvantage. The child poverty rate in Australia varies depending on what is measured, with estimates ranging from 9.4% to 25.3%, in 2000 (NATSEM 2001). The proportion of children in impoverished households has increased; and Saunders states that children today are at far greater risk of poverty than previous generations (Saunders 2005).

Child poverty is associated with a long list of adverse outcomes (Bradshaw 2001). These include infectious diseases, teenage pregnancies, poor educational attainment, youth suicide and mental illness. Leaving aside human rights and equity, this is very costly for society. Moreover, social exclusion is considered to be intergenerational: a child from a socially excluded family is more

likely to become a socially excluded adult (Social Exclusion Unit 2005).

A closer look

While the UK's Blair Government has taken a lead in targeting child poverty (Hills & Stewart 2005; also see Hydon's article, page 5), Australia is yet to follow suit.

BSL research and services are working together closely to address this national oversight, for example through the Breaking Cycles, Building Futures (BCBF) project, part of the state government's Best Start program to improve opportunities for disadvantaged children in 13 areas of Victoria. BCBF explored how children who are hardest to reach can be linked to universal services such as maternal and child health services and preschools (Hydon, Stanley, Van Dyke & Webb 2005).

Two important current BSL research projects are the next stage of Life Chances, the longitudinal study of children (see page 2) and the index of child poverty. Within the BSL, services at The Cottage are being documented, to capture the essential components of this unique program for excluded and vulnerable children, and inform a new program structure.

Child poverty in a wealthy municipality, the City of Boroondara, has been explored in a small, recent study (Stanley, Eadie & Baker 2005). The surprising level of child poverty poses a challenge for intervention and advocacy, especially with new government funds presently being directed to geographical areas of multiple disadvantage.

The BSL is giving research and practice advice to two sites (Frankston and Dandenong) of the new four-year federal Communities for Children

program. In Dandenong, a needs survey of families with children under five will help to identify what would improve their well-being and how the community can respond to children's needs. The BSL will also contribute to the national evaluation.

Speaking out

Such projects will equip the BSL to advocate for equality and justice for Australian children. In December, the BSL's Australian Child Poverty Conference will be addressed by Kate Green, Director of the UK Child Poverty Action Group. The event will urge Australia's decision makers to take children's needs seriously.

Janet Stanley

(03) 9483 1385
jstanley@bsl.org.au

References

- Bradshaw, J 2001, *Poverty: the outcomes for children*, Family Policy Studies Centre, London.
- Hills, J & Stewart, K (eds) 2005, *A more equal society? New Labour, poverty, inequality and social exclusion*, Policy Press, Bristol, U.K.
- Hydon, C, Stanley, J, Van Dyke, N & Webb, J unpublished [2005], *Building futures: promoting inclusion in antenatal and universal early childhood services: implementation and review of the Breaking Cycles, Building Futures project 2004*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Fitzroy, Vic
- NATSEM 2001, *Financial disadvantage in Australia 1990-2000*, The Smith Family, Camperdown, NSW.
- Saunders, P 2005, *The poverty wars: Reconnecting research with reality*, UNSW Press, Sydney.
- Social Exclusion Unit, 2005, *What is social exclusion?*, viewed 4 July 2005, <<http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk>>.
- Stanley, J, Eadie, C & Baker, C 2005, *Social exclusion in Boroondara, Stage One*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Fitzroy, Vic.

The assumption that the child's well-being mirrors the family's or caring adult's well-being often holds, but exceptions exist, such as in the situation of neglect

‘Simple principles really’ ... Observations about UK integrated early childhood services

Carving innovative pathways for the provision of services for young children and their families requires a shift from conventional practice to sophisticated responses to changing circumstances. Australia has much to learn from other countries, particularly the United Kingdom where policy-makers and providers are overcoming the old divides and moving to offer services through integrated child and family models.

In response to high levels of disadvantage and the increasing body of evidence urging investment in the early years, the Blair government has developed a comprehensive plan for the transformation of children’s services. Its flagship early childhood initiative is Sure Start.

The children’s program I visited in the Seacroft Public Housing Estate in Leeds, established in the first round of ‘Sure Start’ funding, is one example of translating the concept of integrated services into a rich tapestry of opportunity. Programs for children aged 0–5 are offered in four locations, more than 28 parent support and participation groups run every week, outreach workers deliver thousands of advertising leaflets as they walk through the estate and a large team of early childhood professionals from counsellors to health nurses see children and parents with specific needs. According to Bernard McMahon, program manager:

The fundamental issues for us ... are equality of access, universal services, more choices and opportunities for children and their families—simple principles really.

Local services staff were quick to point out that programs of this scale and nature would not be possible without significant government funding, a strong policy framework and a long-term

perspective. This is particularly relevant given recent publicity about early findings on Sure Start’s impact (Ward 2005). Long-term outcomes cannot be expected in the short term—building community trust and strong relationships takes time!

Lessons for policy development in Australia

While it would be inaccurate to assert that Australia is not interested in an integrated approach to children’s service delivery, policy responses have tinkered at the edges.

Public policies in Australia concerning the needs of children and their families need to be brought together in a strategy that spans at least 10 years—much longer than an election cycle. This commitment must be properly funded for the long term, not limited to pilot schemes, in a respectful partnership with the communities it claims to target.

Sustainability

Sustainability such as I witnessed in England, ensured by ongoing, substantial investment and multi-stream funding, offers many advantages for children’s services. It allows staff to take risks to reach out to the most disconnected. In the Seacroft program, this had included offering a ‘boxercise’ class after a particularly disconnected adolescent parent made a request. The program manager felt it important to give the idea a try.

For parents, sustainability means that the service will be there in two years’ time to nurture children and maintain close relationships with people who are trusted.

Governance and integration

Governance structures that grant equal status to parents, staff and the community are critical. Without them, the different programs are like ‘ships in the night’ powering along doing their own thing, but

rarely meeting except to collide over resourcing or similar issues. Integrated services for families grant space to those who can imagine practice in a different way. The Fortune Park Children’s Centre in Islington was attempting to do just that, through in-depth consultation and by gathering the courage to break traditional early childhood boundaries and join forces with the local primary school, special school and other therapeutic programs for children with additional needs.

The merits of community governance are widely contested. Effective children’s services, especially those that seek to work in a new integrated manner, rely on communities developing a vision from which practice and services can flow. Otherwise, integrated models lose their connectedness to the lives of the children and families they serve.

Children’s services can assume a transformative role in communities when policies, structures and adequate funding allow. Individual Australian services are often excellent, but what is yet to be seen is a truly sophisticated integrated approach moving beyond co-location to establish deep connections to community, connections based in participation, supported through 10-year funding commitments and underpinned by effective policies.

Catharine Hydon
(03) 9483 2458
chydon@bsl.org.au

Reference

Ward, L 2005, ‘Doubts over value of £3bn Sure Start’, *The Guardian*, international edition, 13 September, p.1.

Children’s services can assume a transformative role in communities when policies, structures and adequate funding allow

Doing It Differently Strengthening connections for students in years 5–8

Doing It Differently, a collaborative project of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Anglicare and the Centre for Adolescent Health at the Royal Children's Hospital, is working with seven schools in a disadvantaged community in outer-metropolitan Melbourne, to improve students' connectedness to school during the primary to secondary school transition.

The project responds to research showing accelerating disengagement from school for many young people during the middle years (Years 5–9). There is evidence of rising average absence rates and an increasing percentage of students below the school leaving age who are not participating in education at all (Russell, Mackay & Jane 2003). Some students drift away, while others challenge schools, families and communities with behaviours including bullying, substance abuse and self-harm (Audas & Willms 2001; Campbell & Kertesz 2000).

This pattern is of concern because engagement with learning and with others in the school environment is a key to positive immediate and long-term health, academic and life outcomes. In disadvantaged communities, student disengagement from school is often exacerbated by limited community involvement, family poverty and low parental interest in education.

Doing It Differently aims to:

- improve school engagement of young people during Years 5, 6, 7 and 8
- assist schools and families to work together within communities to support students' education, health and well-being
- produce a support model that can be applied elsewhere.

Given the complexity of poverty and social disadvantage,

creating sustainable, positive change will take time. For this reason, Doing It Differently is a three-year project and focuses on strengthening connections between schools, families and community organisations.

The project works at several scales: with the schools cluster (through the Department of Education's Innovations and Excellence Program), with teams of students, parents and staff in each school, and with community agencies. The keen interest from each school in developing a partnership with the project team and with each other has been pleasing, particularly as these schools have not traditionally worked together. All the schools have identified family concerns as affecting their ability to address students' educational needs.

Early steps

A formal partnership has been set up with two secondary and five primary schools. Strong relationships have been built with the Innovations and Excellence Educator (Coordinator) and local Neighbourhood Renewal Coordinator. Regular meetings are scheduled for the Cluster team, as well as for school teams.

Demographic data has been gathered about each school, as well as the broader community, and discussions held with schools and community organisations have been documented.

Initiatives developed for students to date include breakfast clubs in some schools and vegetable and herb gardens in each school, with links to various curriculum areas.

Involving the school community

Research and direct experience show that the project team must engage a broad cross-section of each school community. To this end,

there have been separate meetings in each school, with the principal, staff responsible for student welfare, staff leading Innovations and Excellence work, School Support Officers and School Nurse. The team has also engaged with organisations outside the school. These include Neighbourhood Renewal, local government, Departments of Education and Training and Human Services, School Focused Youth Service (within DHS) and the Red Cross (which coordinates the breakfast programs).

The project team has also been talking to students and parents, to raise interest and to better understand their needs. Since the schools have found it difficult to engage parents, they have welcomed this assistance.

Doing It Differently aims to develop approaches that will assist other communities. Staff of the Department of Education, School Focused Youth Service and Neighbourhood Renewal have shown interest in replicating the work.

Helen Butler and Ian Seal
Centre for Adolescent Health
Royal Children's Hospital
ian.seal@rch.org.au

References

Audas, R & Willms, J D 2001, *Engagement and dropping out of school: a life-course perspective*, Applied Research Branch, Strategic Policy, Human Resources Development, Canada, viewed 19 October 2005, <<http://www11.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/cs/sp/hrsdcaarb/publications/research/2001-000175/SP-483-01-02E.pdf>>.

Russell, J, Mackay, T & Jane, G 2003, *Messages from MYRAD: Improving the middle years of schooling*, IARTV, Melbourne.

Some students drift away, while others challenge schools, families and communities with behaviours including bullying, substance abuse and self-harm

Youth unemployment and skills shortages Seeking place-based solutions in Kingston

Like other areas of Melbourne, the municipality of Kingston faces two related and apparently intractable problems: on the one hand there are pockets of disadvantage and high youth unemployment; and on the other, employers—particularly in manufacturing—report persistent difficulties in filling vacancies, both skilled and unskilled.

The City of Kingston, with funding provided through the Department of Victorian Communities, has engaged the Brotherhood of St Laurence to undertake research into the issues underlying these problems. The findings will be used to develop a Youth Employment Strategy to address unemployment and underemployment among young people in the municipality. Research will involve consultations with all key groups: young people, employers, parents, and providers of education, employment and support services to young people.

The project will focus on two areas within the municipality where unemployment of 15–24 year olds is markedly higher than the average for Kingston (ABS 2001): Clayton South and Clarinda in the north, where a large proportion of the population is from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and Chelsea, Bonbeach and Carrum in the south, where the population is predominantly from English-speaking backgrounds.

Research into similar problems elsewhere suggests that the issues are likely to be complex, and solutions are unlikely to revolve around simply ‘matching’ unemployed people to jobs through improved information about employment opportunities. While a lack of accurate information is a barrier, often a greater problem is the ‘skills mismatch’: many of those young people who are

interested in the available work lack the skills sought by employers.

Obstacles and opportunities

Early findings from consultations in Kingston confirm that a lack of skills is a significant problem for young people in the area. Manufacturers and youth service providers report that many young people seeking work lack ‘work-ready’ skills or basic literacy and numeracy skills, or do not understand how to find and apply for a job. Young people themselves agree.

Employers, service providers and young people have all suggested that there are limited opportunities for young people to gain the skills they need. In Kingston, as elsewhere, young people who experienced difficulties at school say that school did not adequately equip them for job seeking and work. They say that they want more training and support in developing ‘life skills’, more opportunities to undertake work experience. They need more support in learning how to search for and successfully apply for jobs, and more support in their studies. Young people and many employers in the manufacturing sector also say that more vocational and ‘hands on’ training opportunities are required—both in school and in other settings—to give young people practical skills and exposure to different kinds of work.

Consultations with young people support other research findings that employers’ own practices can also be a cause of difficulties: poor training, induction and retention strategies, low pay and poor conditions, over-reliance on casual labour, and problems such as workplace bullying can also contribute to high workforce turnover and difficulties in attracting staff. Conversely, good induction methods, working conditions and well-supported

pathways to promotion can improve productivity, morale and staff retention.

Place-based approaches

Many of the problems being identified in Kingston resemble those found elsewhere. However, the local focus of this project recognises that devising solutions requires a detailed understanding of specific local conditions, community characteristics, employment opportunities and skills needs. ‘Place-based’ approaches—increasingly being adopted in a number of OECD countries—can identify gaps in local provision of services, highlight specific opportunities and, most importantly, bring together key actors to ensure that training and support services meet the needs of both communities and employers.

As the project progresses, we would like to move from consultations identifying local issues, to discussions about opportunities for partnerships, innovations in education and training delivery, and how the various groups can work together to support the needs of the local economy and the young people who live in the City of Kingston.

Eleanor Marsh

(03) 9483 1370
emarsh@bsl.org.au

Reference

Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001 *Census of Population and Housing 2001*, Canberra.

While a lack of accurate information is an issue, often a greater problem is the ‘skills mismatch’: many of those young people who are interested in the available work lack the skills sought by employers

Listening to older people A preliminary study of social exclusion

A recent small-scale study by the Brotherhood of St Laurence suggests that for older Australians on low incomes, quality of life is linked to more than just income level. This finding supports the use of a 'social exclusion' framework, rather than a narrower focus on 'poverty', when exploring the experiences of people on low incomes.

Three semi-structured group interviews were undertaken with twelve Brotherhood clients aged 48 to 75. The seven men and five women came from the low-care hostel Sambell Lodge, the Coolibah Day Centre and the independent living units in Fitzroy.

Income

Not surprisingly, the effect of having a low income was raised in all the groups. Hostel residents expressed a greater sense of financial stress, possibly because they had lower disposable incomes after paying comprehensive fees. This limited their access to transport (especially for those who faced the higher cost of taxis) and therefore their activities. People living independently were more content with their incomes, but some spoke of juggling their finances to make ends meet:

That is my biggest worry: what is going to happen between now and the next pension day. You know, if I don't put something away in a jar, I never—I wouldn't have enough money for my meal over in the Coolibah Club. (George)

Transport

Most participants noted that public transport was relatively accessible in the inner city, though trams were not really an option if they were frail or unwell. They commented how difficult it must be for people in outer suburbs to get to services. Strikingly, when asked how they would spend a hypothetical higher income, nine out of twelve

people listed travel, either to go on a holiday or to visit family or friends outside Melbourne.

Housing and safety

Though some participants had had times of homelessness, all but one were now in secure housing and most were fairly satisfied with it. Some had experienced poor rented accommodation and knew how hard it could be for older people to find somewhere to live:

We're sort of just really lucky people as far as I'm concerned, because you hear of other rooming houses, you know, like they're really badly run or no one's running them at all. (Joy)

The issue of threats to safety recurred, with some individuals feeling more vulnerable than others.

Social contact and support

The value attached to social connections varied considerably. Many participants had little contact with family and focused on neighbours as potential sources of informal support, with mixed results:

I sort of try and break the ice with a lot of my neighbours ... but they're so busy with their own lives, which is sad, because they haven't got time to see an old lady going home to see if they're all right or anything. And it's probably not their failing; it's just the way society is. (Shirley)

Those in rented accommodation appreciated the social contact and support offered at the Coolibah Centre and similar places. Independent living unit residents felt they could rely on their neighbours and management for assistance which was not necessarily available elsewhere.

Independence and participation

Choice was important, especially to independent living unit residents. Some enjoyed the freedom at last

from responsibility for looking after a family. All participants made it clear that they were not passive recipients of assistance from the Brotherhood or other organisations:

You've just got to be careful you don't kind of overprotect and erode people's independence too quickly, it's really important, because then they can feel incompetent. (Barbara)

Several felt strongly about the importance of taking part in the running of their residential facility; others did volunteer work; and one had participated in lobbying for change of government policies.

Conclusion

While these findings are from low-income, inner-city residents who felt fairly well supported by Brotherhood services, they do suggest that insecurity, social isolation and reduced independence could contribute, along with limited finances, to social exclusion. Further research would enhance our understanding of such factors and our ability to address them.

**Catherine Waterhouse
and Deborah Patterson**
(03) 9483 1386
dpatterson@bsl.org.au

The report by Catherine Waterhouse and Philippa Angley, *Social exclusion among older people: a preliminary study from inner-city Melbourne*, is available on the web at <www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/soc_exclusn_older_people.pdf> and from Publications (\$6.00 plus p&cp) – phone (03) 9483 1386.

Note

Joy was one of several participants who specifically requested that their real names be used in the report. Other names used here are pseudonyms.

Many participants had little contact with family and focused on neighbours as potential sources of informal support, with mixed results

Changes to Australia's detention regime Limited steps towards justice for refugees

In June 2005, the Australian Government introduced significant changes to Australia's detention policy. The new *Migration Amendment (Detention Arrangements) Act 2005* goes some way in dismantling the unnecessarily harsh, non-reviewable and 'one-size-fits-all' policy of mandatory detention of onshore asylum seekers and laying foundations for fairer refugee policies. However, changes do not go far enough in meeting international best practice for the treatment of asylum seekers and in no way address the punitive policy of granting temporary protection to refugees who have arrived onshore.

Child detention as a 'last resort'

Most importantly, the changes affirm the principle that a child shall only be detained as a measure of last resort, and provide for the release of children and families from high security detention facilities into the community. While still regarded as 'in detention' under the *Migration Act*, families can access living and health support and are permitted to live at a determined residence, with reporting arrangements but without security supervision. A fundamental problem is that the power to release families and children into this Residence Determination remains at the sole discretion of the Minister. Moreover, except for extremely vulnerable individuals, Residence Determination does not yet extend to others who do not pose a security risk. This will, once again, produce an ad hoc system that delivers differential treatment to asylum seekers.

Proper case management

As of 29 July 2005, there are no longer children and families in Australia's onshore detention centres. Welfare agencies, under the leadership of the Australian Red Cross, have worked with the Department of Immigration to

coordinate the release of children and families into community care. Individual care assessment and case plan development are vital to ensure effectiveness, efficiency and transparency.

Time limits and review

The legislation also introduces review of detention cases by the Ombudsman, as well as time limits for processing protection applications. Unfortunately, these changes are weakened by the fact that the Ombudsman's recommendations are not binding on the Minister and failure to meet time limits only requires tabling in Parliament.

Nonetheless, the changes are an identifiable response to sustained campaigning for just refugee policies. Their significance lies in the return to more humane principles, including:

- the international human rights principle of detention of children as a last resort
- the importance of maintaining family units
- understanding that high security detention is unnecessary, disproportionate and detrimental for people posing low risks of absconding
- the need to process protection applications in a timely manner
- the need for accountability and review wherever people are deprived of fundamental liberties.

Though limited, the changes draw from many of the principles advocated by welfare and refugee agencies through the Justice for Asylum Seekers network (JAS), which developed in 2002 the Reception and Transitional Processing (RTP) System, known as *The Better Way*. The RTP system affirms refugees' human rights and welfare needs while recognising the government's role in national

security, and both the system and its modest cost have been outlined in *Brotherhood Comment* (April 2002; November 2003).

Temporary Protection Visas remain

Disappointingly, the recent changes fail to abolish or alter the punitive Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) regime for proven refugees. Instead, the government has committed to improving the processing of applications for permanent protection for a specific caseload of TPV refugees, many of whom have had their 3-year TPV experience prolonged to 5–8 years by slow and constantly changing procedures. The improvements include finalising permanent protection applications by 31 October 2005 and appeals by January 2006; speeding up security checks; and making decisions on the papers lodged without another interview unless a refusal is imminent.

All in all, it is too little, too late for these refugees. They include more than 6000 TPV refugees whose Further Protection Visa applications have already been decided. With a 99% success rate (to October 2005), these people are clearly proving their continuing refugee status. Despite gaining permanent protection, these refugees live with the cumulative effects of having been excluded from settlement services and denied family reunion for their years on a TPV. The Ecumenical Migration Centre has recently completed *Closing the gap: a state-wide action plan for TPV refugees* for the Victorian Government to address the chronic underservicing of this marginalised group.

Rasika Jayasuriya

(03) 9416 0044
rjayasuriya@bsl.org.au

Sarina Greco

(03) 9416 0044
sgreco@bsl.org.au

The changes are an identifiable response to sustained campaigning for just refugee policies. Their significance lies in the return to more humane principles

Welfare, values and religion

Taking a stand

When an *Age* journalist asked me about the Brotherhood's concerns about the Government's proposal to appoint Job Network agencies to administer harsh penalties for unemployed people who failed to comply with new rules, I began to explain in technical policy terms. When she challenged me to state what the Brotherhood's fundamental objection was, I responded, 'We see Christ in the unemployed and we will not be part of visiting injustice upon them. Our role is to overturn laws that unjustly treat the disadvantaged, not to administer them'.

It seemed at the time not to be an extraordinary statement. It fitted comfortably with my faith position and with the traditions of the Brotherhood of St Laurence set by our founder, Father Gerard Tucker. But I was surprised by the strong and diverse responses (both supportive and critical) it provoked from the media, and from colleagues inside and outside the Brotherhood.

Talking about values

On reflection, these reactions reflected the wider community welfare sector response to the current public talk about values—about private values concerning sexuality, abortion, euthanasia, and public values like how we use our nation's prosperity, how we care for strangers, how we respond to war.

Some have lamented that the interest in religion and values marks the end of our secular society. To my mind, this is nonsense. We have always had a separation of Church and State in this country and it will continue. Yet church activism and religious values have long shaped our society through the political processes. Faith communities supported the sick, the homeless and the unemployed, long before governments become involved, and they still have a large role to play.

I believe we should welcome this renewed interest in religion and values, and also realise how the associated public debate is actually determining future public policy options. If we do not engage in the debate, we do so at the peril of a fair and just Australian society.

It disappoints me that the recent rise of Christianity in public discussion has coincided with a decline in interest in the plight of the poor. According to the popular media, the most vocal Christians today emphasise only one aspect of the possible message—individual salvation and taking responsibility for your own life. At its extreme, this encourages people to think that Christianity is a road map to material wealth.

This approach, however, simply gives a lick of paint to an old and discredited set of ideas:

- that there are the deserving poor and the undeserving poor
- that churches should confine themselves to preaching
- that church-related welfare organisations should be confined to providing charity and sorting the sheep from the goats.

I think this reflects serious ignorance among our politicians, economists and commentators about the full Christian message, and the full message of all the great religions.

Painting the whole picture

It's time for people of faith to paint the whole picture. Otherwise, we may soon find that our social message has been completely eclipsed. A big challenge is to communicate our message so it resonates with Australians.

In 1947, Father Tucker campaigned for a man known as Johnny. He was a hunchback with an intellectual disability and was jailed for vagrancy, even though

he clearly had a family and a home and was not actually indigent. Tucker was quoted as saying, 'God cares for Johnny and other slum people'. His statement embodies the belief that all people, irrespective of how our law or society categorises them, enjoy an inherent dignity, which is ultimately bestowed by a higher being.

If, as a society, we ignore the disadvantaged, if we forget our confused aged and their carers, if we close our door to the homeless, if we deny our unemployed and our single parents an income adequate to live with common dignity, what religious values can we claim?

Tucker was arguing that the poor and disadvantaged are our brothers and sisters, that a little bit of a higher being dwells in each of us. Surely this is the basis on which we can join hands—those from different faiths, those of no faith, those who simply believe in the inherent dignity of every person.

It is time to assert our shared values, and not be afraid to express them in terms of our various faith traditions. We should not stand aside while a new role is fashioned for us by politicians, aided by changes in so-called public opinion—a role that is totally at odds with our values that led us to our mission of charity, of justice and of engagement in society.

What I'm arguing for isn't trendy religion, as some will allege. I'm arguing for religion with its full social message. As the debate about religion and values deepens, we shouldn't be reticent about saying so.

Tony Nicholson

(03) 9483 1327

tnicholson@bsl.org.au

It disappoints me that the recent rise of Christianity in public discussion has coincided with a decline in interest in the plight of the poor

Beyond 'compassionate professionals' Welfare, religion and moral imagination

All of us are aware that the place of religion is changing in contemporary society. But it is difficult to get a clear sense of the implications for welfare organisations associated with religious traditions.

Many sociologists argue that we are coming to the end of a long process of secularisation. Secularisation did not mean the end of religion, but its increasing privatisation. Religion would be a matter of private practice, not part of public life—as seen in France, where it is now illegal for students to wear 'religious symbols' in public schools.

However, the opposite process is increasingly evident. In the United States, President Bush may begin Cabinet meetings with prayers; Christian groups are lobbying for religious understandings of the origins of the universe to be included in school science programs; and the 'prosperity gospel' has emerged, celebrating gaining wealth along the lines of 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want'. Similar changes are occurring in Australia.

Many authors argue that we are moving from the twentieth century world divided by secular ideologies of capitalism and communism, into a new context of a 'clash of civilisations' based in religion. This view is associated with influential US neo-conservative thinkers, and also shared by figures such as Osama Bin Laden.

Redefining religion

At the same time, religions are increasingly deinstitutionalising and organised religious authority is weakening. Meanwhile, religion is reinterpreted in political terms. Osama Bin Laden issues fatwas, or religious rulings, without religious training. Equally, George Bush, who also proclaims the world divided between

Good and Evil, has no formal religious authority or training.

In this changing context, the first reaction of many organisations linked to religious traditions is caution. They want to be seen as open to all, rather than associated with the religious divisions of the early twentieth century. At the same time, church-based welfare organisations are increasingly being integrated into service systems, with funding reliant on government approval. To be critical of public policy is already a risk. To add religious references could be even more dangerous. This can encourage organisations linked to religious traditions to be 'compassionate professionals', and no more.

The consequence of this, however, is to allow political actors and governments to define what is 'religious'. This is not necessarily to be welcomed. Political leaders will naturally integrate religious themes into structures of economic, military and political power.

The religious experience, however, involves an appeal to something beyond, which ultimately limits the power of rulers or the state. All religions have an uncomfortable dimension, because they appeal to possibilities beyond present human experience. Throughout history, this has had an enormous impact. Human rights, for example, emerged from European Christian piety movements, while today piety movements within Islam are shaping public life in Muslim-majority societies.

A critical bridge

So welfare organisations have a key role as a critical bridge, ensuring that their religious traditions engage with the new forms of vulnerability and suffering in contemporary societies. At the

same time, such organisations are ways that religions are present in public life and culture: they should be critical of forms of power, as well as channels for religious imagination and visions of utopia.

At a time when political actors do not hesitate to frame their programs in religious language, we need to be reminded of the limits of economic and political power. This is not always a comfortable position to be in. But if welfare organisations linked to religious traditions simply opt to be compassionate professionals, and minimise any reference to those religious traditions, the wider society will be the poorer. Historically, religious traditions have been extraordinarily important in sustaining what we might call our 'moral imagination', our capacity to see the world through the eyes of the other.

We live in increasingly complex societies, where it is difficult to imagine the future, and to understand how we are connected to each other. Religious traditions have a key role in constructing a moral language and imagination that speaks to our world.

Kevin McDonald

Sociology
University of Melbourne
kmcDonald@unimelb.edu.au

The religious experience, however, involves an appeal to something beyond, which ultimately limits the power of rulers or the state

Affordable housing and regional growth A challenge for planners and policy makers

How well are non-metropolitan housing markets able to respond to changed demand? What impacts does this have on lower income households? To what extent is the supply of housing considered when regional growth is planned? These questions are being explored by Brian Howe, a 2005 Dunstan Fellow, with support from the Brotherhood of St Laurence, as part of the Dunstan Foundation's work to spearhead national housing reform.

Evidence from three regional areas experiencing growth will be gathered from discussions with people responsible for economic development and social services. Perceptions of how regional growth affects demand for housing and how markets respond will be included in a report in 2006. Integrated policy solutions will be developed in anticipation of the National Affordable Housing Agreement, due to replace the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement in 2008.

Changed demand for housing

Demographic, social and policy changes have increased the national demand for housing and housing prices have risen in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan regions, although at different rates. The demand for rental housing has increased as fewer households are entering into home ownership and the supply at the lower end of the rental market has declined.

In non-metropolitan regions, these changes are distorted by population movements. National Economics (2002) found more low-income and older households had moved to non-metropolitan regions from the capital cities than in the opposite direction. At the same time, young people are moving to capital cities and larger regional centres, for education and better paid work opportunities. Those who stay

behind tend to be less skilled and less likely to be employed, but still looking to live independently.

Housing demand has grown as some local economies recover from the structural adjustment of the 1980s and 90s and accommodation is needed for workers new to the region. Their wages largely determine the type of housing required (Beer, Alaric & Pritchard 2003).

Meanwhile the First Home Owners Scheme and the sea change/tree change phenomenon appears to have pushed up lower-end house prices and decreased supply in the low-cost rental market. Preliminary analysis of non-metropolitan housing markets (1991–2001) identified above-average growth of median sale prices in two types of markets: sponge cities and coastal areas. Declines were associated with industrial rationalisation, for example of Latrobe Valley power industries (Wulff et al. 2005).

Housing market response

Studying Victorian regional towns, Nankervis et al. (2003) found that non-metropolitan markets are failing to supply adequate or appropriate dwellings. Housing suited to the aged or to younger people is particularly scarce. The limited market size and distance from metropolitan areas increase construction costs and the subdivision market does not function as profitably as in larger centres. Moreover, development of rural land for housing has to compete with agribusiness investment.

Public housing is targeted to highly disadvantaged households, and the private rental market in many towns is tight. A basic problem in the supply is the fact that prices have lagged behind costs and there are reduced

expectations of strong capital gains (compared with larger centres).

There has also been a retreat of institutional investors that formerly owned housing for their staff, who consequently now compete in the rental market. It is the upper end housing, normally tenanted by professionals who are newcomers or on short term-contracts, that is often in short supply. As a result, lower cost housing is taken up by higher income earners.

Impact on low-income households

Housing lower income people including working families is an issue of mounting concern as they are pushed out further, away from services and facilities. Waiting times for priority social housing are generally longer than in Melbourne and rates of homelessness are above the state average, some even higher than suburban areas.

With housing markets failing to respond to economic and demographic change, low income households appear to be bearing the brunt of a failure to recognise housing as an important component of regional development.

Brian Howe and Sally Jope

(03) 9483 1306
sjope@bsl.org.au

References

- Beer, A, Alaric, M & Pritchard, B 2004, *Developing Australia's regions*, UNSW Press, Sydney.
- Nankervis M et al. 2003, *Market failure in Victorian regional towns* (draft), Swinburne Institute for Social Research, Melbourne.
- National Economics 2002, *State of the regions*, Australian Local Government Association, Deakin, A.C.T.
- Wulff, M, Legg, S, Reynolds, M, Healy, E, Hooper, A & Baum, S, 2005, *Trends in Australian non-metropolitan housing markets, 1991–2001*, AHURI, Melbourne.

Housing demand in non-metropolitan regions has grown as some local economies recover from the structural adjustment of the 1980s and 90s and accommodation is needed for workers new to the region

Linking culture with social inclusion Perspectives from Europe

Faith in the socially inclusive potential of cultural participation has characterised a wide range of initiatives worldwide, from rural community arts projects to urban and regional development programs creative industries. While most aim at outcomes that can be listed under social inclusion, for example by improving social cohesion or by reducing crime (Barraket 2005), to view cultural training as a pathway to *cultural labour market* inclusion is more contentious.

Economic relevance

Many newer training initiatives for young unemployed people in the cultural sector are based on the claim that this sector is itself economically relevant. This is supported by sociological analyses of the shift from an industrial or Fordist economy of mass-production to systems of more specialised, flexible production built on the symbolic value of culture. 'Creative industries mapping' has documented the growth of cultural employment in many Western countries. The term 'creative industries', which emerged in the UK in the late 1990s, distinguished a more business-oriented cultural sector from the traditionally subsidised arts sector. Such industries include advertising, crafts, leisure software, television and radio, and performing arts (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 1998).

Social benefits

The social relevance of the creative sector has been stated in various government documents about neighbourhood renewal and urban regeneration strategies. Among the key benefits ascribed to supporting creative industries are:

- their employment potential, especially following economic restructuring
- their potential to solve problems of urban decay and population decline

- their contribution to social and economic well-being of people and place.

Based on these perspectives, many culture-led urban regeneration initiatives and culture-based training initiatives for young unemployed people and residents in disadvantaged neighbourhoods have been established across Europe.

Two lessons from research into the social inclusion effects of the creative sector demand particular consideration:

- the economically insecure and precarious nature of much creative employment
- the critical role of the intermediaries of culture-led regeneration programs.

These intermediaries include the consultants who identify cultural markets, and translate this knowledge into proposals with economic outputs, thereby helping (or preventing) the social inclusion effects (Foord 1998). To name an example, a shiny new arts centre might help a place's image for visitors and even attract private investment, yet be resented by a local community needing support to preserve existing cultural initiatives (such as a community radio station) that are effectively engaging people at risk.

Role of the community sector

The non-profit sector's varying role as intermediary of social inclusion was a key finding of a recent EU-funded research project called 'Changing City Spaces', which analysed cultural diversity policies and cultural production in the context of transnational migration in seven European cities. Some socio-cultural activities reinforced the marginalisation of their clientele by focusing on ethnic identity, instead of facilitating access to mainstream resources. In

contrast, other third sector agencies were a powerful force for inclusion, operating as an oppositional voice to excluding government policies and an advocate of socially excluded migrant groups towards both the government and the corporate sector (Böse, Busch, Dragicevic-Sesic, forthcoming).

Some in the community sector might view 'inclusion through cultural employment' as promoting neo-liberal workfare policies. However, third sector agencies have a vital stake in implementing the multi-faceted potential of cultural participation and production and in making sure that 'social inclusion' is not reduced to handy rhetoric that attracts public funding. They can do so particularly by signalling specific needs and tangible outcomes for socially vulnerable groups.

Third sector agencies were a powerful force, where they spoke out against exclusion and in favour of socially excluded migrant groups

Martina Böse

(03) 9483 1377

mboese@bsl.org.au

References

Barraket, J 2005, *Putting people in the picture? The role of the arts in social inclusion*, Social Policy Working Paper, Brotherhood of St Laurence and University of Melbourne Centre for Public Policy, Melbourne.

Böse, M, Busch, B & Dragicevic-Sesic, M forthcoming, 'Despite and beyond cultural policy: third and fourth sector practices and strategies', in U Meinhof & A Triandafyllidou (eds), *Transcultural Europe: cultural policy in a changing Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, UK.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport 1998, *Creative industries mapping document*, viewed 13 October 2005, <www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_1998/Creative_Industries_Mapping_Document_1998.htm>.

Foord, J 1998, 'Creative Hackney: Reflections on Hidden Art™', *Rising East*, vol. 3, pp.38–66.

Does Australia's wealth distribution match income distribution? Some insights from HILDA data

Although the financially disadvantaged are often equated with people on low incomes, this understates the importance of wealth (assets) in affecting people's range of choices and their vulnerability to financial crises. It is useful therefore to analyse the extent to which the distribution of wealth corresponds to the distribution of income. Recent research into the distribution and composition of personal wealth in Australia reveals a strong positive relationship between income and wealth, even after accounting for life-cycle effects. However there are some interesting exceptions.

Measuring assets and debt

Results here are based on analysis of the second wave (2002) of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey, in which respondents were asked to estimate household asset and debt levels¹; so that net worth (assets less liabilities) could be calculated. To account for differences in the size and composition of modern households, aggregate figures were calculated using an adult equivalence scale².

Table 1 shows the uneven distribution of wealth (net worth) across income and age groups. There are people who struggle to accumulate wealth regardless of age, and the lowest income group together hold little more than 10 per cent of total wealth in all age cohorts except 75+. On the other hand, around 40 per cent of total wealth in an age group is held by the individuals in the highest income quintile. Perhaps surprisingly, the gap between wealth shares of the bottom quintile and the next three is relatively small.

Until close to retirement age, average wealth increases with each successive income quintile, as does the share of total wealth.

Interestingly, the positive relationship between income and wealth reverses somewhat in the bottom quintiles after age 55. Among those aged 65 to 74, people in the lowest income quintile on average hold \$175,000 compared with the \$162,000 held by people in the second lowest income quintile. This contrast is even more dramatic in the 75+ age group, where the lowest income group averages more wealth than either the second or third income quintiles.

Implications

These findings have important implications for governments and welfare organisations seeking to target Australians who are particularly disadvantaged. The income poor are likely candidates because lack of cash flow places them at risk of being unable to meet basic needs. For such people, assets could be a source of liquidity during times of economic distress.

While the results confirm that the income poor, on average, are also the wealth poor, there are some individuals, especially the retired, who have low incomes but quite valuable assets. This suggests that it may be inappropriate simply to target those with low income if many are found to hold substantial assets.

On the other hand, those with low incomes who have very

limited assets (e.g. do not own their own home, and have few savings) are at greatest risk of social exclusion. It is these people who especially need the attention and concern of policy makers.

Li Tan

Li Tan is a final year student of economics and holder of a Ronald Henderson Foundation internship. She conducted this analysis for her final thesis.

Reference

Watson, N & Wooden, M 2002, *The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey: Wave 1 survey methodology*, HILDA Project Technical Paper Series No.1/02, Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne.

— 2004, 'The HILDA Survey four years on', *Australian Economic Review*, vol.37, no.3, pp.343-9.

Notes

¹ Described in more detail in Watson and Wooden (2002 & 2004), the HILDA Survey began in 2001 as a nationally representative survey of Australian households occupying private dwellings.

² Equivalence scale: $m = \text{no. adults} + 0.25 \times \text{no. children}$. Although the parameters chosen in the scale affect the absolute values, they do not alter the overall pattern, thus preserving the general conclusions.

There are people who struggle to accumulate wealth regardless of age, and the lowest income group together hold little more than 10 per cent of total wealth in all age cohorts except 75+

Table 1: Distribution of individual net worth by income quintile and by age cohort. Mean equivalent values, \$000s, and percentage of total wealth (in parentheses)

Income quintile	Age cohort					
	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
1 (Bottom 20%)	62 (12)	93 (11)	123 (10)	176 (11)	175 (12)	188 (17)
2	78 (14)	121 (14)	174 (15)	177 (10)	162 (11)	139 (12)
3	86 (17)	136 (16)	180 (16)	263 (16)	209 (14)	160 (13)
4	105 (17)	165 (20)	238 (21)	335 (20)	255 (18)	229 (19)
5 (Top 20%)	183 (40)	315 (38)	433 (37)	706 (33)	604 (45)	405 (39)

New information on poverty, unemployment and social justice

The following are recent acquisitions of the Brotherhood Library:

ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIANS

Flatau, P, Cooper, L, McGrath, N et al. 2005, *Indigenous access to mainstream public and community housing: final report*, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne, <<http://www.ahuri.edu.au/global/docs/doc879.pdf>>.

Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision 2005, *Overcoming Indigenous disadvantage: key indicators 2005: report*, Productivity Commission, Canberra, A.C.T.

AGED

Cai, L & Kalb, G 2004, *Health status and labour force status of older working-age Australian men*, Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, <<http://www.melbourneinstitute.com/wp/wp2005n09.pdf>>.

Patmore, C & McNulty, A 2005, *Making home care for older people more flexible and person-centred factors which promote this*, Social Policy Research Unit, University of York, UK, <<http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/research/pdf/homecare.pdf>>.

CHILDREN

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2005, *A picture of Australia's children*, AIHW, Canberra, A.C.T.

CREDIT

Ayres-Wearne, V & Palafox, J 2005, *NILS: small loans – big changes: the impacts of no interest loans on households*, Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service Inc., Collingwood, Vic.

DISABILITY

Harding, A, Vu, NQ & Percival, R 2005, *The distributional impact of the proposed welfare-to-work reforms upon Australians with disabilities*, NATSEM, <<http://esvc001127.wic004u.server-web.com/documents/WelfaretoWorkpwd.pdf>>.

ECONOMICS

Ormerod, P 2005, *Why most things fail: evolution, extinction and economics*, Faber & Faber, London.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

Carroll, N 2005, *Unemployment and psychological well-being*, Australian National University, Centre for Economic Policy Research, Canberra, <<http://econrsss.anu.edu.au/pdf/DP493.pdf>>.

May, R, Campbell, I & Burgess, J 2005, *The rise and rise of casual work in Australia: who benefits, who loses?*, RMIT University, Centre for Applied Social Research, Melbourne, <<http://www.econ.usyd.edu.au/download.php/paper8-May%2CCampbell%26Burgess.pdf?id=4306>>.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2005, *Ageing and employment policies: Australia*, OECD, Paris.

HEALTH

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2005, *Expenditures on health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 2001–02*, AIHW, Canberra, <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/hwe/ehatsip01-02/ehatsip01-02.pdf>>.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Department of Justice, Human Rights Consultative Committee 2005, *Have your say about human rights in Victoria: human rights consultation community discussion paper*, Human Rights Consultative Committee and the State of Victoria, East Melbourne.

MELBOURNE

Birrell, R, O'Connor, K & Rapson, V 2005, *Melbourne 2030: planning rhetoric versus urban reality*, Monash University, Clayton, Vic.

MIGRATION ISSUES

Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) 2005, *Refugee and humanitarian issues: Australia's response*, DIMIA, Canberra.

Corlett, D 2005, *Following them home: the fate of the returned asylum seekers*, Black Inc, Melbourne.

POLITICS

Maddox, M 2005, *God under Howard: the rise of the religious right in Australian politics*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, N.S.W.

McKnight, D 2005, *Beyond right and left: new politics and the culture wars*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, N.S.W.

POVERTY

Swan, W 2005, *Postcode: the splintering of a nation*, Pluto Press, North Melbourne.

SOCIAL POLICY

Bessant, J, Watts, R & Smyth, P 2005, *Talking policy: how social policy is made*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, N.S.W.

Fitzpatrick, T 2005, *New theories of welfare*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, U.K.

SOCIAL WELFARE

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2005, *Welfare expenditure Australia 2002–03*, AIHW, Canberra, <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/hwe/wea02-03/wea02-03.pdf>>.

Harding, A, Vu, NQ & Percival, R 2005, *The distributional impact of the proposed welfare-to-work reforms upon sole parents*, NATSEM, <www.natsem.canberra.edu.au/publications/papers/otherpubs/welfaretoWork.pdf>.

WAGES

Saunders, P 2005, *Reviewing recent trends in wage income inequality in Australia*, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney, <<http://www.econ.usyd.edu.au/download.php/Paper6-P.Saunders.pdf?id=4304>>.

WELL BEING

Hamilton, C & Denniss, R 2005, *Affluenza: when too much is never enough*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, N.S.W.

Layard, R 2005, *Happiness: lessons from a new science*, Penguin, New York.

YOUTH

Holdsworth, R 2005, *Real learning real futures revisited*, Australian Youth Research Centre, University of Melbourne.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development & Canadian Policy Research Networks 2005, *From education to work: a difficult transition for young adults with low levels of education*, OECD, Paris.

Youth Affairs Council of Victoria 2005, *Fringe benefits? Young people on the edge of policy and place*, Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, Melbourne.

Information services for the public

The Brotherhood of St Laurence library offers a specialist focus on issues such as poverty, unemployment, aged care, social policy and welfare, taxation and housing. It can also provide, for the cost of copying and mailing, up-to-date information sheets on poverty and unemployment as well as information on the Brotherhood, its services and its publications.

The library is open to students, community groups and members of the public from 9am to 5pm, Tuesday to Thursday. Books can be borrowed by the public through the inter-library loan system (enquire at your regular library).

To find out whether we can help you, ring the Library on (03) 9483 1387 or (03) 9483 1388, or e-mail <library@bsl.org.au>. Further information including the online library catalogue can be found at <www.bsl.org.au>.

Recent submissions

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

- Submission to the Productivity Commission inquiry into the economic implications for an ageing Australia, September 2004
- Joint submission to Mental Health Community Consultations of Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and Mental Health Council of Australia, with Catholic Social Services Victoria, September 2004.
- Response to Community Care Division, Department of Human Services, on the report, *Protecting children: ten priorities for children's wellbeing and safety in Victoria*, December 2004
- Submission to Treasurer John Brumby on the development of the Victorian Government's 2005-06 Budget, December 2004
- Submission to DIMIA on Australia's Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program 2005-06, January 2005
- Response to the DEWR discussion paper on Disability Open Employment services, February 2005
- Response to Commonwealth of Australia Joint Committee on Public Work re Maribyrnong Immigration Detention Centre – Additional accommodation and related works, by Brotherhood of St Laurence as member of Justice for Asylum Seekers, February 2005
- Submission to the Senate Select Committee on Mental Health, April 2005
- Education and social inclusion, submission to the Victorian Government's Review of Education and Training Legislation, May 2005
- Submission to the Australian National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises concerning Global Solutions Limited (Australia) Pty Ltd, June 2005
- Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration inquiry into skills recognition, upgrading and licensing, June 2005
- Submission to the Productivity Commission on the health workforce, July 2005
- Submission to Inquiry into the administration and operation of the Migration Act 1958, August 2005
- Towards a National Eye Health Plan for Australia 2005 to 2010: Submission to the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, August 2005
- Corporate responsibility and triple bottom line reporting: Submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services, September 2005
- Submission to Consumer Affairs Victoria Consumer Credit Code review, Brotherhood of St Laurence and Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service, September 2005.

676_1105comnt

Your subscription is vital. Help us to continue this important work

Produced three times a year by: Social Action and Research, Brotherhood of St Laurence, 67 Brunswick Street Fitzroy, Vic. 3065 Fax: (03) 9417 2691

Name E-mail

Mail address Phone

Annual subscription: \$33 libraries and organisations \$20 individuals \$5 unemployed and pensioners

Please note our publications are GST exempt.

Charge to my Bankcard Visa Mastercard Diners Club Amex ID

Privacy policy

We respect the privacy of your personal details. The BSL will not disclose them to any other party.

Name on card

Expiry date Number

Signature or Cheque enclosed or Official order number

I enclose \$ as a donation to the Brotherhood of St Laurence. Donations over \$2.00 are tax-deductable.