



Social Justice

STOCKTAKE

Taking stock of our communities

AUSTRALIA





Acknowledgement of Country

The Salvation Army Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet and work and pay our respect to Elders past, present and future.

We value and include people of all cultures, languages, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and intersex status. We are committed to providing programs that are fully inclusive. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of people of all ages, particularly children.

A practical approach to social justice

The Salvation Army is committed to seeking reconciliation, unity and equity throughout Australia. We value all people – regardless of age, culture, capacity, language spoken, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression.

We aim to provide safe, welcoming and fully inclusive programs to people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. Our Salvation Army mission worldwide, is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name with love and without discrimination.

We recognise and are sensitive to the needs of people who often find it difficult to access and use services in times of crisis. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people who identify as LGBTIQA+, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people with disabilities.

The Salvation Army believes all people deserve compassion, dignity, hope and respect. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of people of all ages, particularly children.

Indigenous artwork created in collaboration with The Salvation Army's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ministries team. Stock images are used in this brochure for illustrative purposes only – the models are not associated with The Salvation Army Australia.



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The hand-heart-shield motif speaks of the need to raise our hands and be counted, and that we need to do so with love and hope.

The Social Justice Stocktake



Working for justice is at the heart of what The Salvation Army does in Australia. It is integral to our ethos, our mission and our vision.

The experience of the pandemic has given us all greater insight into just how deeply social injustice is embedded in Australia. In this Stocktake, The Salvation Army wanted to get to the heart of what people were seeing in their local communities, and from there build a map of social justice priorities across Australia. We checked in with over fifteen thousand Australians across every State and Territory and in every electorate.

We found that Australians care deeply about social injustice – but don't always know what to do about it.

We heard that many people feel overwhelmed, even hopeless, when asked how Australia can address the issues they see in their local communities. Some felt they needed government to act before they could do anything individually. Some despaired that governments (of any level and any political persuasion) don't seem to care enough about the issues and injustices going on around them every day.

So instead of just providing our findings, we've tried to help alleviate that sense of hopelessness by also outlining practical solutions. We firmly believe that every social justice issue can be addressed.

Every person can make a difference.

Together, we can make an even greater difference.

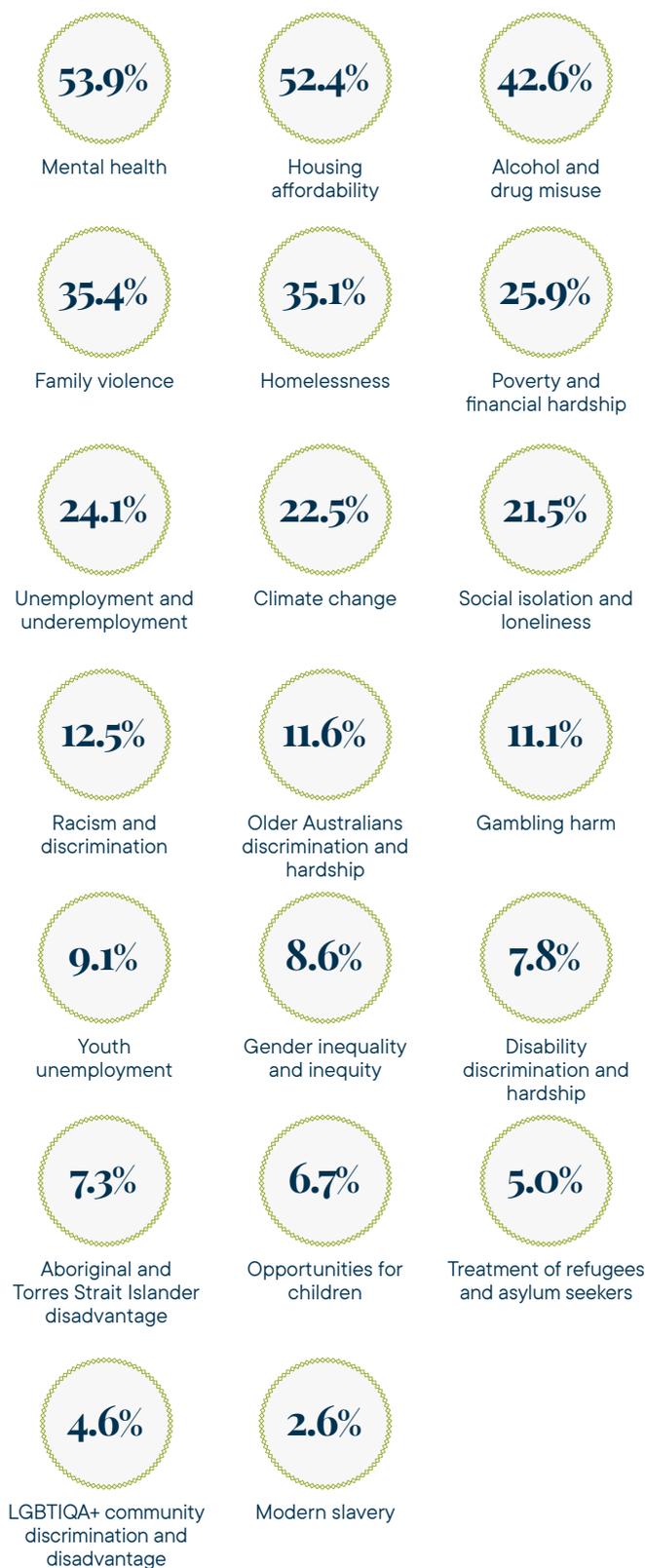
Our hope is that the following report will show how.

The Salvation Army Australia is a Christian movement dedicated to sharing the love of Jesus. **We do this by:**

- *Caring for people* • *Creating faith pathways*
- *Building healthy communities* • *Working for justice*

Social Justice in Australia

Breakdown of responses



Mental health and housing affordability were consistently the most prevalent issues in all jurisdictions, other than the Northern Territory, and in almost all electorates across Australia. What was most striking about this result was these two social justice issues appeared to be identified often irrespective of any other factors. These two issues were prevalent irrespective of geography, socio-economic disadvantage or whether respondents were in lockdown as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The impact of COVID-19 on mental health, and also on social isolation, are also pertinent to the results. Recent statistics suggest **55 per cent** of respondents had felt lonely since the start of the pandemic in 2020.¹ Men are twice as likely to experience isolation and loneliness (**males 38 per cent to females 18 per cent**), and those that live alone are significantly more likely to experience loneliness.²

Mental ill-health and housing stress have been shown to have a strong correlation. The Salvation Army's experience is that **38 per cent** of clients who present to homelessness services have mental ill-health.³

Around **16 per cent** of people with mental illness live in unsuitable accommodation, including overcrowded, low-quality accommodation, or are at risk of eviction.⁴ These conditions can continue to cause economic pressures, including difficulty securing employment (which also exacerbates mental ill-health).

Both housing affordability and homelessness are clearly major issues in Australia. At the 2016 census, there were **116,427 people experiencing homelessness**. It's estimated that Australia has a shortfall of **433,400 social housing properties**.⁵ Respondents to this stocktake clearly identified that homelessness, and the kind of housing stress that could lead to homelessness, were issues in their local community.



Overwhelmingly, people felt something needed to be done and wanted to be part of the solution but felt disempowered around finding or implementing solutions.

Alcohol and drug misuse was an issue in all jurisdictions but was particularly prevalent in regional and remote electorates. In the Northern Territory, over three quarters of respondents identified alcohol and drug misuse as a major social justice issue in their community.

Family violence was also consistently prevalent across all jurisdictions and almost all electorates. The Australian Institute of Criminology found that the pandemic coincided with the onset of physical or sexual violence or coercive control for many women. For other women it coincided with an increase in the frequency or severity of ongoing violence or abuse.⁶ Family violence has historically remained hidden in our society, so the prevalence of this result might reflect both an increase in the incidence of violence, but also the concerted efforts by governments and community groups to raise awareness around family violence.

One of the themes that came through when we invited respondents to tell us in their own words what they wanted to see done about social justice in their community was a sense of hopelessness. Overwhelmingly, people felt something needed to be done and wanted to be part of the solution but felt disempowered around finding or implementing solutions.

Every social justice issue identified can be addressed. With that in mind, the rest of this report is focused on exploring these social justice issues and tangible steps we can take together to fight hardship and injustice.

“I would like to see the community coming together to create positive and meaningful change.”

QUEENSLAND

“I would like to see the government come up with a long-term solution for this. It's not just about throwing money at people; it's about education and support, and that is lacking and under-resourced.”

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

“I would love for the stigma of these issues to be removed; this would enable people affected to seek assistance more easily.”

VICTORIA

“I want to participate, if I can, to help resolve these issues.”

NEW SOUTH WALES

“It'd be great if the community would work together and fix the issues.”

TASMANIA

“A livable wage or government benefit should be available for everyone. Availability of rental properties for people who receive government benefits or a low income.”

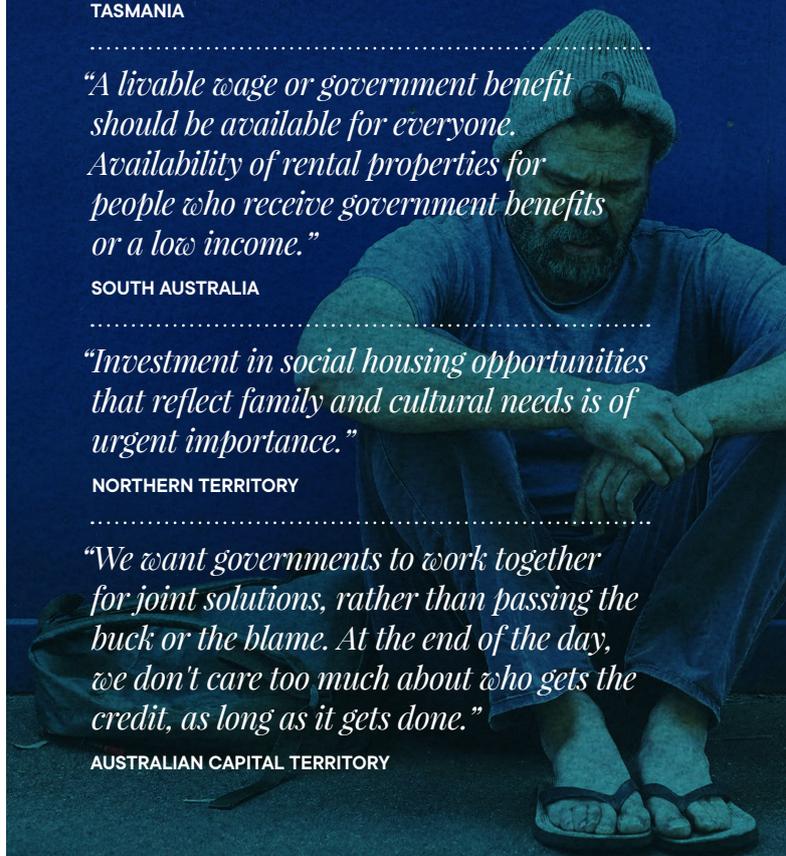
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

“Investment in social housing opportunities that reflect family and cultural needs is of urgent importance.”

NORTHERN TERRITORY

“We want governments to work together for joint solutions, rather than passing the buck or the blame. At the end of the day, we don't care too much about who gets the credit, as long as it gets done.”

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY





Addressing
Social Injustice



Mental health



A person's mental health is a central component of wellbeing. Mental ill-health, whether a condition is considered severe or not, undermines the quality of life of millions of Australians. There are many factors that can cause a person to experience mental ill-health. Some of the societal contributors include economic stresses, such as unemployment and homelessness, and social factors including family and domestic violence, substance use disorders and loneliness and social isolation.

Once a person is experiencing mental ill-health, it's easy for minor conditions and setbacks to snowball, and for this to have monumentally negative impacts upon every part of a person's life.

Mental illness does not discriminate. It's important that anyone experiencing mental ill-health can access timely, non-judgmental and effective support so everyone can achieve and maintain mental health and wellbeing.

We probably can't eradicate all underlying causes of mental ill-health, but we certainly can address much of the hardship that comes with it.



Every year, **3.2 million Australians (13.1 per cent)** experience an anxiety-related condition and **2.4 million (10 per cent)** experience depression or feelings of depression. These numbers are growing.¹



Nearly half of Australians (46 per cent) experience a mental disorder throughout their lifetime.



One in seven (13.9 per cent) of children between 4 and 17 experience mental ill-health in any given year and more than three quarters of mental health problems occur before the age of 25.²

What we can do?

AS A NATION

- » **We can design our support systems to recognise the societal, as well as medical contributors to mental ill-health.** This means our national approach to mental health needs to acknowledge systemic issues such as poverty, housing insecurity and family and domestic violence. One 'big thing' the Australian Government can do is reform our social security system, so there is adequate income support for people who become unemployed due to mental illness.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

- » **We can focus on early intervention – providing support before a person finds themselves in crisis.** This will require a change in how services are delivered and will need diverse, ambitious, evidence-based trial programs based on the lived experience of people experiencing mental ill-health, as well as experts.

AS A COMMUNITY

- » **We can break down the stigma around mental ill-health and asking for help.** If we treat mental illness in the same way we treat physical illness – recognising that the person with the condition is not to blame and needs appropriate support – we can change the conversation and provide an avenue for people to reach out for support.

AS INDIVIDUALS

- » **We can educate ourselves about mental illness and also about how to support someone experiencing mental ill-health.** There are many resources online, as well as specific courses (such as mental health first aid) that can help us on this journey.

Homeless & housing affordability

Homelessness is a widespread and serious issue in Australia – well over 100,000 people are homeless in Australia.¹ The risk of homelessness is highest for those who have experienced family and domestic violence, young people, children on care and protection orders, Indigenous Australians, people leaving health or social care arrangements and Australians aged 55 or older – particularly women.²

People experiencing homelessness are amongst the most socially and economically disadvantaged in our society. Homelessness leads to increased impact and complexity of existing trauma, substance use and mental ill health.³ The cost of homelessness to individuals, our community and economy is enormous and increases the longer the individual remains homeless. Homelessness is a result of systemic and structural issues, such as poverty, low income and a lack of safe, affordable housing.

Housing affordability relates to how much money a person has to spend on housing (mortgage payments or rent) relative to their household income.⁴ Any type of housing (including rental/home ownership, permanent/temporary, for-profit/non-profit) is considered affordable if it costs less than 30 per cent of household income.⁵

Access to appropriate, affordable and secure housing is the foundation of any family or individual's engagement in work, education and social relations. It's also the single most critical exit point from homelessness services. The lack of affordable housing is one of the main factors for increasing homelessness across the nation.

Housing prices in Australia have been steadily increasing since the mid-1980s, while wages and support payments have not increased at nearly the same rate.⁶ This is a significant factor driving the crisis of housing affordability.

The superficial solution to addressing homelessness and housing affordability is to just build more houses (or appropriate accommodation of any kind). Of course, it's a bit more complicated than that, but addressing housing supply, especially ensuring there are enough suitable accommodation options available, is a solid start.

Eradicating homelessness and addressing housing affordability issues are possible in Australia, but it is going to take concerted efforts.



One in 200 people are homeless on any given night.⁷



One third of people experiencing **homelessness** in Australia are **under 18 years of age**.¹⁰



Social housing, as a proportion of housing, has **dropped from 4.6 per cent to 4.2 per cent** between 2014 and 2020.⁸



Rents have increased nationally by **8.2 per cent over the 12 months** ending August 2021, the largest rise in rents since 2008.¹¹



In 2020, approximately one in three **women and children escaping family violence** seeking homelessness services were **turned away** due to a lack of accommodation.⁹



A survey considering **74,266 rental listings** showed that:¹²

- **zero per cent of rentals** were affordable for a single person on either JobSeeker or Youth Allowance anywhere in the country
- only **two per cent of rentals** were affordable for a couple living on the age pension (the most generous of government payments)



What we can do?

AS A NATION

- » **We can make a commitment to eradicate homelessness.** Making the end of homelessness a key measure of the success of governments will drive action to address the structural causes of homelessness – poverty, low income and the lack of social and affordable housing. Accountability will also encourage governments at all levels to work together.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

- » **We can focus on transparent population health and infrastructure planning.** One of the barriers to effective action is that there hasn't been enough focus on building evidence around the housing needs of Australians. There is more than enough evidence to get started on increasing social and affordable housing right now, but we also need to be looking at how to ensure that accommodation options meet the needs of the people who will actually live in them.

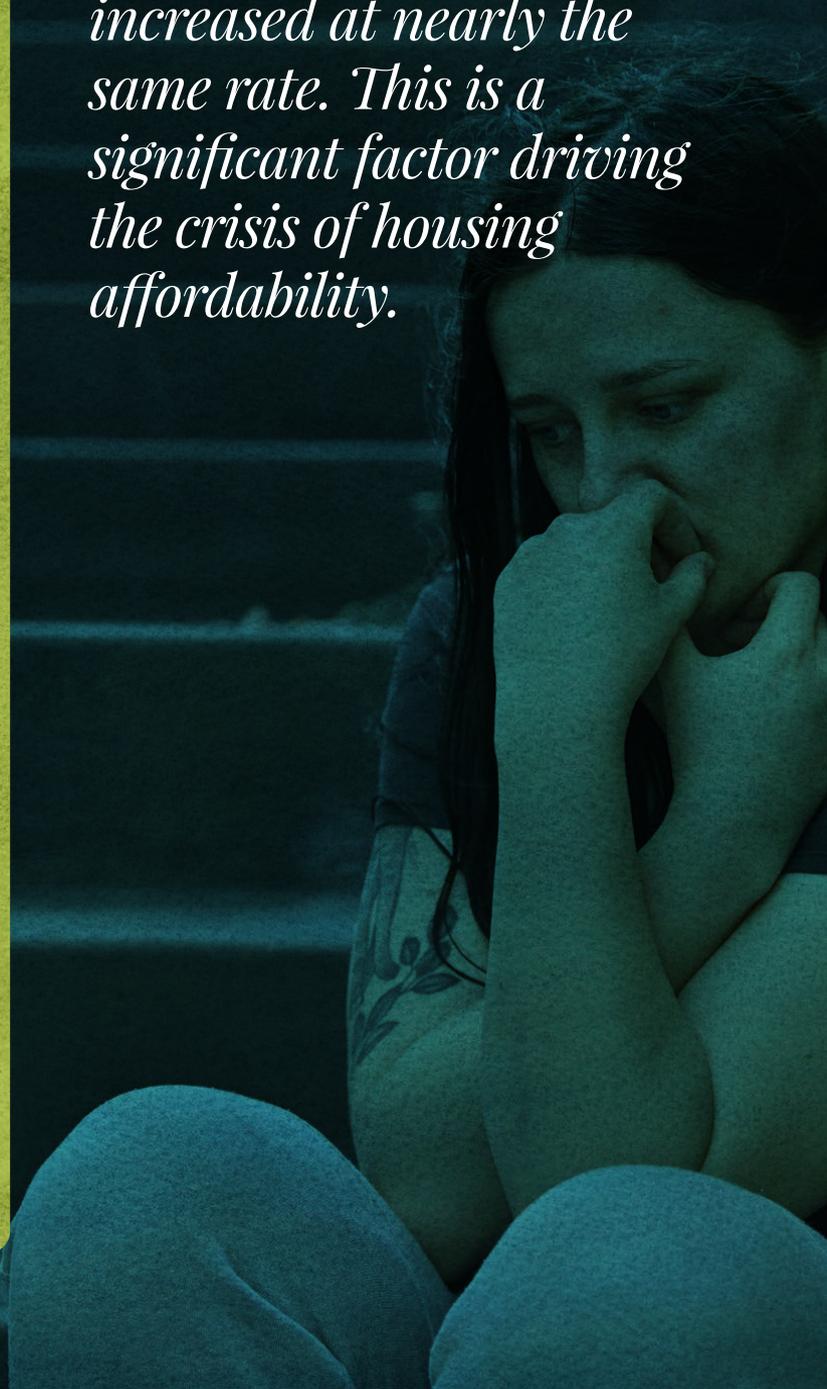
AS A COMMUNITY

- » **We can give people who are experiencing (or have experienced) homelessness a voice.** Being homeless causes such extraordinary personal stress and disengagement that survival is the individual focus, rather than advocacy for structural reform. As a community we can support groups that assist people experiencing homelessness – we can fundraise, volunteer and advocate.

AS INDIVIDUALS

- » **We can treat people experiencing homelessness or housing stress with dignity and respect.** If we see someone in the street experiencing homelessness, we can smile and have a chat. If we are in the position of owning an investment property, we can be ethical landlords.

Housing prices in Australia have been steadily increasing since the mid-1980s, while wages and support payments have not increased at nearly the same rate. This is a significant factor driving the crisis of housing affordability.



Alcohol & drug misuse



The consumption of alcohol and illicit drugs can place a heavy burden on individuals, families and society. For individuals, it can affect health, relationships, jobs and education. For the community, the cost to the community from alcohol-related harm is estimated to exceed \$14 billion annually. For illegal drugs it exceeds \$8.2 billion.¹

Alcohol and other drug related harm is both a driver for and result of other forms of disadvantage. Often a person experiencing alcohol or other drug harm is also experiencing multiple disadvantages at once. Alcohol and drug misuse itself can change an individual's brain, making it harder for them to change behaviour – even when they want to.²

Alcohol and drug misuse is widespread in Australia. Around 43 per cent of Australians aged 14 and over had illicitly used a drug at some point in their life (including pharmaceuticals used for non-medical purposes) and 16.4 per cent had used one in the last 12 months.

There is a lot we can do to address the harm that comes from alcohol and drug misuse.



It's estimated that every year in Australia:³

- **4,816 people die** from alcohol-related injuries, illness and accidents.
- **75,772 people are hospitalised** due to alcohol consumption.
- **2,070 people die** from drug-related deaths
- **More people die** from drug overdoses than die on the roads.



More than one in five Australians (21 per cent) aged 14 and over have been **verbally or physically abused** or put in fear by another person who was under the influence of alcohol.⁴



The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Australia who consume alcohol at levels that exceed lifetime risk guidelines was **18.4 per cent in 2018–19**. Over the same period, **23 per cent** of Indigenous Australians had **used an illicit drug** in the last 12 months.⁵

What we can do?

AS A NATION

- » **We can invest in harm reduction.** This means that we focus on solutions to mitigate the problems that come with misuse. In doing this, we need to acknowledge that alcohol and drug misuse often occur alongside other forms of disadvantage, so we need to ensure that policy responses are tailored and culturally appropriate.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

- » **We can take a local approach that protects vulnerable people and communities.** We need to understand local populations to provide accessible and effective alcohol and other drug treatment systems. Such systems need to be situated within the wider welfare support response to create pathways and services that better engage, maintain and successfully exit people from treatment.

AS A COMMUNITY

- » **We can provide social connection that is not reliant on alcohol or drug use.** Community groups can ensure their events and activities are supportive and accepting as a way to create pathways for people to build hopeful, purposeful and meaningful lives.

AS INDIVIDUALS

- » **We can recognise that alcohol and drug misuse are health issues that take great effort and courage to seek help with.** We can listen carefully and connect with people experiencing alcohol and drug misuse, and reduce the stigma associated with alcohol and other drug misuse.

Family & domestic violence



Family and domestic violence is a major health and welfare issue in Australia that can have lifelong impacts for both victim-survivors and perpetrators. It affects all people of all ages and from all backgrounds, but mainly women and children.

Family violence is not always physical. Financial abuse, verbal abuse, emotional abuse or coercive control can be less obvious but just as harmful as physical violence. All these forms of abuse cause immediate and lasting harm to victim-survivors as well as others, especially children, who witness it.

In the last year family and domestic violence has been labelled as the 'shadow pandemic'.¹

Gender inequality and inequity in Australia provide the underlying conditions for violence against women. Many of the drivers of family violence are 'societal' and how we, as a community and as individuals, respond to gender inequity and gender stereotypes can be a powerful force for change.



Almost a quarter of Australian women have **experienced violence** from a current or former partner.



On average in Australia, **one woman every week is murdered** by her current or former partner.²



One in three women with disability experienced **emotional abuse** from a partner.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are **35 times more** likely to experience **family violence** than non-Indigenous women and **32 times more** likely to be **hospitalised** because of injuries caused by violence.

What we can do?

AS A NATION

- » **We can ensure that when a victim-survivor seeks help, they receive it.**

This means that there is sufficient funding for supports and also that supports allow victim-survivors to be physically safe while continuing to be employed, pursue education and be connected. When someone leaves a violent situation, they need somewhere to go.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

- » **We can make sure that first responders receive the training and support they need to identify family violence and provide appropriate support.**

Sometimes family violence is difficult to identify. Sometimes victim-survivors are even misidentified as the perpetrators of violence. First responders have a difficult task, and they need sufficient support.

AS A COMMUNITY

- » **We can have safe but challenging conversations about family violence.**

Having these conversations can equip us with the tools and resources to understand the nature of family and domestic violence as a pattern of behaviours over time. They can also demonstrate to victim-survivors that they are not alone, and they are not to blame.

AS INDIVIDUALS

- » **We can challenge our own ideas and language around family violence and question when others use language that minimises or excuses violence within the family or home.**

Everyone can call out negative behaviour. It's important to do so in a manner that doesn't shame the victim, but you can always say 'that's not ok'.

Poverty & financial hardship



Australia is a wealthy country, but there are still millions of Australians who experience financial hardship and poverty. For a person in poverty, every decision is filtered through the lens of survival. Some of the choices can be as extreme as choosing between affording rent and paying electricity bills or choosing between medications and having food for dinner that night. In this context, it is extremely difficult to prioritise social connection – even though we know that social connection is critical for wellbeing.

Some Australians are in what we call ‘intergenerational poverty’ – they’re in financial hardship because their parents were in financial hardship and, without intervention, it’s highly likely their children will have the same experience.

Even short-term, circumstantial poverty can become a trap. Financial stress can draw people into unsustainable debt, it can impact on a person’s ability to gain or maintain employment and it can make it significantly harder to escape harmful situations such as domestic or family violence.

There are many contributors to poverty in Australia, including insecure and casualised work, housing stress and rising costs of living. Probably the biggest contributor though is the fact that welfare payments in Australia are set well below any recognised poverty line. The level of income support is so low that a person who is reliant on it doesn’t have scope to meet both basic needs and plan for the future. A person dependent on welfare risks long-term

unemployment, social isolation, entrenched poverty and intergenerational disadvantage simply because the rate of JobSeeker and Youth Allowance is too low.

The upside of that is there are concrete actions we can take to eradicate poverty in Australia.



In Australia, more than **3.24 million people** or **13.6 per cent** of the population live below the poverty line.¹ Of this, **774,000 children**, or **one in six children**, are in poverty.²



The poverty rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is **31 per cent**, while poverty is twice as high in very remote communities (**54 per cent**) as in major cities (**24 per cent**).



Estimates suggest that between **22 per cent to 32 per cent** of the Indigenous population are food insecure.³



In 2019, nearly one in five households (**19.5 per cent**) were unable to raise **\$2,000** within a week for something important. There were also more households in 2019 that experienced a cash flow problem in the previous 12 months compared to 2014 (**21.8 per cent compared to 19.3 per cent**).⁴



968,000 people or **38 per cent** of the 2.6 million people living in poverty (excluding self-employed people) came from households where wages were the main source of income. This is an increase from the **32 per cent** of people in poverty in the 2013–14 statistics.⁵

What we can do?

AS A NATION

- » **We can increase social security payments to allow people reliant on them to live with dignity.** More generally we can make eradicating poverty a stated goal and critical success measure for governments in Australia.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

- » **We can focus on expanding the supply of social, community and affordable housing.** Secure housing is the foundation for other supports to help people out of poverty.

AS A COMMUNITY

- » **We can be sensitive to the prevalence and stress of financial hardship for the people around us.** With over 3.2 million Australians

living in poverty, it’s highly likely that members of our community groups are experiencing financial stress. Ensuring that our social activities are financially accessible (such as by offering free tickets, bursaries or non-financial options for contributing) could be the difference between someone in financial stress being able to participate or not.

AS INDIVIDUALS

- » **We can give to or volunteer for groups that are working to support people in poverty.** This is such a big problem that it can feel overwhelming but, there is already so much great work being done that we can get involved with. There are local and national groups working in this space who would welcome any support we can give.

Unemployment & underemployment



Employment underpins the economic output of a nation and enables people to support themselves, their families and their communities. In September 2021, Australia's unemployment stood at 4.5 per cent,¹ however this figure doesn't tell the whole story. People who are underemployed but work 'one hour of paid work per week' aren't counted as unemployed. People who are not employed but have given up actively looking for work also don't count in this figure.

Unemployment, underemployment and casualised employment can be a major source of stress that has the potential to compromise the health and wellbeing of individuals. The current JobSeeker payment is set at an unsustainably low level and forces many people to forego necessities or enter into debt.

Currently in Australia about 750,000 people are 'long-term unemployed', meaning they have been on unemployment payments of 12 months or longer. The longer a person is unemployed, the more their employment prospects diminish,² and the more likely they are to experience heightened levels of anxiety, depression and hopelessness.

Underemployment and long-term unemployment are the biggest challenges Australia faces in building an inclusive COVID-19 recovery in which no one is left behind, yet the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have not fallen with equal severity on all shoulders.³ Low paid workers, many of whom are women, have been exposed to the full health and employment effects of the crisis, resulting in lower workforce participation rates than men and the additional stresses of at home child-care and schooling.⁴



The two main unemployment benefits: **JobSeeker Payment** (\$391pw including Rent Assistance for a single adult) and **Youth Allowance, unemployed** (\$331pw) are the lowest in the OECD for individuals who have recently become unemployed.⁵



Only **48 per cent** of people with disability are employed, compared to **79 per cent** without disability.⁶



Recent research reveals there are **27 jobseekers** competing for each entry-level job.⁷



In March 2021, an estimated **376,287 people** receiving JobSeeker Payment were defined as having partial capacity to work. **Over 60 per cent** of these people were **aged over 45 years**. Most were on JobSeeker Payment long term.

What we can do?

AS A NATION

» **We can action the commitment to full employment as an urgent policy priority.**

This would mean that those who are available, able and actively seeking work can obtain it, including addressing structural and systemic barriers that prevent people from participating fully in the workforce, including gender pay gap and the casualisation of the workforce.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

» **We can implement state-based programs and engage with local expertise to find pathways for people who are unemployed or underemployed into new employment opportunities.**

Working alongside the Australian government, state and territory governments can promote features of innovative funding and grant arrangements, such as 'social procurement' options.

AS A COMMUNITY

» **We can encourage and facilitate opportunities for people who are unemployed to learn new skills.**

Community-based organisations can seek out and welcome unemployed and underemployed people into their activities as volunteers, as well as provide work-related skills, experience and mentoring.

AS INDIVIDUALS

» **We can listen to people's experiences of unemployment and underemployment.**

We can make sure we aren't judging people for being unemployed.



The level of carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere acts as a blanket and has led to an increase of one degree Celsius since preindustrial times.¹ This has led to:

- » **More frequent and extreme heatwaves and bushfires**
- » **More evaporation and therefore more rain**
- » **Rising sea levels due to melting polar ice caps**
- » **Coral bleaching and death, as over 90 per cent of the increased heat is stored in the oceans.²**

Research shows that climate change impacts go beyond the environmental impacts. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts with a 'very high' level of confidence that climate change will have strong impacts on health, including those resulting from lack of access to clean water and sanitation, changes to spread in diseases, increased natural disasters and poverty.³

We are already experiencing this in Australia, and it's expected to get worse.⁴

Responses to climate change need to both address emissions and allow for adaptation to the changes that are already happening. Unfortunately, people already experiencing disadvantage are more likely to be impacted negatively both by climate change and by measures to adapt. This is because people who are already disadvantaged are less able to prepare for the impact (such as those experiencing poverty being less able to afford energy costs of maintaining a healthy home or modifications to achieve energy efficiency).



Following **COP26**, the Australian Government forecast achievement of a **35 per cent** cut in emissions by 2030, however Australia's actual 2030 emissions reduction target remains unchanged at between **26–28 per cent**.



Current state and territory interim targets combined translate to an estimated **37–42 per cent** reduction on 2005 emissions Australia-wide by 2030. While this is short of what is needed, it's higher than Australia's Paris commitment for 2030 of **26–28 per cent** below 2005 levels.



Research suggests that to remain within the **remaining '1.5°'** carbon budget, Australia's targets would need to be **74 per cent below** 2005 levels by 2030 and net **zero emissions** by 2035.⁵

What we can do?

AS A NATION

- » **We can be a champion of ambitious climate action in a way that supports the people most vulnerable to climate change.** We need to do this by pursuing a path that scales up Australia's 2030 emissions reduction target, while including measures that strengthen the resilience of communities and support people and the services they rely on to adapt to the effects of climate change.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

- » **We can facilitate change in the private sector, especially in attracting investment into renewable technologies.** Government policies around standards, taxes and incentives are a decisive force in driving corporate behaviour and can encourage investment, as well as target specific sources of emissions.

AS A COMMUNITY

- » **We can take action in our local spaces to both lower our own impact and build resilience.** We can plant climate-friendly food and native gardens, organise clean up working bees, join or start community monitoring programs of plants and animals, or engage in resilience planning if our local community is at particular risk.

AS INDIVIDUALS

- » **We can minimise waste, recycle and reuse everyday items, shop ethically and sustainably.** Small changes, implemented consistently by many of us together, can have a huge impact.

Social isolation & loneliness



Over the past two years, Australians have been put under significant strain. The necessary steps to keep people safe throughout the COVID-19 pandemic have led to many becoming isolated from their social communities and experiencing feelings of loneliness. Although a huge effort was made to move activities online and maintain connection despite lockdowns, not everyone felt connected and included.

Of course, social isolation and loneliness did not start with COVID-19. It has been a growing issue in Australia for some time, but it is largely hidden and not well understood.

We do know that people who are lonely have a higher risk of developing mental ill-health, particularly depression and anxiety. This can start a feedback loop, as people who are anxious or feeling depressed may isolate themselves further as a coping mechanism. Loneliness can have other implications too, including poorer physical health, pain and sleep disorders and even gastrointestinal disease.



Lonely Australians are **15.2 per cent** more likely to be depressed and **13 per cent** more likely to be anxious.¹



Recent statistics suggest **55% of respondents** had felt lonely since the start of the pandemic in 2020.²



Men are twice as likely to experience isolation and loneliness (**males 38 per cent to female 18 per cent**) and those that live alone are significantly more likely to experience loneliness.³

What we can do?

AS A NATION

- » **We can elevate addressing social isolation and loneliness as a policy priority.**

Other nations have created a ministerial portfolio for the issue of loneliness. Such a role in Australia could lead a national discourse on the issue and help drive action across all parts of our society.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

- » **We can make sure that service delivery is holistic and focuses on wellbeing.** As many of us access government services, there is an opportunity to design and implement services in a way that strengthens social connection, rather than pushing people experiencing family and domestic violence, homelessness, substance use and mental ill-health into isolation and loneliness.

AS A COMMUNITY

- » **We are in the driver's seat for addressing social isolation and loneliness.** This might involve dedicated outreach to attract more participants to events or activities or checking in and building deeper connections with currently active members. To really foster connection, social programs need to be both welcoming to a broad cohort, but also flexible and adaptable to the needs of a specific community.

AS INDIVIDUALS

- » **We can reach out.** If we're open to building a connection with new people and are welcoming of new people into our circles, we can make a huge difference to the social connection of the people in our lives.

Racism & discrimination



Racism can take many forms and includes “prejudice, discrimination or hatred directed at someone because of their colour, ethnicity or national origin”.¹ Racism can be overt (where disadvantage against a particular group is openly enacted or spoken about), covert (where it is subtle such as a ‘joke’ or when seemingly universal rules only actually affect one group) or structural (where processes or systems either purposely or inadvertently disadvantage a particular group).

Unfortunately, racism is a common occurrence in Australia. While legislation protects against discrimination based on race, many people experience racism daily. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, migrants and refugees often experience racism at a higher rate than the general population. Racist attitudes and behaviours often become more pronounced, and less veiled, according to topical and current affairs in Australian society. This can sometimes lead to an increase in racial discrimination against specific groups in society at a given time. Sadly, we have seen examples of this during the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the heart of racism is the failure to recognise that we are all inherently equal and valuable, so that is where we need to start in addressing racism.



A recent study by the Australian Human Rights Commission identified that **20 per cent** of Australians have **experienced racism** in the form of race **hate talk** and about **5 per cent** have been **attacked** because of their race.²



7 in 10 students report having **experienced racism** during their childhood.³



In Australia, the **Racial Discrimination Act 1975** exists to bring equality between all people regardless of their race, colour, descent or place of origin.⁴ It’s against the law to discriminate on the basis of “age, disability, race, sex, intersex status, gender identity or sexual orientation in certain areas of public life”.⁵

What we can do?

AS A NATION

- » **We can ensure that the voice of culturally diverse peoples is not only heard, but valued, in policy formation.** This might provide opportunities that focus on all-of-society cohesion, as well as ways to strengthen protections against racial discrimination.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

- » **We can address laws and policies that allow structural racism to remain.** States and territories can undertake law reform where laws are implemented in a way that leads to racist outcomes (such as raising the age of criminal responsibility) and operational decisions that lead to disadvantage due to cultural background (such as the provision of enhanced medical facilities so Aboriginal women can give birth on Country where safe to do so). Valuing culturally diverse voices in the policy process would help determine where priority action needs to be taken.

AS A COMMUNITY

- » **We can examine whether our own structures lead to racial disadvantage.** Some of the organisations we are involved with may have developed their rules and policies a long time ago and it may be that they need a refresh. Involving people from diverse backgrounds in this reconsideration is a great way to avoid inadvertently perpetuating racism.

AS INDIVIDUALS

- » **We can challenge our own ideas and language around other cultures.** We can also question when others use language that minimises or discriminates against another person.

Older Australians discrimination & hardship

Older Australians generally live longer and healthier lives than those in earlier generations, but many older people still experience considerable hardship. Older people (65 years plus) are especially at risk of falling into poverty, homelessness and housing insecurity. The single Aged Pension, with additional supplements is around \$25,000.¹ With the high cost of living in Australia, this amount leaves many in need. Home ownership is the most important determinant of the wellbeing of people on the full Aged Pension², and about 14 per cent of pensioners who don't own their home say they have suffered financial hardship – for example, they skipped meals, did not heat their home or were unable to pay bills on time.³

Access to appropriate aged care can also be especially difficult for groups already experiencing disadvantage or discrimination, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) peoples, Veterans of the Australian Defence Force and their families, older people living in rural or remote areas, those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, older women in private rental accommodation and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual and other sexuality and gender diverse (LGBTQIA+) people.

Older Australians can also face ageism which remains the most accepted form of prejudice in Australia.⁴ Ageism has economic costs, with recent research suggesting that an extra three per cent in workforce participation by

people aged 55 years and over would lead to a \$33 billion boost to Australia's GDP.⁵ Older Australians are also one of the groups most vulnerable to loneliness, marked by transitional life changes that can increase the risk of, or act as a trigger for loneliness, especially for older men.

Older Australians have made, and continue to make, an enormous contribution to Australian society and we need to ensure they can live with dignity in their retirement years.



In 2017, there were **3.8 million** Australians aged **65 and over** (15 per cent of the total population). The number and proportion of older Australians is expected to continue to grow with the population of older people expected to comprise **8.8 million people** (or 22 per cent of the population) by 2057.⁶



Apart from income, a major indicator of poverty in Australia is age. In Australia, the poverty rate for those over 65 years is **19.5 per cent**, rising to **28.7 per cent** for those over 75 years.⁷



A third of older Australians have experienced some form of age-related discrimination, most commonly as employment-related discrimination.⁸

What we can do?

AS A NATION

- » **We can provide adequate funding for the care of older people.** This involves ensuring there is appropriate health, aged care and social services, with wrap-around supports that allow all people to age 'in place' where they feel safe and connected.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

- » **We can develop programs for older Australians informed by lived experience and evidence-informed research about the needs of older Australians.** These might include education around digital literacy and safety, accessible transport, financial literacy, elder abuse, social connection and loneliness, training to (re) enter the workforce and increased volunteerism.

AS A COMMUNITY

- » **We can reduce stigma associated with ageing.** We can do this by providing welcoming spaces for older Australians that are inclusive of their many varied roles in society, including as carers, grandparents, mentors and volunteers.

AS INDIVIDUALS

- » **We can connect with older people in our community.** This might be to offer help when needed (like mowing the lawn or picking up groceries) but could also be to learn from and enjoy the company of our elders.

Gambling harm



Gambling harm is any adverse consequence related to gambling activity that affects the health or wellbeing of an individual, family unit, community or population.¹

Gambling, like any other addiction, is a chronic disease, not a personal weakness or a moral failing. Gambling harm is not limited only to those who gamble at risky levels or compulsively. It's also experienced by the family and friends of those who gamble (even if not compulsively) and the wider community.² Gambling harm might include relationship difficulties, health problems, emotional or psychological distress, financial problems, issues with work or study, cultural problems and criminal activity.³ Australians spend more per person on gambling than any other country in the world (almost double that of New Zealand).⁴ More money is spent on gambling than on other activities that can be addictive and dangerous including alcohol, tobacco and all illegal drugs.⁵

For every person who gambles in a harmful way in our country, another seven are directly impacted, including family and friends, causing a multiplying impact of 'affected others' within communities.⁶



Australians **lost \$25 billion** on gambling in 2018–19. This means that **\$1,277 was lost** on gambling per person in that year.⁷



Approximately **9.9 million** Australians gamble regularly.⁸

- **42.6 per cent** play the lottery or scratchies (losing \$2.5 billion annually).
- **11.9 per cent** play poker machines (losing \$8.7 billion annually).
- **10.4 per cent** participate in betting (losing \$4.2 billion annually).
- **55.2 per cent** who participate in betting do so online.



The COVID-19 pandemic increased online gambling activity in Australia:⁹

- Approximately **1 in 3 people** signed up for a new online betting account during 2020 lockdowns.
- People who gambled **4 or more** times per week rose from **3 per cent to 32 per cent** between June and July 2020.
- Men aged 18–34 **lost \$1,075 per month**, up from \$687 over the same period.

What we can do?

AS A NATION

» **We can take a public health and holistic approach to gambling harm.** This would involve ensuring that gambling harm minimisation, prevention and consumer protections are at the centre of any gambling-related legislation and policy across the country. It would also involve regulation to reduce the proliferation of gambling advertising and gambling products.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

» **We can focus efforts on consumer protections.** This might involve reducing availability of poker machines in the most stressed communities, identifying gambling behaviour that could lead to harm and providing proactive interventions, including better training for staff at gambling venues. For some states and territories, it may involve reducing the government's own reliance on gambling revenue.

AS A COMMUNITY

» **We can be aware, and raise awareness, of the considerable harm that comes from gambling.** Being sensitive to the possibility that members might be experiencing gambling harm might lead a community group to avoid gaming venues for social events or forego 'office sweeps' on sporting matches.

AS INDIVIDUALS

» **We can support people experiencing gambling harm and suffering the stigma attached to it.** We can recognise that a person exhibiting concerning addictive behaviour around gambling is dealing with a health issue and not a personal weakness.

Youth unemployment



Young people are active agents of change and key actors in society. Unfortunately, many young people in our country do not get a great start in life, facing numerous challenges that are beyond their control and that affect their development.

Youth unemployment has been increasing over the last few years in Australia. Even when employed, many young people are also underemployed, or working in casual and part-time jobs, but wanting or needing more stable, full-time work.¹ Poor employment prospects can substantially impact a young person's wellbeing. Being unemployed can limit access to a wide range of services and opportunities, including housing, transportation and covering basic needs. Unemployment at a young age can also lead to poverty, exposing young people to isolation and exclusion from society, and can significantly reduce the person's long-term potential in life.²

Unemployment barriers amongst young people are often linked to social and economic disadvantage, primarily the lack of a stable home, lack of training or skills development, the absence of entry-level employment opportunities and disengagement with education in general.³ The extremely low rate of the Youth Allowance payment means that employment, or access to intergenerational wealth, is the only way to avoid poverty.



Unemployment among young people aged 15–24 reached a **23-year high** (since 1997) of **16.4 per cent** in July 2020, an increase from **12 per cent** (or 264,000) in 2019. This represents approximately 337,224 young Australians unable to find work. With these figures, youth unemployment is higher than the post-GFC peak of **14.4 per cent** in 2014.⁴



If we combine unemployment and underemployment for young people, this results in one in 3 young people in the labour force **unable to get enough hours of work** to make ends meet.⁵



Research before the COVID-19 pandemic showed that **1.2 million** Australians under the age of 24 are living in poverty. This represents **37 per cent** of the total population living in poverty in Australia, estimated at **3.24 million**.⁶



On any given night in Australia, **116,427** Australians are homeless. **27,680** of these are young people aged 12–24 years.⁷

What we can do?

AS A NATION

- » **We can ensure that our policies will lead to equitable outcomes for young people, irrespective of their start in life.**

Prioritise the development of a more effective national employment placement, support and workplace training model to facilitate young people into suitable, sustainable work.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

- » **We can develop social policies that place young people at the centre, listening to young people's needs.**

This means that resources, supports and interventions need to be tailored, flexible and responsive to the actual needs and experience of each young person.

AS A COMMUNITY

- » **We can help prepare young people for adulthood.** We can seek out the insights, experiences and skills of young people, particularly those from disadvantaged cohorts, when making decisions or choosing leaders. In this way we can help mentor and support young people in their aspirations.

AS INDIVIDUALS

- » **We can celebrate young people as active agents of change and key actors in society.** We can treat and listen to young people with the dignity and respect they deserve.



Gender inequality & inequity



Gender inequality is a social condition that stems from the unequal value placed on men and women. Although women make up over half the population in Australia, they are underrepresented in almost all places of influence. Across all positions, women are paid less than men and they are also disproportionately more likely to be doing unpaid work at home. Gender inequality also provides the underlying conditions for violence against women.

We need gender equality urgently. Gender equality prevents violence against women and girls and is essential for economic prosperity. Gender equality and women's economic security will benefit boys and men too, through increased personal wellbeing, happier relationship quality, greater economic growth and more peaceful societies.¹

Societies that value all genders equally are safer and healthier – it's in everyone's interests to achieve gender equality.



Australian women retire, on average, with **less than 60 per cent** of the super that men retire with.



Australia's full-time gender pay gap is **13.4 per cent**, with women earning an **average \$242.20 per week** less than men.



The World Economic Forum annual global gender gap index indicates that Australia's overall pay gap has **worsened from 23rd position** in 2010 to 50th in 2021.



The 'typical' Australian man spends fewer than 5 hours a week doing housework, but the typical Australian woman does between **5 and 14 hours**.



In 2019, the Workplace Gender Equality Agency reported that only around **17.1 per cent** of CEOs or heads of business were women.

What we can do?

AS A NATION

- » **We can actively implement policies that promote women's independence and decision-making both in public and private.** For example, some countries have explored ways of encouraging men to increase their use of paternity leave when their child is born – the increased use of paternity leave has seen a more equal division of labour in the home and better for parents and children.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

- » **We can tackle the gender pay gap.** State and territory governments can set an example by ensuring equitable paid leave and superannuation arrangements for public sector workers, so that informal care and pregnancy don't lead to long-term disadvantage.

AS A COMMUNITY

- » **We can model gender equity.** Community groups can look to own leadership and decision-making structures and ensure that women have an equal place at the table. Community groups can also take a zero-tolerance approach to sexism and misogyny within our own membership.

AS INDIVIDUALS

- » **We can challenge our own unconscious bias that allows for gender inequality to foster in our own lives.** All individuals, irrespective of gender, need to call out sexism – both overt and covert. We can challenge language and images that suggest that women are less than men.

Disability discrimination & hardship



Approximately one in six Australians live with disability.¹ A person might have an impairment (physical, sensory, intellectual or psychosocial), but this is only a disability when our society makes it one. That means when our community is organised in such a way that that impairment means a person is not able to participate in society fully.

Barriers that people with disability experience include issues with physically accessing a space but can also include barriers to effective communication (information not provided in a suitable form, such as an easy English translation or live captions in a meeting), absence of support (such as personal care support or an assistance animal) or even discrimination (such as deliberately excluding a person because of their impairment or because making an adjustment would be inconvenient).

When people with disability are denied the opportunity to fully participate – socially, politically and economically – our whole society misses out, not just the individual who is being excluded.

These barriers can also make people with disability more vulnerable to other forms of disadvantage and sometimes, they make people with disability more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. We need to address this vulnerability by removing barriers to participation and providing support necessary to ensure people with disability are treated with the respect and dignity that all people deserve.



People with disability experience **higher rates of violence**, abuse and neglect than people without disability. **47 per cent** of adults with disability have experienced violence compared with **36 per cent** of those without disability. Evidence also shows that people with intellectual disabilities are 'significantly' more likely to experience sexual abuse.²



People with disability are more likely to leave school at younger ages and to have a **lower level of educational** attainment. **34 per cent** of people aged 20 and over with disability have completed year 12, whereas **66 per cent** of people without disability have completed Year 12.



48 per cent of people aged 15–64 with a **disability are employed**. This is significantly lower than those without disability (80 per cent).³

What we can do?

AS A NATION

- » **We can redesign government services to ensure both equity of access and equity of experience for people with disability.**

This is particularly the case for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders with a disability. We should also recognise the great contribution of carers.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

- » **We can ensure that all services (not just specialist disability services) are designed with and for people with disability.** There

needs to be a focus on inclusion and belonging – not separation – recognising that all people benefit when all abilities are recognised and celebrated.

AS A COMMUNITY

- » **We can include people with disability in decision-making and leadership roles**, recognising the huge contribution people with disability can and do make to the community. Doing this will ensure that community groups are accessible and safe for people with disability to participate fully.

AS INDIVIDUALS

- » **We can be an ally to people with disability.** It's important to view people (friends, colleagues and strangers) through their strengths, not their disability.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are part of the oldest living culture in the world, but they are also amongst the most disadvantaged Australians. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities experience lower life expectancy and poorer health outcomes, while encountering higher rates of infant and maternal mortality, family and domestic violence, suicide and incarceration.

There are both historical and current contributors to this disadvantage and the experience of colonialism and suppression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures has an ongoing negative effect on people from these cultures. Many of the drivers of disadvantage are systemic and structural. This means that as well as addressing disadvantage as it's experienced, we also need to address the underlying structures that lead to discrimination and hardship.

In Australia, successive governments have committed to 'closing the gap' between outcomes experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and those enjoyed by non-Indigenous Australians. The most recent report from the Government showed that much more work is needed in order to meet the target of closing the gap by 2030.

Indigenous people have shared a pathway with us to address this social justice issue – now we need to walk along it.



Although Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults make up around two per cent of the national population, they constitute **27 per cent** of the **national prison population**.



Indigenous youth are **22 times more** like to be in juvenile detention than non-Indigenous youth.



Rates of out-of-home care for Indigenous children have almost **tripled in the past 15 years**.²

What we can do?

AS A NATION

» **We can implement the recommendations of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.**¹

This involves creating a constitutionally enshrined Indigenous Voice to the Parliament and Makarrata Commission. On a very practical level, we can also increase cooperation and cross-sectoral funding for the full implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

» **We can address laws, policies and systems that perpetuate disadvantage.** This is

most urgently needed in the criminal justice system (such as raising the age of criminal responsibility), but we can also ensure that services, such as health and educational resources, are culturally appropriate, accessible and fit for purpose for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

AS A COMMUNITY

» **We can be respectful of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and wisdom.** We can include Welcome to

Country/Acknowledgement of Country in our gatherings and ensure that our events and activities are actively welcoming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and delivered in a culturally safe way.

AS INDIVIDUALS

» **We can commit to learning more about the shared history of this land – even when that history is challenging or painful.** We can then use that knowledge

to show support and respect, such as using Indigenous place names or supporting Indigenous organisations, businesses and events.

Opportunities for Children



Children have a right to a full life and the early years of a child's life provide the foundation for future health, development and wellbeing. According to the five Australian Early Development Census (AECDC) domains, around one in five Australian children are developmentally vulnerable by the time they start school, and these children are overrepresented in the most disadvantaged settings.¹

There is a strong correlation between poverty in the first thousand days of a child's life and adverse health and wellbeing outcomes in later life² including poor educational and employment outcomes. Families who attract the attention of child protection services most often have ongoing lived experiences of poverty, domestic and family violence, substance misuse and mental health conditions. Indigenous children are faced with additional hardships and children with disability have nearly four times higher risk of experiencing violence than children without disability.³

Children have so much potential. To address this social justice issue we need to provide the foundation for that potential to be realised.



In 2020, (based on pre-COVID-19 research), almost **one in six children** up to the age of fifteen years (17.7 per cent) **were living in material poverty**,⁴ not including opportunity or relational poverty.



At 30 June 2018, just over **45,800 children** were in out-of-home care in Australia. Indigenous children are **11 times more likely** to be in out-of-home care than non-Indigenous children⁵ and approximately **14 per cent of children** in out-of-home care were reported as having a disability.



The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on children and young people. **46 per cent of Australian children** and young people are at risk of adverse effects by being physically disconnected from school and **youth employment dropped to 67 per cent** at August 2021⁶.

What we can do?

AS A NATION

- » **We can uphold the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.** This will include platforms for children to express their views (voice) equally as adults and freely on all matters affecting them. We can also implement child-centred policies and programs (not just for parents and families), including those that provide early intervention and prevention support for the first five years of a child's life.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

- » **We can provide funding for programs that provide specialist and safe – including culturally safe – support for children.** For example, we can provide child support workers, including for families experiencing family and domestic violence and young

parents. We can also better coordinate services used by children and families (schools, health and community centres), especially in communities that are most disadvantaged.

AS A COMMUNITY

- » **We can design and invest in community spaces for children.** Soft-entry spaces can provide a 'hub' for community connection and targeted support which are more effective in delivering outcomes for disadvantaged children.

AS INDIVIDUALS

- » **We treat children as fully realised people.** We can see the children around us. Smile and be genuinely curious. We can seek out connections with children in spaces that are safe, appealing and welcoming to children.

Treatment of refugees & asylum seekers



The United Nations defines a refugee as “any person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country”. An asylum seeker is a person who is seeking protection as a refugee and is still waiting to have their claim assessed. Australia is a signatory to the UN Convention and Protocol that provides a framework for the protection and fair treatment of all people seeking asylum.

Data from the United Nations Human Rights Council indicates that at least 82.4 million people around the world have been forced to flee their homes at the end of 2020, including 26.4 million formally recognised refugees.¹ While Australia has consistently resettled refugees and asylum seekers, the number it accepts is low compared to many of our OECD counterparts.² Some experts have also raised concerns around whether the ways in which Australia assesses and treats asylum seekers is consistent with the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

The numbers and nationalities of people seeking asylum can vary significantly and dramatically with changing political realities. Those nations who can accommodate refugees, including Australia, need to have programs and services that remain agile in responding to the humanitarian crises that often follow political instability, totalitarianism and war.



One in every 97 people globally has fled their home as a result of conflict or persecution.³



42 per cent of all refugees are children aged under 18 years old.⁴



Between January 2009 and December 2018, Australia recognised or resettled almost **181,000 refugees**. This represented **0.89 per cent** of the 20.3 million refugees recognised globally over that period. Australia's total contribution for the decade was ranked 25th overall, 29th per capita and 54th relative to national GDP.⁵

What we can do?

AS A NATION

- » **We can ensure humane standards of treatment and conditions for refugees and asylum seekers in line with relevant international conventions and commitments.** This includes ensuring that having a status of refugee or asylum seeker does not make a person more vulnerable to other forms of harm, such as family violence. We can also increase Australian intakes and actively resettle refugees in Australia, with appropriate support.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

- » **We can focus on social cohesion and support.** We can offer grants and programs that promote social cohesion, education opportunities and safe, affordable housing when refugees and asylum seekers are based in the community.

AS A COMMUNITY

- » **We can create welcoming spaces and events that actively include refugees and asylum seekers.** If it's appropriate, we could even sponsor refugee families to settle in local communities.

AS INDIVIDUALS

- » **We can be friends.** We can intentionally engage with refugees and asylum seekers when our paths cross and provide opportunities, where possible, for employment, training and social interaction. We can speak up when we hear or see racism or bias against refugees and asylum seekers.

LGBTIQA+ community disadvantage



Although Australia has made progress toward equality and equity for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual and other sexuality and gender diverse (LGBTIQA+) people, there's still a really long way to go. It has been illegal to discriminate against any person on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status since 2013, but the fact is that discrimination still occurs.

Many LGBTIQA+ people live healthy and happy lives. Research demonstrates that a disproportionate number experience poorer mental health outcomes and have higher risk of suicidal behaviours than their non-LGBTIQA+ peers. Compared to the general population, LGBTIQA+ people are more likely to have attempted suicide, had suicidal ideation and engaged in self-harm in their lifetime. These health outcomes are directly related to experiences of stigma, prejudice, discrimination and abuse on the basis of being LGBTIQA+.¹

At the heart of disadvantage for LGBTIQA+ people is the failure by some people in our society to recognise that we're all inherently equal and valuable. Addressing this social justice issue needs to start from a recognition of the inherent worth of LGBTIQA+ people.



LGBTIQA+ people **aged 16–17** were almost **three times more** likely to have attempted suicide in the past 12 months and almost five times more likely to have attempted suicide in their lifetime.



Transgender people **aged 14–25** are **15 times more** likely to have attempted suicide.



71 per cent of LGBTIQA+ people **aged 16–27** indicated that they did not use a crisis support service during their most recent personal or mental health crisis. Of this group, **32.6 per cent** indicated that their decision was due to anticipated discrimination.²



Over **23 per cent** of LGBTIQA+ people **aged 14–21** have experienced one or more forms of homelessness in their lifetime and **11.5 per cent** had this experience in the past 12 months.³



Over 41 per cent of LGBTIQA+ people aged 18 and over reported having ever been in an intimate relationship where they felt they were abused in some way by their partner/s and **38.5 per cent** of LGBTIQA+ people **aged 18 and over** reported ever feeling abused by a family member.⁴

What we can do?

AS A NATION

- » **We can ensure that the national conversation about human rights, discrimination and religious freedoms recognises the inherent value and equality of people irrespective of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status.** This recognition flows to a commitment to appropriate research and data collection (such as through the Census) to inform policy and ensure that LGBTIQA+ people are included in all policy discussions that impact them.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

- » **We can address the laws and policies that allow discrimination against LGBTIQA+ people to remain.** We can ensure that all services funded by government are inclusive, non-judgmental and accessible for LGBTIQA+ people. We can reform laws that perpetuate hardship, such as criminalising all change and suppression (gay conversion) practices.

AS A COMMUNITY

- » **We can make sure that our community spaces and groups are welcoming and safe for all people, irrespective of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status.** We can also reassess whether places that currently legally exclude LGBTIQA+ people (such as for religious reasons) should continue to do so and acknowledge the significant pain that exclusion causes.

AS INDIVIDUALS

- » **We can treat all people with love, respect and dignity.** We can examine our own language and behaviour and call out discrimination, exclusion and oppression whenever we see it.

Modern slavery



Modern slavery is a non-legal term used to describe economic exploitation achieved through force, fraud, coercion or abuse of vulnerability. It's a crime described as 'hidden in plain sight' because victims are often working right in front of us – on farms, in restaurants, massage salons and as cleaners – but are too scared to seek help.

Australia has made some progress in recent years, but we're still lagging compared to similar countries, with the majority of victims going undetected¹ and conviction rates remaining low.² Some of the reasons for this are that the community has not been given the chance to learn how to detect modern slavery or given the tools to respond effectively if they see signs of exploitation.

There are also issues with how we provide support in Australia. Right now, government support is only available through engagement with law enforcement. This is an issue because there is strong evidence to suggest that victims' legitimate fear of police prevents them from seeking help.³

Without a critical rethink, Australia will continue to under-identify victims of this terrible crime, leaving many to either remain in slavery or take enormous personal risk to negotiate their own safety. Additionally, traffickers will continue to go unpunished.



For every one victim identified in Australia, **four remain undetected.**



The Global Slavery Index estimates up to **15,000 people** are in some form of slavery in Australia.



Less than **30 individuals** have been prosecuted for slavery and trafficking crimes in Australia.



There are over **40 million people** in modern slavery around the world. Most are women and girls.



The average modern-day slave is sold for **\$90-\$100.**⁴

What we can do?

AS A NATION

- » **We can provide victim-centred pathways to timely, needs-based, unconditional support.** We can also provide tools and education for service providers and the general public to know the indicators of modern slavery and take appropriate action. In this way we can increase the support available to victims and increase visibility of this crime.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

- » **We can build our understanding of modern slavery risks and ensure we aren't contributing to it.** States and territories can support research and data collection to inform the national understanding of modern slavery. States and territories can also update public procurement rules to make sure that

government spending is in line with human rights and sustainability principles.

AS A COMMUNITY

- » **We can learn more about the indicators of modern slavery.** We can be alert to modern slavery risks in our own communities and seek information and advice from anti-slavery organisations if we see any risk signs.

AS INDIVIDUALS

- » **We can consume ethically.** We can look into the modern slavery credentials of the companies where we spend our money and make decisions that support companies that are taking an active stand to eradicate modern slavery.

About the Social Justice Stocktake



The Salvation Army believes that the social justice issues we face in Australia can be addressed. The best way to do that is to examine and act on social justice within our own communities.

In 2021, The Salvation Army set out to find what social injustices people see in their own communities in Australia, and then explore how these prevalent issues could be addressed. We partnered with PureProfile to collect 15,514 responses – securing 100 or more responses in almost every federal electorate. We asked people to identify the five social justice issues they were seeing in their local community and invited them to tell us what could be done about them.

We used the results from the survey to focus our analysis of a range of relevant data and then produced 157 reports – one for Australia, one for each state and territory and then one for each federal electorate (with the exception

of Lingiari (NT) and Solomon (NT) which due to sampling difficulties were treated as one electorate, and the newly created electorate of Hawke (VIC), where no data was available).

Our hope in producing and distributing these reports is that we can help equip and empower people to talk about social justice. The results of this survey confirmed what we already suspected – Australians want to address social injustice – but also reinforced how hard it is to know what to do to make a change.

Every Australian can make a difference – by taking direct action, supporting those on the front line of addressing disadvantage and by making it clear to governments that social justice matters to the people they represent.

More information about the Stocktake, including access to all 157 reports and references, can be found at www.salvationarmy.org.au/socialjusticestocktake or by e-mailing policy.advocacy@salvationarmy.org.au

About The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is an international Christian movement with a presence in over 130 countries. Operating in Australia since 1880, The Salvation Army is one of the largest providers of social services and programs for people experiencing hardship, injustice and social exclusion.

As part of fulfilling our vision and mission, The Salvation Army in Australia has a small Policy and Advocacy team who work alongside our services, corps (churches) and the community to identify social justice issues, explore social policy solutions and advocate for change.

Wherever there is hardship or injustice Salvos will live, love and fight, alongside others, to transform Australia one life at a time, with the love of Jesus.



HOPE
THE SALVATION ARMY
WHERE IT'S NEEDED MOST

