Organisational Context

This submission to the Australian Inclusion Board is provided on behalf of The Salvation Army, Southern Territory. The Southern Territory programmes and service delivery centres across the jurisdictions of Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and Northern Territory.

In Australia, The Salvation Army has been operating for 130 years and is one of the most well known and respected charitable welfare organisations. Each year in Australia over a million people receive assistance from The Salvation Army. Services provided to the community are diverse and cover areas of: addiction, aged care, community support, out of home care, accommodation, disability services, emergency responses, employment services as well as financial assistance and counselling. Given the scope of service networks, each service is able to draw on the capacity and expertise of other Salvation Army services, enhancing the organisation’s capacity to respond to those experiencing complex and multiple needs.

The Salvation Army has a long history of assisting the most vulnerable and marginalised in our communities and so welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission and contribute to research by the Australian Inclusion Board on breaking cycles of disadvantage.
Cycles of Disadvantage

Defining Social Inclusion

The Salvation Army recognises the Australian Government’s definition of social inclusion as being one where all people have the resources, opportunities and capabilities to learn, work, engage and have a voice. Further, that a cycle of disadvantage occurs where gaps in resources, opportunities and capabilities interact to create a mutually reinforcing cycle impacting on a person’s ability to participate fully in society.¹

This definition is considered a pivotal starting point for understanding cycles of disadvantage as it clearly distinguishes itself from the theory of income poverty and acknowledges the multidimensional nature of poverty and the interplay of various forms of disadvantage. Here, social inclusion is distinguished from the concept of poverty because it recognises that non-economic measures are equally as important as economic ones.

The Processes of Social Exclusion

Effectively responding to social exclusion, must include an understanding of the processes of exclusion.

‘Social exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in society, whether in economic, social, cultural, or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole.’²

Much of the empirical literature on social exclusion has focused on identifying those individuals or groups who are excluded and their individual characteristics and conditions. However, little consideration has been given to the ‘acts of exclusion’ themselves or to identifying those individuals, institutions, structures and conventions that implicitly endorse or encourage acts of exclusion.³

Understanding the processes of exclusion, that is, identifying those who are excluded as well as the actions that have worked to excluded them is complex. Saunders (2003) provides the following example:

*The pensioner who stays at home through fear of being assaulted is excluded, on the face of it, by her or his own decisions. Who is doing the excluding in this case? The young people in the neighbourhood whose raucous behaviour gives rise to the initial fear, those who have allowed local public infrastructure to run down and not provide appropriate facilities where youngsters can meet, or those whose economic mismanagement has produced the unemployment that breeds the social discontent that can lead to anti-social acts? The aged end up being excluded, but trying to identify what act or acts have excluded them (or led them to exclude themselves) is very difficult.*

To effectively create a social inclusion strategy there needs to be further exploration of the processes of exclusion. A focus on the acts of exclusion, who performs them, what structures reinforce exclusion as well as what actions are not taken (omissions) and so actively support social exclusion. An example of the latter (omissions) would be failure to provide disability access in public places.

**Breaking Cycles of Disadvantage**

Many of the responses designed to break cycles of disadvantage target intervention according to place and according to critical points in the life cycle. The Salvation Army recognises the following as important interventions to break cycles of disadvantage and actively applies these interventions in its own work.

**Intergenerational Disadvantage**

Early intervention and prevention targeted at influential stages in the life cycle (in particular, the early years) can assist those caught within the cycle of disadvantage at a young age and therefore at a higher risk of social exclusion in later life.

People experiencing deep exclusion frequently refer to childhood abuse and/or deprivation. Moving from childhood into adolescence provides many challenges and

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7 Ibid
psychosocial changes, which can be more difficult for some individuals than others given experiences in the formative stages of life.

Transition Points

A critical transition point is often a stage in an individual’s life that presents as a ‘fork in the road’ that will significantly impact on later life outcomes. For example, the transition from school to work or further study. Targeting transition points is an important way to ensure successful progression towards achieving milestones throughout life.⁸

Leaving the family home to seek employment, study or other pursuits can be a very lonely experience, and the development of a positive social network is a critical stage in the process of ‘being included.’

In mid-life, exclusion can result from a wide range of situations relating to family, employment and health, all of which are interconnected and require well developed coping skills to maintain a good quality of life.

Ageing can lead to exclusion and can be particularly acute in those who have been excluded in mid-life. A change in lifestyle in retirement, bereavements, loss of mobility, moving into care and nursing homes can all cause increasing levels of anxiety. Coping in old age can very much depend on physical and mental health and the levels of support available to help maintain independence.

Throughout the life cycle there will be a wide range of differences in individual’s ability for inclusion in society. These differences depend on the complex interactions between background, learned experiences, self efficacy, past crises and responses and the presenting social environment. Interventions need to address a multiplicity of inter-related factors.

Locational Disadvantage

Locational disadvantage requires a suite of programmes tailored to meet the needs of geographical areas.⁹ Responses need to specifically identify issues particular to ‘place’ and address them with targeted programmes.

The Salvation Army Australia Southern Territory believes that ‘local solutions’ are the effective responses to social exclusion. Listening to the needs of local communities and building responses that can work at the neighbourhood level can generate positive policy outcomes in promoting social inclusion.

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⁹ Ibid
The Salvation Army Australia Southern Territory delivers a wide range of social and community programmes. Like other Community Service Organisations, the Salvation Army continues to develop models of service delivery that promote social inclusion. Two of these, ‘Doorways’ and ‘Safe from the Start’, are examples of successful and innovative interventions, and are discussed later in this submission.

Social inclusion is not a new phenomenon and The Salvation Army from its inception has promoted values and principles of community engagement that continue to inform today’s service delivery.

A Lesson from the Past

In 1890 General William Booth (Founder of the Salvation Army in London) gathered data and formulated the scheme for social action and inclusion documented in “In Darkest England and the Way Out”\textsuperscript{10}. In this book he laid down the principles that would address the complex needs, which he considered to be caused by:

\begin{quote}

\textit{Difficulties which heredity, habit, and surroundings place in the way of its solution, but unless we are prepared to fold our arms in selfish ease and say that nothing can be done, and thereby doom those lost millions to remediless perdition in this world, to say nothing of the next problem must be solved in some way… I lay down what must be essential elements of any scheme likely to command success:}

\begin{enumerate}
\item Every scheme must change the man when it is his character and conduct which constitute the reason for his failure in the battle of life.
\item The remedy must change the circumstances of the individual when they are the cause of his wretched condition and lie beyond his control.
\item Any remedy worthy of consideration must be on a scale commensurate with the evil with which it proposes to deal.
\item Not only must the scheme be large enough, but it must be permanent.
\item But, while it must be permanent, it must also be immediately practicable.
\item The indirect features of the scheme must not be such as to produce injury to the persons whom we seek to benefit.
\item While assisting on class of community, it must not seriously interfere with the interests of another
\end{enumerate}
\end{quote}

The \textit{Darkest England} scheme aimed to create communities in which people could receive help to increase their physical, moral, spiritual and employment capacity, to learn to manage themselves, and to build a sustainable society to provide for others as they became independent.

These principles continue to inform Salvation Army practice, albeit, within a 21\textsuperscript{st} Century context. The following examples outline responses to issues of social inclusion within current Salvation Army service delivery.

\textsuperscript{10} William Booth, 1890, \textit{In Darkest England and The Way Out}. The Salvation Army.
Innovative Salvation Army Responses

*Doorways: An Example of Breaking Cycles of Disadvantage*

Social inclusion recognises that an individual’s participation and life outcomes can be affected by a number of interrelated barriers (e.g. health, employment, education). In response social inclusion strategies commonly call for “joined up work” across agencies to respond to presenting multiple needs of individuals.

An example of where The Salvation Army has worked well to address multiple and complex needs but delivering “joined up” services and maintaining a clear client focus has been its implementation of the “Doorways” Pilot, a model of service delivery for the organisation’s Community Support Services.

The “Doorways” model has been implemented as a pilot in several Community Support Service centres across the Australia Southern Territory and 240 staff and volunteers have received training in the “Doorways” principles and practice. A formal evaluation of the “Doorways” model is expected to be conducted towards the end of 2010.

Whilst providing support to address the initial crisis the “Doorways” model also focuses on building the capacity of people who repeatedly present to the service. It provides a prevention and early intervention response to assist people in need and avoid the initial crisis from escalating and further entrenching people in poverty and disadvantage. The Emergency Relief response is only the first step and the important work is to help people to deal with health, relationship, employment and emotional well-being.

The provision of ‘Emergency Relief’ or ‘material aid’ is not the end of the process, but rather this creates the opportunity to help the individual to address the underlying issues (non-presenting needs) in their lives, which have created the crisis.

“Doorways” is a social inclusion approach to service delivery that provides a single entry point to a range of social and practical supports to address the specific needs of each individual. “Doorways” also endeavours to realise the ambition of ‘One Door – No Wrong Door’ which provides support and advice in ensuring that clients are guided to the service which most meets their immediate need, as opposed to leaving clients, who are often in a vulnerable state, to try to find their way through the complex system of social supports available.

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11 Ibid
12 ALP Social Inclusion Policy
Doorways: Key Principles

The “Doorways” model is underpinned by a number of key principles. These are:

- **Early Intervention**

  To assist in preventing personal and social crisis issues escalating out of control, we subscribe to an early intervention approach to identifying and addressing needs.

- **Trusting Relationships**

  Developing a sense of mutual trust and respect is essential in the formation of any relationship and trusting relationships are the hallmark of all Salvation Army services. The initial meeting is a critical point in establishing the relationship and developing rapport.

- **Client-Centred Approach**

  A client-centred approach respects the dignity and rights of each individual and provides the basis for all interactions.

- **Capacity Building**

  To support people in developing their capacity, we use a life planning process that includes a holistic assessment, goal setting, information and advocacy, skilled and timely referral to other service providers and client follow up.

- **Strengths Based Approach**

  A strengths based approach is founded on the principle of empowerment and begins with the assumption that all people possess a wide range of talents, abilities, capacities, skills, resources and aspirations. The focus is on skill building and capacity development rather than on handouts that can perpetuate dependency.

- **Culturally Appropriate**

  Services are provided in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well as people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

- **Partnerships**

  Partnerships with specialist agencies, business and community groups are essential to providing integrated services which meet the complex needs of the people who seek our support. Developing collaborative and respectful relationships with a range of local services underpins the pathways we create through “Doorways”.

Safe from the Start: Early Intervention Programme

Research shows that supporting families, particularly through early intervention and prevention strategies for those most in need, has positive social and economic benefits such as: reductions in child abuse and neglect, better school performance, lower rates of criminality within families, and a decreased need for services. Children raised under
a regime of financial difficulties, social isolation, domestic or family violence, mental health problems, disability, alcohol and/or substance abuse, and the lack of adequate housing, are more likely to experience lower social competence, poor school performance, impaired language ability and mental health, and are more likely to be imprisoned.13

Each year The Salvation Army’s Australia Southern Territory supports more than 2,000 women who have survived family violence, as well as additional numbers of women and children at risk, through 20 different services.

‘Safe from the Start’ was developed through a 12-month action research project initiated by The Salvation Army, in partnership with the University of Tasmania. The project documented the impact of witnessing violence on children aged 0-6 and developed educative resources to assist parents and professionals working with children.

The research shows that a child who lives with violence is forever changed, but not forever ‘damaged’.14 This programme assists parent or those working with children to prevent further damage and ameliorate the effects on the child who have witnessed violence.

The programme includes an evidence based training module, research report and an innovative tool kit consisting of 24 products including reading books, puppets and resources.

Training in the use of the Safe from the Start kit has been provided to over 500 participants including children’s workers, child protection workers, teachers and training of a further 20 facilitators of the programme will take place later this year.

The use of early intervention strategies such as Safe from the Start address fundamental issues that for many disadvantaged Australians has a causal relationship to later life cycle disadvantage and exclusion.

**Conclusion**

The overall aim of social inclusion is to achieve better individual life outcomes through social and economic engagement, with concurring benefits for the community as a whole.

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14 Ibid.
It is essential that any social inclusion strategy is built on an understanding of the barriers to inclusion that people may face as well as the processes of exclusion or acts that serve to exclude people.

The Salvation Army has presented a sample of its current work aimed at breaking cycles of disadvantage. As discussed, the work of The Salvation Army is based on the principles of early intervention, client-centred practice, empowerment, partnerships and an underlying philosophy of delivering services in a sensitive, respectful and caring way.

The Salvation Army makes the following recommendations in response the Cycles of Disadvantage.

**Recommendations**

- Ensure a mainstream approach to social inclusion in all relevant strategies, policies and service plans. A mechanism for consideration to achieve this may be a ‘Social Exclusion Impact Statement’, similar to or replacing the ‘Family Impact Statement’.

- Recognise the importance of ‘place’ in social inclusion by prioritising the provision of resources to the most disadvantaged communities.

- Develop a practical ‘whole of government’ approach to social inclusion and community sector service delivery.

- Increase funding for innovative service models such as “Doorways”, which promote social inclusion.

- Promote the exchange of ideas and information through the development of networks to share best practice and explore innovative strategies for social inclusion.

The Salvation Army welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the research of the Social Inclusion Board through this submission and is available to discuss the content further if required. We look forward to a continued partnership with the Australian Government to assist the most marginalised in our community and work towards a socially inclusive society.