

# SACOSS

## ANTI-POVERTY STATEMENT

### 2015



**SACOSS**

*South Australian Council  
of Social Service*





# SACOSS ANTI-POVERTY WEEK 2015 STATEMENT

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Every person should have somewhere safe to live, reasonable food and clothing, access to basic utilities, employment, justice, education and health services.

SACOSS believes that South Australia must develop a specific anti-poverty focus to provide justice, opportunity and shared wealth for all in our community.

While cost of living pressures are felt across the board, they impact most on those with low incomes who have fewest options and who spend disproportionately more of their income on the basic necessities of life.

Anti-Poverty Week is an opportunity to talk about solutions, fairness and a decent standard of living for all South Australians. Anti-Poverty Week focuses on poverty around the world including Australia, and includes the UN's International Anti-Poverty Day, 17 October. The main aims are to strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship, and encourage research, discussion and action to address these problems.

Poverty has many faces, and for many people it represents the ongoing and daily struggle to navigate through everyday life. A successful society is one that enables all its members to enjoy its benefits, not just some.

Poverty exists in South Australia and is more prevalent than many of us realise. However, it does not need to exist and we should never consider it an inevitable part of life, nor should we assume that those who experience poverty are to blame. We all have a responsibility to work to eradicate poverty.

## **This report profiles poverty in three different South Australian communities:**

- > Charles Sturt Local Government Area
- > Onkaparinga Local Government Area
- > Port Augusta Local Government Area

The report includes Department of Employment and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Community Profile Census data relating to education, employment, ethnicity, income and other economic resources for each area as well as for South Australia as a whole.

Accompanying the demographic data we asked a member organisation in each area to provide a case study of a person's real current day experience of poverty in their community. Some case studies include a weekly/fortnightly budget.

# SOUTH AUSTRALIA OVERVIEW

## POPULATION: 1,596,572

% Born in Australia	73%
% Aboriginal or TSI	2%



## HIGHEST YEAR OF SCHOOL COMPLETED

Year 12 or equivalent	45%
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## UNEMPLOYMENT^

Number of unemployed people	59,700
Unemployment rate	6.9%



## INCOME\*

Median total personal income (\$/weekly)	534
Median total family income (\$/weekly)	1,330



## HOUSING TENURE

Owned outright	33%
Rented total	28%



Source: Census 2011 Community Profiles – South Australia

<sup>^</sup>Source: Dept. Employment, LGA Data tables - Small Area Labour Markets - June quarter 2015

\*Median total personal income is applicable to persons aged 15 years and over.  
Median total family income is applicable to families in family households

## Dropping off the Edge Report 2015

In 2015 Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services released significant research examining geographical disadvantage across Australia.

Dropping Off The Edge (DOTE 2015) included analysis of 20 different indicators that limit life opportunities across 125 Statistical Local Areas (SLAs) in South Australia.

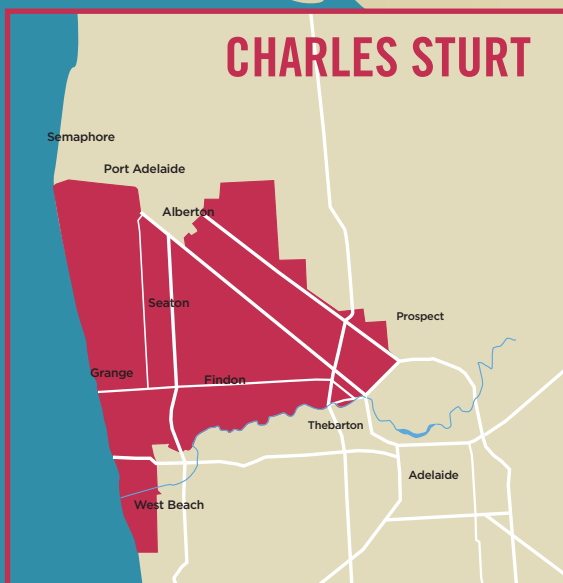
Each SLA was ranked 1 to 125 against each indicator of disadvantage. For example, the SLA ranked 1 for unemployment has the highest rate of unemployment

of the 125 South Australian SLAs. Therefore the lower the number, the more prevalent that issue is in that community.

In this Anti-Poverty Week Statement we have included 4 of the 20 DOTE indicators to provide a comparison between geographical areas. In the cases of Onkaparinga LGA and Charles Sturt LGA we have been able to provide comparators which highlight significant disparity between geographical areas within the LGA.

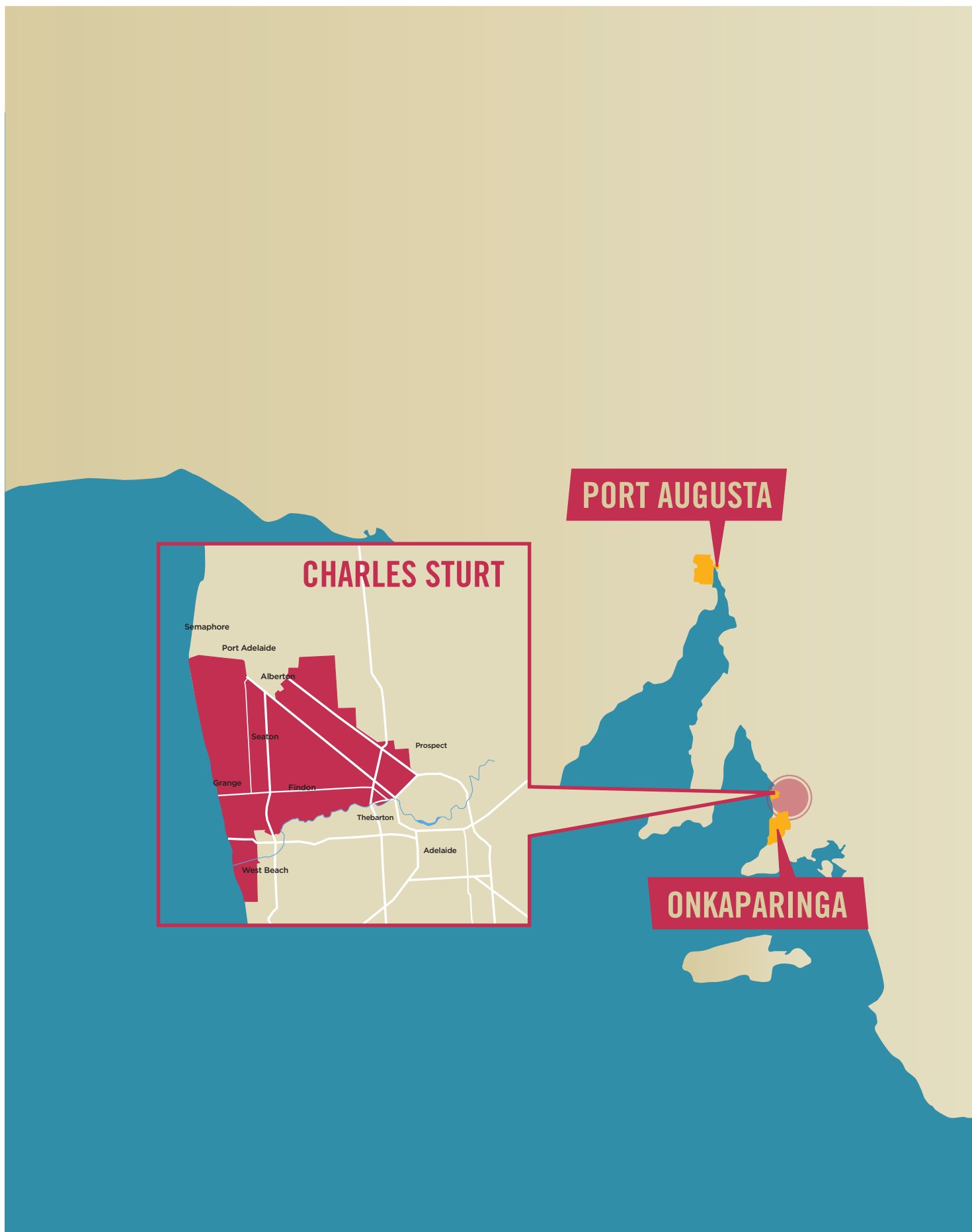
# SOUTH AUSTRALIA REGION PROFILES

## CHARLES STURT



## PORT AUGUSTA

## ONKAPARINGA





## CHARLES STURT LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

The City of Charles Sturt is located in the western suburbs of Adelaide, comprising a mix of residential, industrial and commercial areas over 54.8 km<sup>2</sup>.

The Charles Sturt local government area was formed on 1 January 1997 as a result of the amalgamation of the City of Hindmarsh Woodville and the City of Henley and Grange.



**POPULATION: 104, 981**

% Born in Australia **68%**  
% Aboriginal or TSI **1%**



**HIGHEST YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETED**

Year 12 or equivalent **47%**



**UNEMPLOYMENT<sup>^</sup>**

Number of unemployed people **3,943**  
Unemployment rate **6.7%**

<sup>^</sup>Source: Dept. Employment, LGA Data tables - Small Area Labour Markets - June quarter 2015



**INCOME**

Median total personal income (\$/weekly) **524**  
Median total family income (\$/weekly) **1,345**



**HOUSING TENURE**

Owned outright **36%**  
Rented total **31%**

Census 2011 Community Profiles - Charles Sturt LGA

## DROPPING OFF THE EDGE 2015

Each Statistical Local Area (SLA) is ranked 1 to 125 against the indicators of disadvantage. The lower the number, the more prevalent the issue is likely to be in the community.

There is a marked difference in experience of disadvantage when comparing the North-East of Charles Sturt with its Coastal area. The North-East ranks more highly on each of the four indicators. The biggest difference in rankings relate to overall education and unemployment, although there is also a wide gap in housing stress and low family income.

Housing stress



Low family income



Overall education



Unemployment



## CASE STUDY

Sally has been a client of Uniting Care Wesley Bowden (UCWB) since 2012. Sally hadn't before needed to access social assistance because her partner had full-time employment, providing the family a stable income. This changed when her husband had to give up his job because of poor health and the family found themselves relying on Centrelink benefits to get by.

Their housing was no longer affordable and they had to move a long distance to access affordable Community Housing to rent. Sally was isolated and geographically separated from family and friends and struggling to support her three children on a very limited income.

Sally's partner was abusive. When they were first together, the abuse was occasional and her partner was very remorseful. As time went by the abuse became a more regular occurrence. Sally became more and more depressed; the abuse made her feel she was a bad partner and mother to her children. Sally's partner discouraged contact with family and friends, leaving her with few sources of support.

Sally first accessed support from Uniting Care Wesley through the Emergency Relief Service (The Open Door) but stated more than once that she was ashamed that she had to use the service. The workers tried to talk to Sally to find out what was going on and what she might need, but she was very vague and difficult to engage.

Sally began to call in on a more regular basis for the free bread provided in the reception area of Emergency Relief Service. The workers recognised Sally was struggling and put away donated children's toys and clothes to offer to Sally when she called in for bread. In doing this, the workers started to build a more open relationship with Sally and she began to feel comfortable enough to disclose some of the issues she was facing.

Sally was in considerable financial hardship with debts that she had not been able to face for years. She was scared to answer the phone or open mail. The workers at The Open Door referred Sally to one of the Financial Counsellors onsite. Sally didn't attend the first appointment as she was embarrassed and nervous, but she presented the following week at the Emergency Relief Service (The Open Door).

When asked how her appointment with the Financial Counsellor had been Sally burst into tears. The worker contacted the Financial Counsellor who came over immediately to talk with Sally. They made another appointment time and this time Sally attended.

It has been a long journey for Sally to improve her financial position because her abusive partner often spent money set aside for bills on alcohol and gambling. The Financial Counsellor could see that Sally needed more supports and referred her to the social work team at Uniting Care Wesley Bowden.

Over the past few years Sally has achieved great improvement in her and her children's lives. After some shorter term attempts, Sally has managed to separate from her abusive partner who has moved out of the family home and remained away for a long period of time. Sally is still working with the Financial Counsellor to develop her budgeting capacity to stay on track. The social worker is still working with her, building her self-esteem regarding her improved coping and parenting skills. Sally uses the Community Food Hub Bowden and purchases goods with her own money.



### Sally's Budget

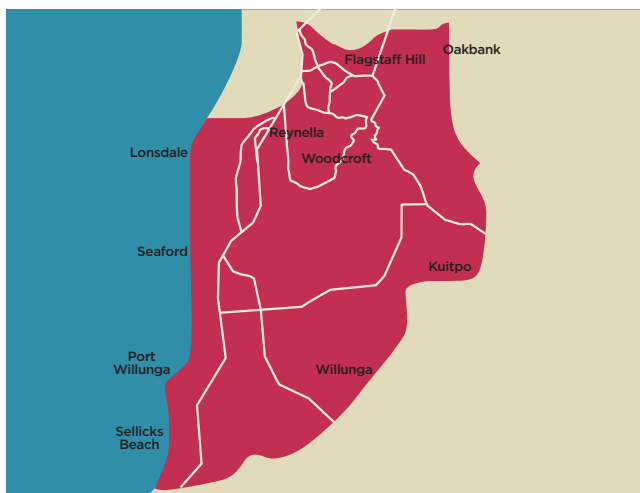


#### FORTNIGHTLY INCOME

Centrelink	\$769
Family Tax Benefit	\$676
	<b>\$1,445</b>

#### FORTNIGHTLY EXPENDITURE

Food and clothing	\$620
Housing (rent, rates etc)	\$341
Communication (phones, internet etc)	\$141
Utilities	\$130
Public transport	\$86
Centrelink Advance	\$83
Education	\$29
Family entertainment	\$10
Health	\$5
	<b>\$1,445</b>



## ONKAPARINGA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

The City of Onkaparinga is located on the southern fringe of Adelaide and includes both urban and rural communities. It is the most populated local government area in South Australia and covers a geographic area of 518.1 km<sup>2</sup>.

The City of Onkaparinga was formed on the 1 July 1997, from the amalgamation the former Cities of Happy Valley and Noarlunga with part of the District Council of Willunga.



**POPULATION: 159, 567**

% Born in Australia

74%

% Aboriginal or TSI

1%



**HIGHEST YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETED**

Year 12 or equivalent

42%



**UNEMPLOYMENT<sup>^</sup>**

Number of unemployed people

7,356

Unemployment rate

8.8%

<sup>^</sup>Source: Dept. Employment, LGA Data tables - Small Area Labour Markets - June quarter 2015



**INCOME**

Median total personal income (\$/weekly)

542

Median total family income (\$/weekly)

1,311



**HOUSING TENURE**

Owned outright

29%

Rented total

23%

Census 2011 Community Profiles - Onkaparinga LGA

## DROPPING OFF THE EDGE 2015

Each Statistical Local Area (SLA) is ranked 1 to 125 against the indicators of disadvantage. The lower the number, the more prevalent the issue is likely to be in the community.

Comparing the Hills and Hackham regions of Onkaparinga shows a substantial difference in experience for each indicator of disadvantage. The community of Hackham ranks highly for housing stress and unemployment demonstrating that these are key issues in the area. Hackham ranks better for overall education yet not as highly as the Hills region which has a ranking that shows it is particularly advantaged in this respect.

Housing stress



Low family income



Overall education



Unemployment



Onkaparinga - Hackham

Onkaparinga - Hills



## CASE STUDY

Angelique is in her late 30s, bringing up her six year old son who has autism and ADHD. Angelique has an intellectual disability, and is supported by an agency in the southern area. She is a talented artist, and is studying at an adult college two days a week while her son is at school. She is a strong and passionate advocate for people with disability, particularly around her son's right to live a rich, full life with the same opportunities as his peers.

Angelique has received the disability support pension for many years, and has developed very good skills at making ends meet with her limited income. It's getting harder as her son gets older, and she finds she has to juggle her money to get him what he needs. She had to buy him a pair of shoes for \$35, which had to come out of the money she put aside for food that week.

She and her son have not been on a holiday for 4 years, and she longs to get away for a few days to Port Pirie to see her father, but she doesn't have any spare money to put towards a visit.

Currently Angelique lives in a unit, and one of her dreams is to one day buy her own home so she can have some stability and control over her home, but her income does not allow for any savings. Much of her furniture is broken or needs repair, and when her old fridge finally stopped working, she needed to take out a loan to replace it.

Day to day financial pressures means that she isn't able to pay for her son's excursions at school, nor is he able to join the school soccer team (with boots alone costing over \$100). He loves being outdoors and will run and run if given the opportunity, but the costs of joining Scouts and other outdoor groups means he is left out.

Angelique's health is also impacted by her financial position – she has diabetes and arthritis, and has been advised to attend aquarobics twice a week to help manage both conditions. But at \$6 per visit she can only attend once a fortnight.

### Angelique's Budget

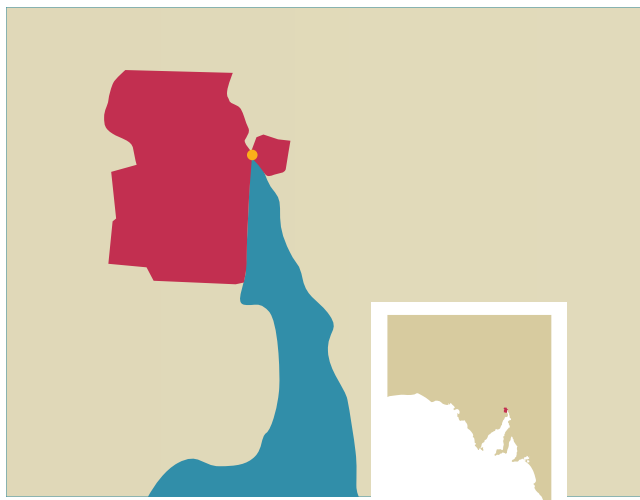


#### FORTNIGHTLY INCOME

Disability Support Payment	\$700
Family Tax Benefit	\$200
	<b>\$900</b>

#### FORTNIGHTLY EXPENDITURE

Food and clothing	\$200
Housing (rent, rates etc)	\$350
Communication (phones, internet etc)	\$25
Utilities	\$80
Public transport	\$25
Loan repayment	\$93
Education (College fees)	\$32
Lawn and garden maintenance	\$15
Health (medications)	\$70
Laybys	\$25
	<b>\$915</b>



## PORT AUGUSTA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Located about 322 kilometres north of Adelaide, Port Augusta is a seaport and railway junction city on the east coast of the Spencer Gulf.

Port Augusta City Council covers an area of 1152.1 km<sup>2</sup> including the city of Port Augusta, Stirling North, and the seaside homes located at Commissariat Point, Blanche Harbour and Miranda.



**POPULATION: 13,985**

% Born in Australia **83%**  
% Aboriginal or TSI **17%**



**HIGHEST YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETED**

Year 12 or equivalent **25%**



**UNEMPLOYMENT<sup>^</sup>**

Number of unemployed people **514**  
Unemployment rate **7.6%**

<sup>^</sup>Source: Dept. Employment, LGA Data tables - Small Area Labour Markets - June quarter 2015



**INCOME**

Median total personal income (\$/weekly) **541**  
Median total family income (\$/weekly) **1,245**



**HOUSING TENURE**

Owned outright **30%**  
Rented total **36%**

Census 2011 Community Profiles - Port Augusta LGA

## DROPPING OFF THE EDGE 2015

Each Statistical Local Area (SLA) is ranked 1 to 125 against the indicators of disadvantage. The lower the number, the more prevalent the issue is likely to be in the community.

It is important to note that because of the statistical boundaries, comparison between distinct areas of Port Augusta was not possible. Port Augusta's rankings show that the area has an issue with unemployment. Overall the SLA does not show a significant problem with housing stress which reflects the lower cost of housing in some regional areas.

Housing stress



Low family income



Overall education



Unemployment



## CASE STUDY

Adam was born in Port Augusta in the mid-sixties. His parents were both born in the bush living most of their lives on missions or cattle stations. Adam's grandmother on his mother's side was Stolen Generation but has now passed away.

Adam also spent time being cared for on a mission as a baby and small child:

*'It's funny I can remember when I was a baby in a small room in side of a wooden cot, there was two other cots on each side of me, with a string across with blue elephants to keep my mind at ease.*

*The other two cots had little babies in them. They also had toys over their heads. I can't remember their toys but do remember the two babies.*

*We had a missionary lady come and look after us every day and most of the night. One day I can remember the baby on my right had gone.'*

Adam lived at the mission until he was five. One day he was told his mother was coming to get him:

*'I didn't know my mother but remember hanging onto this old missionary lady's hand while seeing an Aboriginal woman walking up to me in the late afternoon, reaching for me. The old missionary woman gave me to this lady, my mother, who took me back on to the reserve now called Davenport Aboriginal Community.'*

Adam was reunited with his parents and other siblings. Adam remembers how the White Man controlled the Aboriginal people who required permits. Adam witnessed police responding to Aboriginal people drinking:

*'I saw police come and drag people out of our house asking for their permit, from memory it was like a communist country.'*

Adam's father took him hunting for kangaroos and rabbits and when asked why they were killing animals his father said "we are starving, son". The meagre income Adam's father received was nowhere near enough to support the family, which included five children. Adam's family relied on their Aboriginal culture to get by, hunting and sourcing bush food which was shared with family.

*'It was hard watching mum and dad make ends meet, but it was even harder seeing a non-Aboriginal male controlling how live.'*

While Adam and his sisters were at school they often didn't have enough to eat. They were given a lunch box with a few sandwiches which were shared amongst the siblings. Sometimes they went without. When Adam wanted to play football at his school in Port Augusta he was pulled aside by his PE teacher and told the other children did not want to play with him because they might catch diseases.

Adam's parents sent him to be cared for by his grandparents in another regional town. His grandparents lived in a tin shack surviving on lizard and damper to stretch their pensions. The shack had no power or hot water and when it rained, they got wet.

Eventually Adam's grandparents were offered a government funded house.

*'I can remember reading my grandparents mail because they could not read. Even when they got a power bill or rent or whatever, it was my job to read the bills.'*

Adam went to the local school and tried hard to complete year 12 but was told by the teachers that the school only went to year 11.

After school Adam returned to Port Augusta. He was unemployed and struggled a lot. He continued to return to the bush and relied on bush food, but this meant he was often in trouble with farmers and police because of his access to private land.

*'I thought to myself, what I am meant to do? The land was taken from us and we live under policies that keep me and my people in a place where if you are Aboriginal then you live off of welfare and handouts. But like your parents this means you must struggle, only to return to bush food and traditional way of life to survive.'*

Adam now works with a community NGO. This work means he sees his family and community in prison, represented in the judicial system and suffering from a myriad of social problems that he traces back to displacement from their land and being affected by ever changing policy.

Adam has grown-up children who have children of their own now.

*'I feel my children and grandchildren live my life just with different forms of social experience around education, housing and employment but the same poverty'*

Adam believes that the effect of colonisation goes on. For him, the experience of poverty includes family members committing suicide and suffering the effects of poor health and neglect.

*'I love my family and I worked hard to have the courage to ask my mother why she put me in the home.'*

*She said, "In those days babies were dying. I put you in there to try and save you. You were in there with your cousin. I visited you three times a week. You were with two other babies but one passed away. The other baby was your big cousin who lives on the reserve /mission now. It was hard back then - no food, no health services. If you were Aboriginal hardly anybody cared. I'm sorry son, but we really struggled to make it through those days and I did my best. All Aboriginal people lived in poverty in those days and they still live there today"*

*'I am a proud Aboriginal male. I've never been to prison and I try and support my family the best I can'.*

# SACOSS ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT AND CONTRIBUTION TO THIS ANTI-POVERTY WEEK STATEMENT FROM:



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*Viewed 3 September 2015*

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Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia 2015, 'Dropping Off The Edge 2015'  
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[www.dote.org.au](http://www.dote.org.au)

*Please note: names in the preceding case studies have been changed to protect the anonymity of service clients*



# Anti-Poverty Week

**11-17<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

**Poverty and severe hardship affect more than a million Australians.**

**Around the world more than a billion people are desperately poor.**

**In Anti-Poverty Week help fight poverty and hardship.**

- > Why not organise a display, stall or award?**
- > Maybe a workshop, lecture or forum?**
- > How about a fundraiser, fact sheet or petition?**

**For more information and ideas:**

- > [www.apw@antipovertyweek.org.au](mailto:www.apw@antipovertyweek.org.au)**
- > [apw@antipovertyweek.org.au](mailto:apw@antipovertyweek.org.au)**
- > 1300 797 290**



## Principal National Sponsors







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The South Australian Council of Social Service does not accept poverty, inequity or injustice.

We will be a powerful and representative voice that leads and supports our community to take actions that achieve our vision.

We will hold to account governments, business, and communities for actions that disadvantage vulnerable South Australians.

We have a vision that all South Australians can live a life free from poverty, in a genuinely inclusive society where there is equality of opportunity and equity of outcomes for all.

2015

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