

DROPPING OFF THE EDGE 2015

Dropping off the Edge 2015 examines 29 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Tasmania across 21 different indicators of disadvantage. The indicators, based on statistics collected from a number of government agencies, reflect factors that may limit life opportunities in the broad areas of social wellbeing, health, community safety, access to housing, education and employment.

LGAs were ranked on each indicator, with high rankings indicating the LGA was significantly affected by the particular limiting factor (eg unemployment or disability). These results were then used to produce a 'rank average' taking into account aspects of disadvantage to which the locality is particularly vulnerable, and those aspects to which is it less vulnerable, and combining them into a single score.

Dropping off the Edge 2015 builds on similar reports released in 2007, 2004 and 1999, although Tasmanian data was not included in the earlier two reports.

Key findings

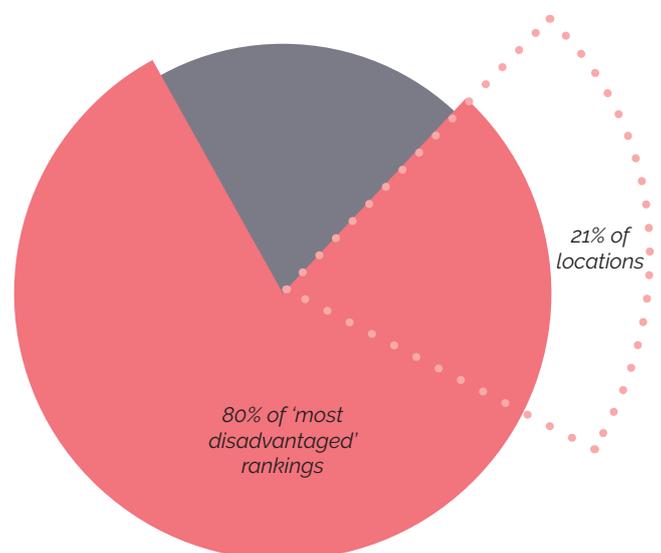
- Disadvantage is concentrated in a small number of communities within Tasmania.
- These communities experience a complex web of disadvantage and bear a disproportionately high level of disadvantage within the state.
- A number of LGAs have remained depressed for long periods demonstrating the persistent, entrenched nature of the disadvantage experienced by these communities.

Locational disadvantage is concentrated

A limited number of LGAs account for a disproportionate number of 'top ranked' (ie most disadvantaged) positions. The data suggests that 21% of localities account for around 80% of 'most disadvantaged' ranks.

The disproportionate distribution of disadvantage within the state is highlighted when the incidence of particular factors such as unemployment and contact with the justice system among those living in the 3% most disadvantaged LGAs is compared with the rest of the state. Those living in the 3% most disadvantaged LGAs in the state are:

- more than twice as likely to have suffered domestic violence
- twice as likely to be disengaged from education or employment as young adults
- at least 50% more likely to have had some form of personal contact with the criminal justice system.



A complex web of disadvantage

The study examined LGAs which ranked in the 'most disadvantaged' group on more than five indicators, and found that these multiply-disadvantaged LGAs (of which there were five) had a number of dominant features:

- **Disengaged young adults** - three of the five multiply-disadvantaged LGAs rank highly on 'young adults not participating in full time work, education or training'.
- **Unemployment and low family income** - three of the five multiply-disadvantaged LGAs recorded high rates of long-term unemployment.
- **Contact with the criminal justice system** - three of the five ranked highly on juvenile offending and criminal convictions, emphasising that lack of engagement often goes hand in hand with contact with the criminal justice system.
- **Disability** - a serious issue in three of the five multiply-disadvantaged LGAs.

Despite the commonalities, there was also considerable diversity regarding the prevalence of other indicators. This variability suggests the need to be sensitive to specific local contexts. There were also hopeful signs regarding educational engagement, with indicators reflecting readiness for school, Year 3 numeracy, unskilled workers, and Year 9 reading not as prevalent as other markers of disadvantage.

Locational disadvantage is entrenched

Disadvantage is entrenched in a number of the state's most challenging communities. The persistent nature of the disadvantage is demonstrated when we compare findings of this 2015 study with previous studies undertaken in 2007.

The data suggests that over the past seven years both Break O'Day and the Central Highlands continue to experience high levels of relative social disadvantage, appearing among the most disadvantaged LGAs in both 2007 and 2015.

The communities of Brighton, George Town and Tasman appear to have experienced a deterioration of their social circumstances over the past seven years while Derwent Valley remained steady or improved in relation to unemployment and court convictions.

Dominant characteristics of Tasmania's multiply-disadvantaged locations

Young adults disengaged

Unemployment, low family income

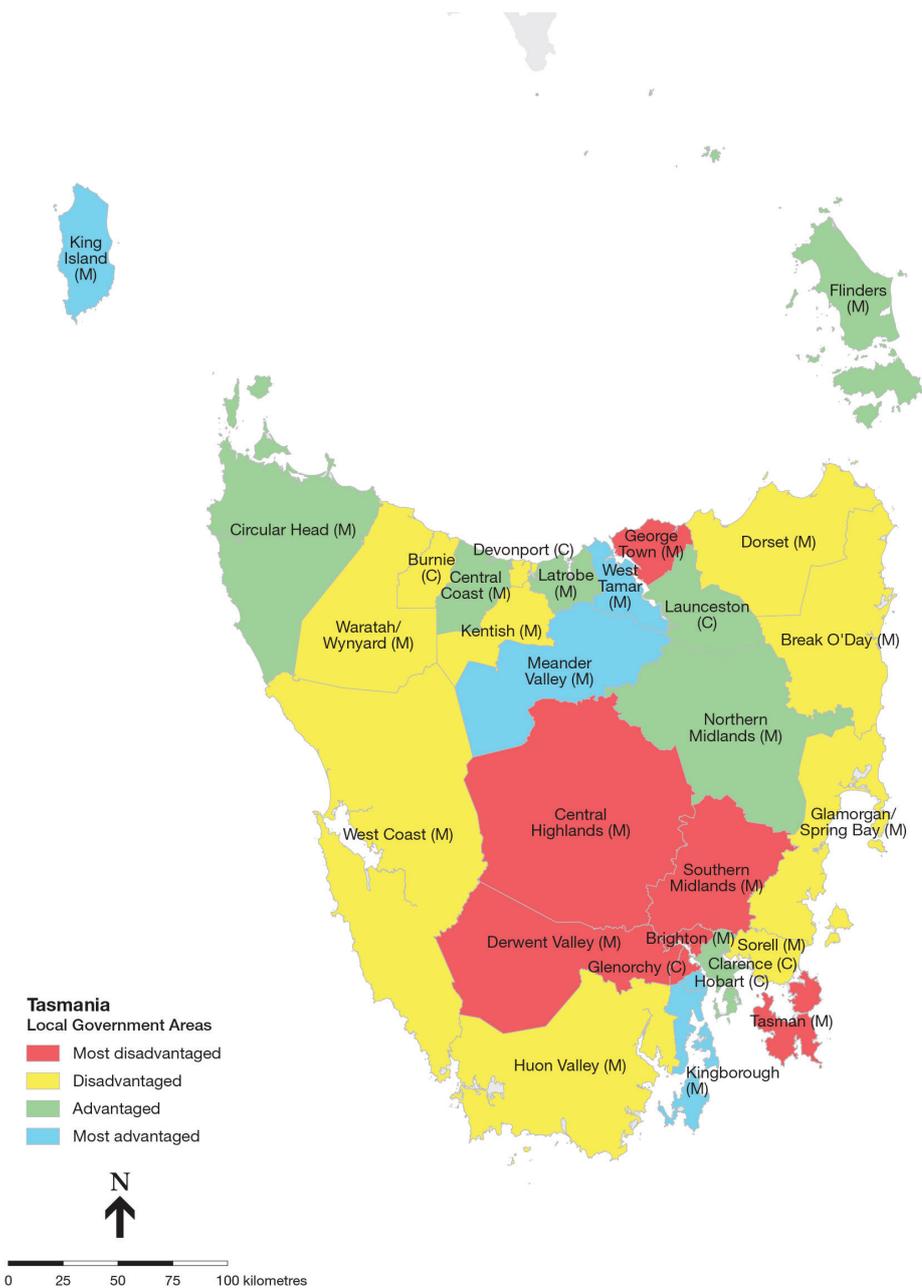
Contact with justice system

Disability

Tasmania's most disadvantaged regions

The following table presents the rank averages for the 29 LGAs: the smaller that average the more susceptible the locality is to the problems represented by the indicators. From that perspective, Brighton, Central Highlands, Derwent Valley, George Town and Glenorchy are among the most cumulatively disadvantaged places.

LGA	Rank average	Estimated Population (2011)
Break O'Day	11.7	6194
Brighton	6.05	15460
Burnie	13.7	19329
Central Coast	17	21355
Central Highlands	6.52	2262
Circular Head	17.6	7977
Clarence	20	51852
Derwent Valley	7.57	9704
Devonport	13.2	24615
Dorset	13.9	6827
George Town	7.71	6636
Glenorchy	7.9	44656
Flinders	18.3	776
Glamorgan/Spring Bay	13.5	4190
Hobart	23.7	48703
Huon Valley	13.8	15140
Kentish	15	6086
King Island	20.3	1566
Kingborough	24.6	33893
Latrobe	20	9833
Launceston	15.5	64193
Meander Valley	21.8	18888
Northern Midlands	17.8	12228
Sorell	15	13194
Southern Midlands	10.4	6049
Tasman	9.79	2355
Waratah/Wynyard	14.8	13708
West Coast	13.4	4678
West Tamar	22.1	21817



Source data used provided by ABS and relevant State Government Social Service agencies.
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Persistent communal disadvantage in Australia

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