

BEING LEFT OUT HURTS



1 IN 6 CHILDREN IN AUSTRALIA LIVE IN POVERTY

Many children are experiencing disadvantage on multiple fronts, lacking the opportunities and family resources to be socially connected and to participate fully in their local communities.

Poverty, social exclusion and disadvantage are complex issues that require a community-wide response.

Tackling disadvantage is everyone's business.

All children in Australia should have the opportunity to learn, engage and have a voice. We all have a responsibility to make this happen – government, services and the community. The Uniting Church's community services network deliver prevention services to overcome disadvantage across the country as showcased in the stories below

CHLOE'S STORY

Chloe is 14. She feels alone and disconnected. She's been self-harming and has changed schools many times because of bullying. She's the eldest in her family of six children and often feels unwanted and unsupported by her family.

Chloe joined Uniting Communities' 'Ruby's United' basketball team.



Playing with Ruby's United has helped Chloe to feel connected, confident and supported by her friends and family. She now captains the team and enjoys spending time with her dad and younger brothers every week.

Social exclusion is complex and multi-dimensional. It can include the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities available to the majority of people in society, including in families.

Ruby's Reunification Program, delivered by Uniting Communities, helps to resolve conflict and improve relationships between a young person and their parents or caregivers. More information is available at: <https://www.unitingcommunities.org/services/youth-services/support-young-people-homeless-risk/>

JODIE'S STORY

Jodie is a mother with two teenage daughters. She has no family close by, nor friends to rely on. The environment that she's living in has become abusive and unsafe for her family to stay in. They leave and become homeless and Jodie worried for the safety and wellbeing of her family.



Social exclusion is complex and multi-dimensional. Children from families where housing stress is an issue are significantly more likely to be at risk of social exclusion.

Jodie connects with Uniting Wesley crisis team, who provide her family with immediate safe accommodation.

She and her family are referred to the Interim Support Program while in their crisis accommodation. This gives them emotional support, a safety network and financial support.

Jodie said: "Uniting Wesley Homelessness services were the light in my darkest hours of need. The simplest of everyday things you take for granted, like a hot coffee in the morning, I now appreciate."

Uniting Wesley provides crisis accommodation and information for people in the eastern region of Melbourne who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness and family violence. More information is available at: <https://www.unitingwesley.org.au/crisis-homelessness/>

AMANDA'S STORY

Amanda is a mother of three young children. Her eldest child exhibits significant behavioural issues that impact on the whole family. Her younger children are increasingly acting out in an effort to gain attention. She and her children live away from the family property and her husband during the week, in order for the children to be able to access school.

Feeling overwhelmed, Amanda reached out to one of UnitingCare's Child and Family Support Hubs, located in a remote community in Queensland.



Through the Hub, she was connected with a network of community support providers, including the local GP, Allied Health professionals, and representatives from the local school. Amanda's support coordinator listened to her concerns, as well as those of all three of her children.

The comprehensive and coordinated support that Amanda and her children received helped to diagnose her eldest child's underlying condition and strategies to best engage and support them. She and her kids have also been connected with other families and children through the Hub, attending playgroups and other activities.

Amanda now describes her entire household as calmer, happier and more content.

Social exclusion is complex and multi-dimensional. One in three children in remote and very remote Australia experience the highest risk of social exclusion.

UnitingCare supports rural and remote communities through quality, innovative and individualised services and resources that meet the needs of families and children. More information is available at: <https://www.unitingcareqld.com.au>