

**S**ome areas of Victoria and New South Wales have far greater numbers of persons unemployed, poorly educated, or imprisoned than could ever be imagined. Many of the same areas have much higher rates of confirmed child abuse, mental illness, disability pensions and sickness benefits than would be expected, given their population profile.

A report released today by the Jesuit social policy office, The Ignatius Centre, has sent out a warning to Federal and State government authorities: address the complex needs of these areas or they may become "No Go Zones" in coming years.

The report *Community Adversity and Resilience* also presents authorities with a way forward, outlining a methodology for building social cohesion that can buffer some of the harmful impact of such intense social disadvantage.

## The forgotten Australians

### LIVING IN URBAN, RURAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

The author of the report, Emeritus Professor Tony Vinson, does not believe that the findings demand large additional expenditures by government, but rather a different approach in those identified areas that have severe disadvantage:

"Building a sense of belonging to one's locality and increasing neighbours' interaction with one another can go a long way to shielding children and families from the full impact of social disadvantage," Professor Vinson explained.

"However, such building of connections between the residents of disadvantaged areas needs to be accompanied by the creation of new oppor-

Granville 2142

Footscray 3011

Maitland 2320

National 3330

Blacktown 2148

Traralgon 3844

Parramatta 2150

Dandenong 3175

Tamworth 2340

Mildura 3500

Werribee 3030

Woolahra 2025

Box Hill 3128

Stingy Creek 2011

Wangaratta 3676

Chatswood 2067

Horsham 3400

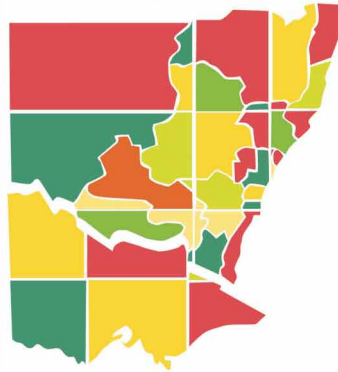
Bathurst 2795

Frankston 3199

Parkes 2870

## Community adversity and resilience:

the distribution of social disadvantage in Victoria and New South Wales and the mediating role of social cohesion



Tony Vinson

The Ignatius Centre  
for social policy and research  
March 2004



**"Australian leaders have a responsibility to ensure that all families are given a fair go and if your destiny could be determined by your postcode, it might be time to think a little more cleverly about how the interests of some of these communities could be advanced."**

— FR PETER NORDEN

code, it might be time to think a little more cleverly about how the interests of some of these communities could be advanced," Fr Norden suggested.

"Social exclusion breeds social alienation and unless this is addressed in national public policy decisions in the coming year, Australians will continue to observe increased instances of child abuse and neglect, mental health disorders, youth suicide, substance misuse and spiralling prison populations" he concluded, "at great economic and social cost to the wider community."

"Failing to act now will result in dramatic increases in expenditure for State and Federal Governments" he said, "in dealing with the serious consequences of social exclusion."

*Community Adversity and Resilience* contains detailed information on all 647 Victorian and 587 New South Wales postcode areas on fourteen social disadvantage factors.

For further information, consult the Jesuit Social Services web page: [www.jss.org.au](http://www.jss.org.au) ■