

MEDIA RELEASE

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MOVING FROM THE EDGE: STORIES OF ACHIEVING GREATER INCLUSION

Launching their latest research Jesuit Social Services CEO and Chair of Victorian Anti Poverty Week Julie Edwards said, "A key learning from this study is to be wary of 'one size fits all' solutions when it comes to assisting people moving from the edge of social exclusion.

The study was launched by Victorian Deputy Premier and Attorney-General Rob Hulls on 20th October 2010.

"In commissioning the research for ***Moving from the Edge: stories of achieving greater inclusion***, Jesuit Social Services sought to better understand the factors which assist excluded people to improve their inclusion in the life of the community. This research seeks to present the voices of those who have suffered exclusion, through homelessness, illness, involvement with the child protection and justice systems."

The author, Professor Tony Vinson AM, worked with Jesuit Social Services in 2007 to produce the very influential study *Dropping off the Edge: the distribution of disadvantage in Australia* which described how local neighbourhoods can compound the exclusion of people who live within them. This work has influenced Governments at State and Federal levels.

"The concentration and persistence of disadvantage in a limited number of localities causes some people to shrug their shoulders in disbelief that the situation can be remedied," said Professor Vinson. "The stories told in *Moving from the Edge* show that given the opportunity, people who were previously 'outsiders' can find places in society that are satisfying to them and productive from the community's viewpoint.

"But there is no single formula for achieving this change, a supporter's respect for an individual's aspirations, a shared conviction that she or he can achieve their goals, and assistance in charting a credible path to the attainment of those goals being hallmarks of the life-stories of outsiders who have moved from the edge," said Professor Vinson.

Ms Edwards said "Jesuit Social Services' new study ***Moving from the Edge: stories of achieving greater inclusion*** personalises the policies and discussions about social inclusion. It forcefully reminds us that behind each statistic about social exclusion lies a person – a unique and valuable human being with hopes and aspirations; a person often facing daunting barriers to their full flourishing as human beings and citizens.

"The honest reflections of people in this study who have made the transition from social exclusion to social inclusion, provide clear explanations of how people can overcome the barriers that further entrench social disadvantage and how the Government or community organisations can most effectively assist them," said Ms Edwards.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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Moving from the Edge: stories of achieving greater inclusion is \$20. Order at www.jss.org.au