



MEDIA RELEASE

MEDIA RELEASE – MARCH 4, 2024

New extreme heat research shows disadvantaged communities experience climate impacts the worst: Jesuit Social Services

New research by ACOSS into the impact of extreme heat is an important addition to the growing body of evidence demonstrating the disproportionate effect extreme climate conditions have on people experiencing disadvantage, says Jesuit Social Services.

“The ACOSS Heat Survey 2024 shows the devastating impact extreme heat in homes has on people’s health and wellbeing, and the urgent need for government action to address harm from extreme heat,” says John Ryks, Director of Jesuit Social Services’ Centre for Just Places.

“It paints a stark picture of how the impacts of climate change are compounding. People who are marginalised are bearing a heavy burden of the impacts of climate change. Residents in social housing being unable to cool their sweltering homes is a stark sign something has gone wrong. ACOSS’ research shines a light on this harm and provides practical recommendations for governments to make meaningful changes. We congratulate ACOSS on this important publication.”

Mr Ryks says the Heat Survey sits alongside existing disadvantage research, including Jesuit Social Services’ research into locational disadvantage – which for 25 years has examined persistent and entrenched disadvantage in every Australian community, and in its most recent 2021 Dropping off the Edge report tracked 37 indicators of disadvantage for 2,292 communities nation-wide, including environmental indicators such as heat stress, tree cover, and air quality.

“Entrenched disadvantage harms individuals and communities,” says Mr Ryks.

“To meaningfully address the underlying factors driving disadvantage, decision-makers must design and resource policies based on the evidence.”

In its recent [submission to the Federal Pre-Budget](#), Jesuit Social Services called on the Federal Government to resource long-term, place-based and systemic approaches that address the factors that lead to inequity and disadvantage.

Recommendations include increasing the stock of climate-safe and energy-efficient public housing, retrofitting existing social housing with energy-efficient upgrades, increasing access to energy-efficient housing, investing in energy efficiency improvements for low-income households, and raising the rate of JobSeeker and related payments to at least \$78 per day to enable people to meet rising energy costs.

“Supporting people to adapt to the worsening climate impacts is an urgent and important step – however, we must also address the factors driving disadvantage in order to end its harm,” says Mr Ryks.

“I commend ACOSS on this significant contribution to the body of evidence that paints a clear picture of the harm caused to marginalised communities by climate impact and the policy pathway that can make a meaningful difference.”

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