

## POSTCODE POVERTY, SERVICE INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION

The paper provides an introduction to a pilot project of integration of services to families with young children in the premier urban regeneration initiative in South Australia. It begins with some demographic data comparing the suburb to the Local Government Area and to the State. Then it proceeds to give a short history of the suburb and the Salisbury North Urban Improvement Project. Finally it describes the integration project and the approach it wants to pursue. The aim of this presentation is to start dialogue on community development approaches to service integration and share questions and learnings. It is the intention to continue reporting on the progress of the project at future Australian Institute of Family Studies conferences

### Demographics of Salisbury North

	South Australia	Salisbury	% state	Salisbury North	% Salisbury
Males	722,327	55,362	7.7	4,527	8.2
Females	744,934	55,562	7.5	4,566	8.2
Total	1,467,261	110,924	7.6	9,093	8.2
Males aged 14 years and under	147,851	12,911	8.7	1,140	8.8
Females aged 14 years and under	140,242	12,061	8.6	1,116	9.3
Total aged 14 years and under	288,093	24,972	8.7	2,256	9
Males aged 15 years and over	574,476	42,451	7.3	3,393	8
Females aged 15 years and over	604,692	43,501	7.2	3,449	8
Total aged 15 years and over	1,179,168	85,952	7.3	6,842	8
Never Married (15 years and over)	358,896	27,433	7.6	2,449	9
Married	604,807	43,525	7.2	2,903	6.7
Separated	39,300	3,482	8.9	383	11
Divorced	93,703	7,400	7.9	801	10.9
Widowed	82,462	4,113	5	316	1
Australian-born	1,099,591	76,601	7	6,759	8.9
Aboriginal	22,063	1,646	7.5	262	16
Torres Strait Islander	796	67	8.4	8	12
Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	566	39	6.8	3	7.7
Born outside Australia	367,670	29,645	8.1	1,845	6.2
Speaks English Only	1,233,121	88,824	7.2	7,750	8.7
Speaks also LOTE	234,140	22,679	9.7	1,345	6
Couple Families with children under 15	133,758	10,861	8.1	765	7.1
Couple Families without children	153,753	9,978	6.5	664	6.7
One parent families with children under 15 <sup>1</sup>	41,782	4,078	9.8	505	12.4
Fully owned and being purchased dwellings	407,126	29,535	7.2	1,921	6.5
Housing Trust dwellings <sup>2</sup>	44,688	3,840	8.5	895	23.3
Families with weekly income of \$400 or less	58,830	4,868	8.3	562	11.54

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### Postcode Poverty<sup>3</sup>

Salisbury North is home to nearly 10,000 people from a rich diversity of cultural backgrounds. It is one kilometre from the centre of Salisbury, 21 kilometres north of the Adelaide CBD, comprises 4 square kilometres, and is bounded by Waterloo Corner Road, the Little Para River, the Adelaide to Port Augusta railway line, and Bolivar Road. It is contiguous to the Defence Science and Technology Organisation, a part of which is being developed as an industrial site for automotive, defence and advanced manufacturing (Edinburgh Park).

Salisbury North was the first South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) development in the northern region of Adelaide. It was designed to provide housing for workers of the long-range Weapons Research Establishment in nearby Penfield after World War II. However

due to the national and international restructuring of the manufacturing sector, unemployment rose and the profile of the community changed. Salisbury North gradually achieved the notorious reputation of being an “icon” of multiple social disadvantage scoring high on the various social indicators, e.g., poverty and high unemployment, high crime rate, high level of sole parent families, high Housing Trust tenancies, and low levels of educational attainment. The public housing stock was declining progressively. Public housing had a vacancy rate of 25%, the highest of any suburb in the City of Salisbury. Many of the ageing double rental homes in the area owned by SAHT had become expensive to maintain, unattractive to rent, and provided fewer amenities compared to modern homes built by the Trust.

### **Salisbury North Urban Improvement Project**

A two-phase study between early 1997 and May 1998, commissioned by the South Australian Housing Trust and the City of Salisbury, recommended an integrated social, physical, economic, and environmental redevelopment of the area. The Salisbury North Urban Improvement Project (SNUIP) comprises 4 stages over 10 years (1998-2008) and involves an estimated total expenditure of \$100 million.

The project is a collaborative venture between the City of Salisbury and the SAHT. A Steering Committee, with representation from the two partners, the Department of Human Services, the project management group, and the Community Reference Group, oversee the whole development.

Right from the very beginning it was recognised that the residents were important stakeholders and that the ongoing success of the project would depend on their active participation. A Neighbourhood Development Officer was employed to facilitate resident participation, ensure communication between the community and other stakeholders, and develop self-help initiatives. In September 1999 a Community Reference Group was formed. The community is actively involved in festivities, cultural events and projects, safety audits, newsletter production, an information technology project, etc. Gradually it is re-discovering its voice and place in “building a community of opportunity and spirit”.<sup>4</sup>

### **Service Integration**

Obodo n'ezu ezu azu nwa: it takes a whole village to raise a child.  
Igbo (Nigeria) Proverb

Early last year the City of Salisbury received funding from the State Department of Human Services to facilitate the integration of human services to families with young children (0 to 12 years of age) in Salisbury North. This had been identified four years earlier as a need and there were a few departmental attempts to get the project up and running. Finally the three-year project was contracted out to the City of Salisbury in mid 2002. The Service Agreement stipulates the establishment of “new models for more efficient, accessible integrated and coordinated service provision ... (and) examples of multi-sectoral program coordination.” I was employed in August last year.

In a climate of increasing needs and decreasing resources, “integration” is the latest catch-phrase in human services. However, there is no agreement on what this means. Underneath there are various assumptions that need to be either confirmed or challenged:

1. *There are services in Salisbury North to be integrated.* It is difficult to assert confidently whether Salisbury North residents are adequately served or not by “human services” simply because no reliable data on service usage seems to be available. The major difficulty seems to be that Salisbury North shares the same postcode with Salisbury, Salisbury Downs and Paralowie and at this stage it would imply a manual extraction of data to get the figures specifically for Salisbury North. (The Salisbury North population comprises 16.6% of the total of these suburbs.) Many services are office-based either at the Salisbury city centre or at the Elizabeth city centre; when juxtaposed with the other data that shows that Salisbury North has the lowest percentage within the Council of ownership of private motor vehicles, then it is logical to conclude that access to human services by Salisbury North residents is very low. Therefore, the first challenge is to have services to be integrated!
2. *The individual services are in themselves effective and the main challenge is the integration of services.* This assumption needs to be checked out with the community whether indeed the services respond to their needs.
  - What are the measures of effectiveness that the agencies use?
  - Where there is conflict between agency self-understanding and community expectations and standards, how is this negotiated?
3. *The services want to be integrated.*
  - Where is the mandate for integration coming from?
  - How is this mandate communicated to and owned by different human services?
  - To what extent is *service disintegration* an experience of the different agencies such that they aspire for *service integration*?
4. *The community wants the services to be integrated*
  - What is the community experience of the supposed lack of integration of services?
  - How has the community articulated the need for service integration?
5. *Integration of services is automatically a better state of affairs.* Integration is often seen as the organisational response to inefficiencies and resource limitations. As a response to the former, it can be effective only if individual agencies go through a service reform that clarifies strategic directions, evaluates service effectiveness, and implements the necessary changes. As a response to the latter it has very limited effectiveness.

There comes a point when there is no other reasonable recourse but to increase resources; individuals and organisations can be lean and ‘act smart’ only to a certain point. Furthermore, when integration is used as the only (or even the primary) response to scarcity of resources, it may tighten (rather than loosen) eligibility criteria thus creating more gaps. Hooper-Briar and Lawson caution against a rush toward program mergers as goals in their own right: “There is evidence that some such initiatives may reduce, rather than improve, supports and services. In other words, some well-intentioned program mergers may make things worse, not better.”<sup>5</sup>

There is no universal formula of integration. Vimpani calls for a shift from a regional or state-wide model to a neighbourhood model of primary services.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, understanding the local community context is important and it should form the back-drop of any decision about service integration.

### **Project Plan**

At this stage of the project, it is becoming clear that integration of services is a change process that involves aspects of governance, organisational culture, work practices, administration and delivery of services, interagency formal and informal relationships. Central to this is the participation of the community. Up to now this ‘insight’ is more intuitive than scientific and rational. It remains largely untested. An evaluative framework right from the very beginning is important so as not to fall into ideological positions.

After the initial Orientation and Establishment Phase (September 2002 to February 2003), Implementation will run from February 2003 to February 2005, ending with the Evaluation (February 2005 to June 2005).

### **Inclusion**

After initial conversations with various service providers and some community members, it was decided to pursue a “bifocal approach”. One focus of the project is the work with the various agencies, services that directly impact on the welfare and wellbeing of families with young children (“direct services”) and infrastructure services that benefit the whole community including families with young children. Direct services encompass three levels: universal (directed to all families and children), targeted (directed to vulnerable families and children) and specialist (directed to families and children in acute need).<sup>7</sup> Hooper-Briar and Lawson write of primary services that are educative and promotive, early intervention and primary prevention services, and crisis- and remediation-oriented services. They also refer to these three tiers as family outreach and support, family development, and family preservation. They call the last two “secondary services”.<sup>8</sup> Infrastructure services refer to those “institutional resources” that assist various members of the community and create neighbourhoods that are safe, secure, supportive and wholesome. These include housing, streetscape and landscape, recreational opportunities and facilities for all members of the family, medical and dental facilities, public transport, employment training and placement services, food stores and other small businesses. Table 1 gives a diagrammatic presentation of this approach and can be used as a framework for service mapping and the design of a ‘balanced’ service mix.

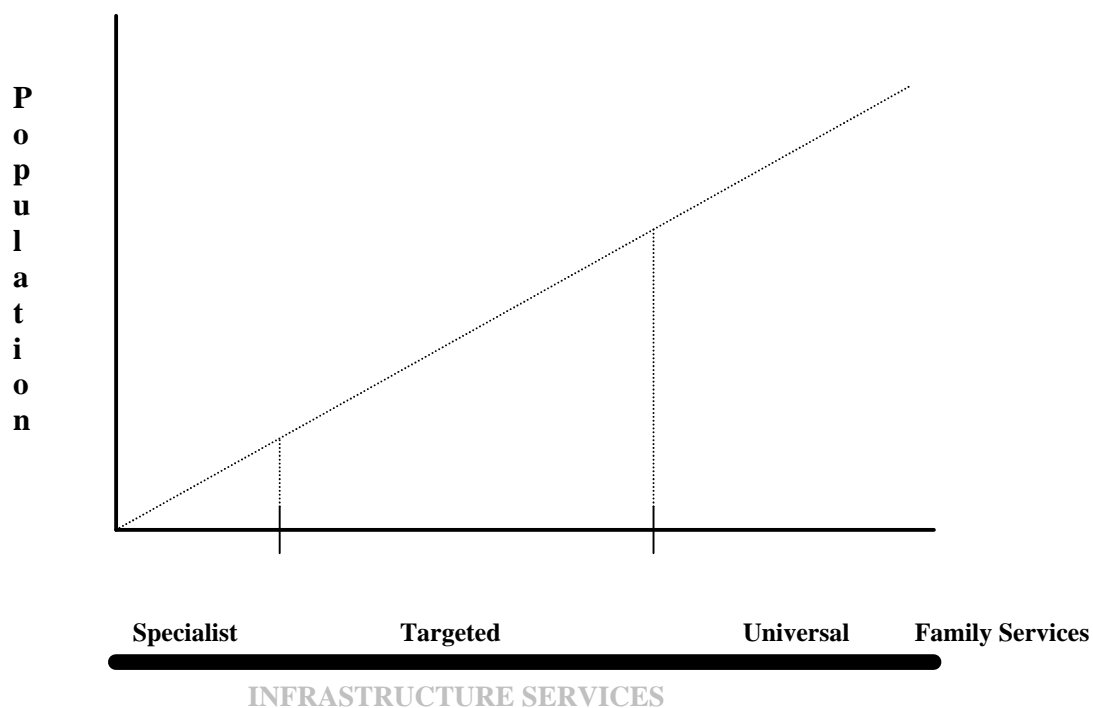


Table 1

The backdrop of provision of services (both direct and infrastructure services) in Salisbury North is (should be) community organising and development; this forms the other focus. Not only is this consistent with the aim of the Salisbury North Urban Improvement Project of pursuing an integrated ‘triple-bottom line’ approach, this respectful stance ensures welcome, continuity and sustainability. Services need to be responsive to the community such that the identification of needs, design of services and models of integration, lobbying for resources, and perhaps even the management of services involve the residents directly.

Though service providers and social commentators of Salisbury North (together with the Peachey Belt of the adjoining Playford Council) can easily rattle off the ‘deficits’ of the community, Salisbury North residents have a strong and realistic pride in their community. Attempts to rename the area to halt further adverse publicity have been resisted vehemently by the community. Also, there is a plethora of community initiatives and events that could be creatively “woven together” to further strengthen the sense of neighbourhood and community. One of the first activities planned for this year is an inventory of ‘community strengths’ which would then be projected back to community members for comment, addition, and, more importantly, utilisation to enhance ‘social cohesion’.

### Conclusion

This is a work in progress. Wood reminds us that “community participation is not an easy – or cheap option” and that “community development emerges as the most significant factor in promoting and developing community involvement in renewal”.<sup>9</sup> A formal monitoring and evaluation framework with active community participation will test out whether indeed and what form of community development will ensure “community renewal”. Next time we can report on the barriers and resistances to service integration,

the opportunities to progress service integration, possible models of integration, the learnings in community development, and possible transfers of methods and outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> Of the 2,446 families in Salisbury North, families with children under 15, both couple families and one parent families (1,270) constitute 52%.

<sup>2</sup> South Australian Housing Trust data as at 28.02.98, however, record that at the beginning of the Salisbury North urban regeneration there were 1390 SAHT properties of which 1100 were double units. These would make them 36% of the total SAHT properties in Salisbury.

<sup>3</sup> See Hawskbury Park on [www.housingtrust.sa.gov.au](http://www.housingtrust.sa.gov.au); Barry Phillis & Associates (1998), Salisbury North Urban Improvement Area: Phase 2 Study; City of Salisbury and South Australian Housing Trust (2002), Submission to 2002 Awards for Excellence in Urban Development

<sup>4</sup> Vision of City of Salisbury

<sup>5</sup> Hooper-Briar, Katherine and Lawson, Hal A. (1994). Serving children, youth and families through interprofessional collaboration and service integration: a framework for action. Oxford, OH: The Danforth Foundation and the Institute for Educational Renewal at Miami University, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Vimpani, Graham (1996). *How can we improve access to services for families with young children? The need for new models of interagency collaboration*. Paper presented to the Australian Family Research Conference, 27-29 November, 1996, p. 4. [www.aifs.org.au/institute/afrcpapers/vimpani.html](http://www.aifs.org.au/institute/afrcpapers/vimpani.html)

<sup>7</sup> Local Government Association (UK) (August 2002), Serving Children well: A New Vision for Children's Services, London: LGA Publications, p.5.

<sup>8</sup> Hooper-Briar, Katherine and Lawson, Hal A. (1994), Serving children, youth and families through interpersonal collaboration and service integration: a framework for action, Oxford, OH: The Danforth Foundation and The Institute for Educational Renewal at Miami University, pp. 17-19.

<sup>9</sup> Wood, Martin (2002). Resident participation in urban and community renewal. AHURI, p. 58.