



Social Justice STOCKTAKE



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disadvantage

Attributable To Secretary for Mission, Captain Stuart Glover

Were you surprised by the ratings Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage concern received in the Stocktake?

Initially yes. With the repeated reports of disadvantage and discrimination in the media, the results of the Close the Gap report each year, the growing conversation about Australia Day, and the impact of colonisation, we did expect it to be higher. When we look at the results overall though, we see that all the disadvantage experienced by individual cohorts is ranked lower. I believe we are seeing people identify the outcome of discrimination in terms of broader disadvantage rather than the discrimination itself.

Why is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage a concern for your average non-indigenous Australian?

Any disadvantage in our community is a concern for everyone in the community – that is inherent in the concept of social justice.

More specifically, the disadvantage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is a direct result of the imposition of colonialism and that continues to benefit non-indigenous Australians, especially Anglo-Celtic Australians, over Indigenous Australians. Changing a system to be fairer often takes action from those who are privileged by that system.

How big is the disparity experienced between indigenous Australians and non-indigenous Australians?

Under the Closing the Gap Agreement the Productivity Commission assesses whether Australia is on track to achieve a series of socioeconomic indicators around the disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The latest report indicates that far more work needs to be done to achieve parity. The report can be found at <https://www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data/annual-data-report/2021>.

One headline disparity is in life expectancy. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a lower life expectancy (they will not live as long) as non-Indigenous Australians. There is a gap of 8.6 years for boys and 7.8 years for girls.

Other gaps are around educational attainment, employment and incarceration rates where, consistently, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders experience barriers that most non-Indigenous Australians do not experience.



Social Justice STOCKTAKE



The Australian Government is speaking about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage on a regular basis. What is needed to see this disadvantage disappear?

There needs to be a concerted effort to address the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. Critically, this effort needs to be led and fully informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

One way that we can ensure this is to support the measures set out in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

What can individuals do to help reduce the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

Everyone can take the time to learn more about Australia's shared history and pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander continuing cultures and connection to land. Individuals have a huge role to play in ensuring that discrimination is not perpetuated.

What can The Salvation Army offer an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander presenting with hardship?

The Salvation Army provides a wide range of services and supports and is committed to ensuring that this support is provided in a culturally safe and appropriate way. Working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is foundational to The Salvation Army delivering on its mission. You can find out more about our commitment to working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and our commitment to reconciliation, in our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan which can be found at

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/subscribe/sites/auosalvos/files/documents/TheSalvationArmy-InnovateRAP-2020-SinglePages.pdf> .