

Knowledge to Action: Mobilising Research to Impact on Policy

David Mackenzie

Upstream Project Australia [UPA]

Associate Professor, School of Psychology, Social Work & Social Policy, University of South Australia; Chair of Youth Development Australia Ltd; Director of the Upstream Project Australia consortium.

We all work in silos



academics



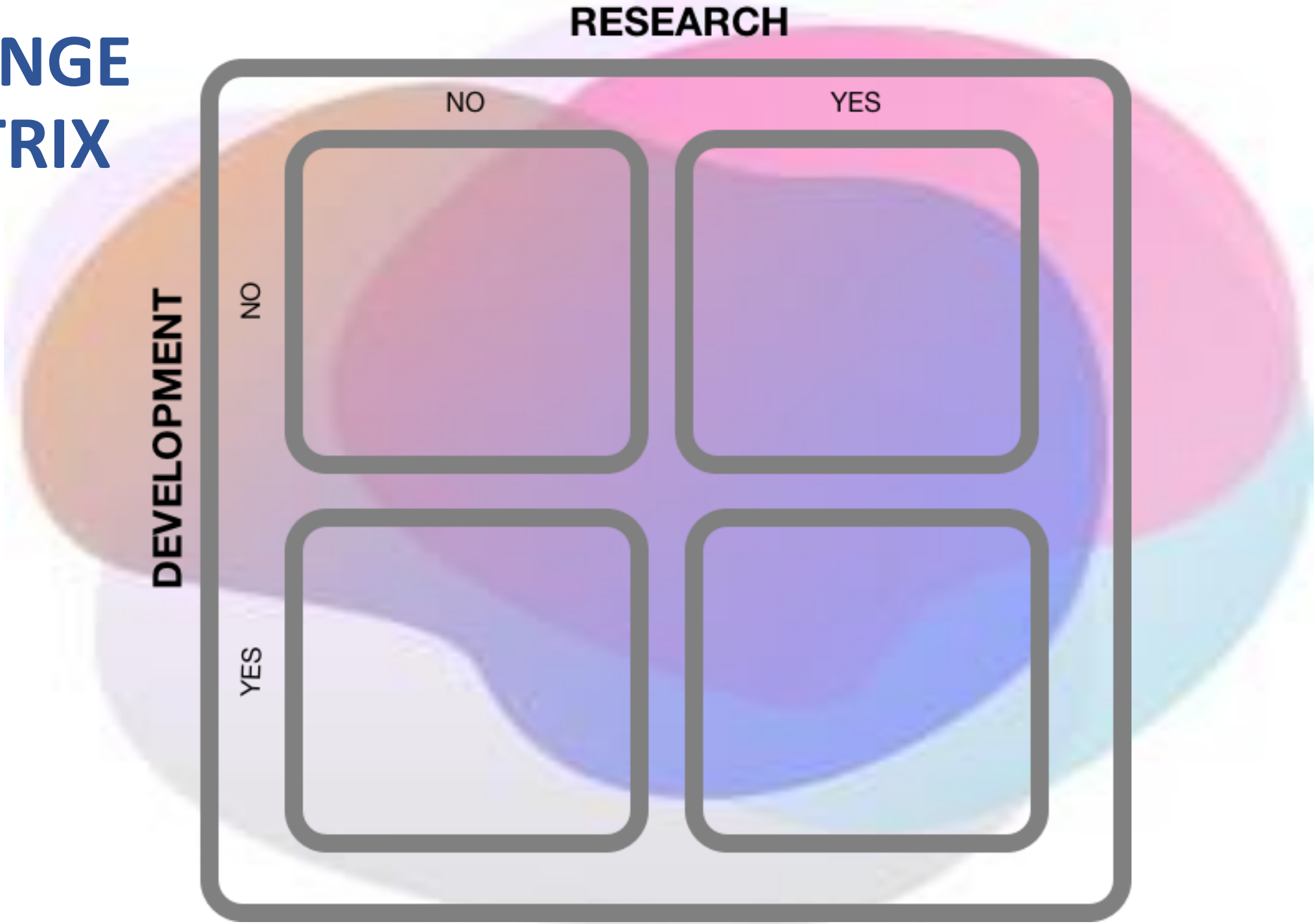
Dept of Justice

**Dept of
human services**

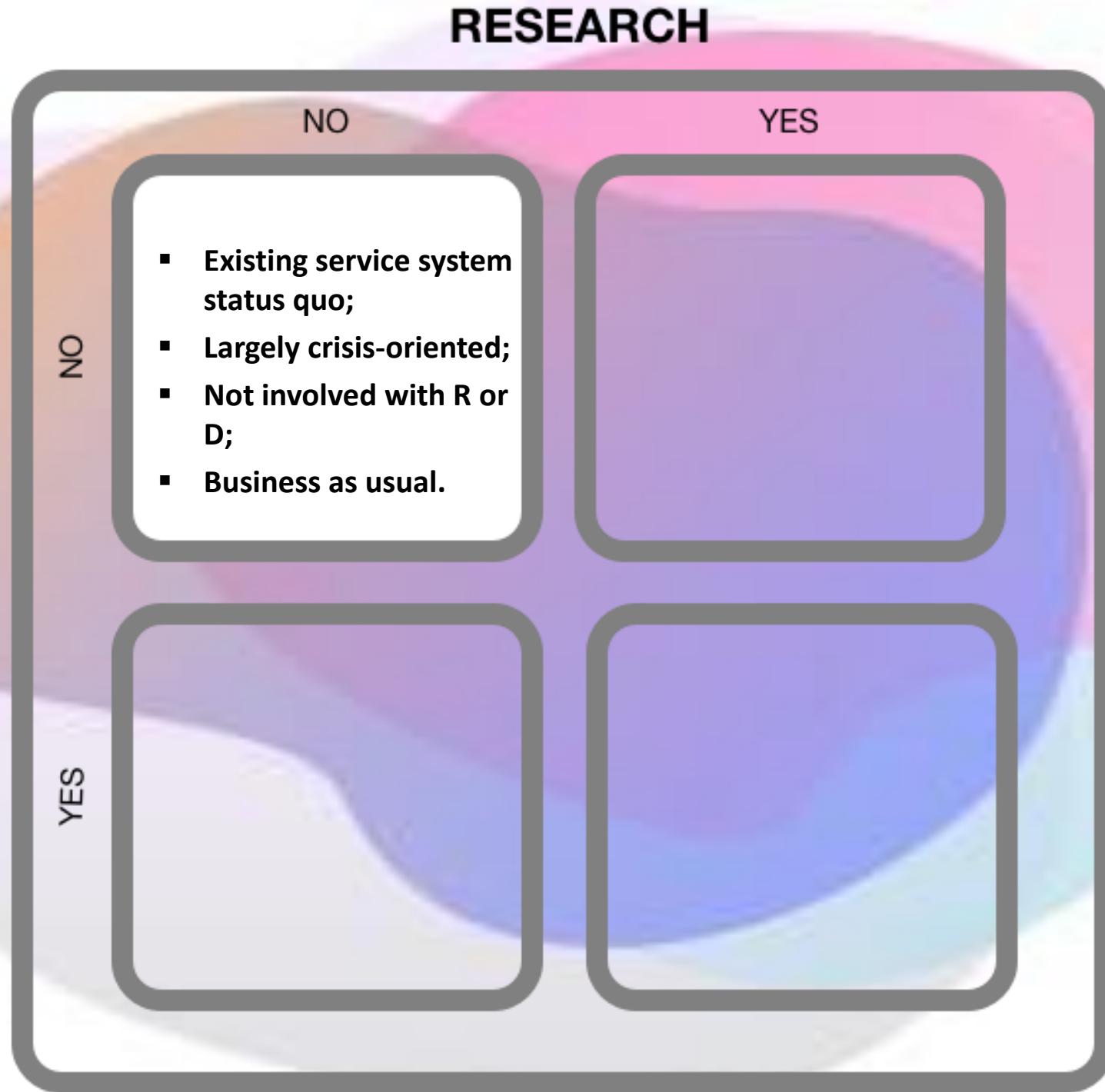
**Dept of
Education**

University researchers

CHANGE MATRIX



CHANGE MATRIX



CHANGE MATRIX

RESEARCH

DEVELOPMENT

		NO	YES
NO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Existing service system status quo;▪ Largely crisis-oriented;▪ Not involved with R or D;▪ Business as usual.		
YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Services put up funding proposal for 'new; service models;▪ Not usually strongly evidence-based;▪ Agency-focused.		

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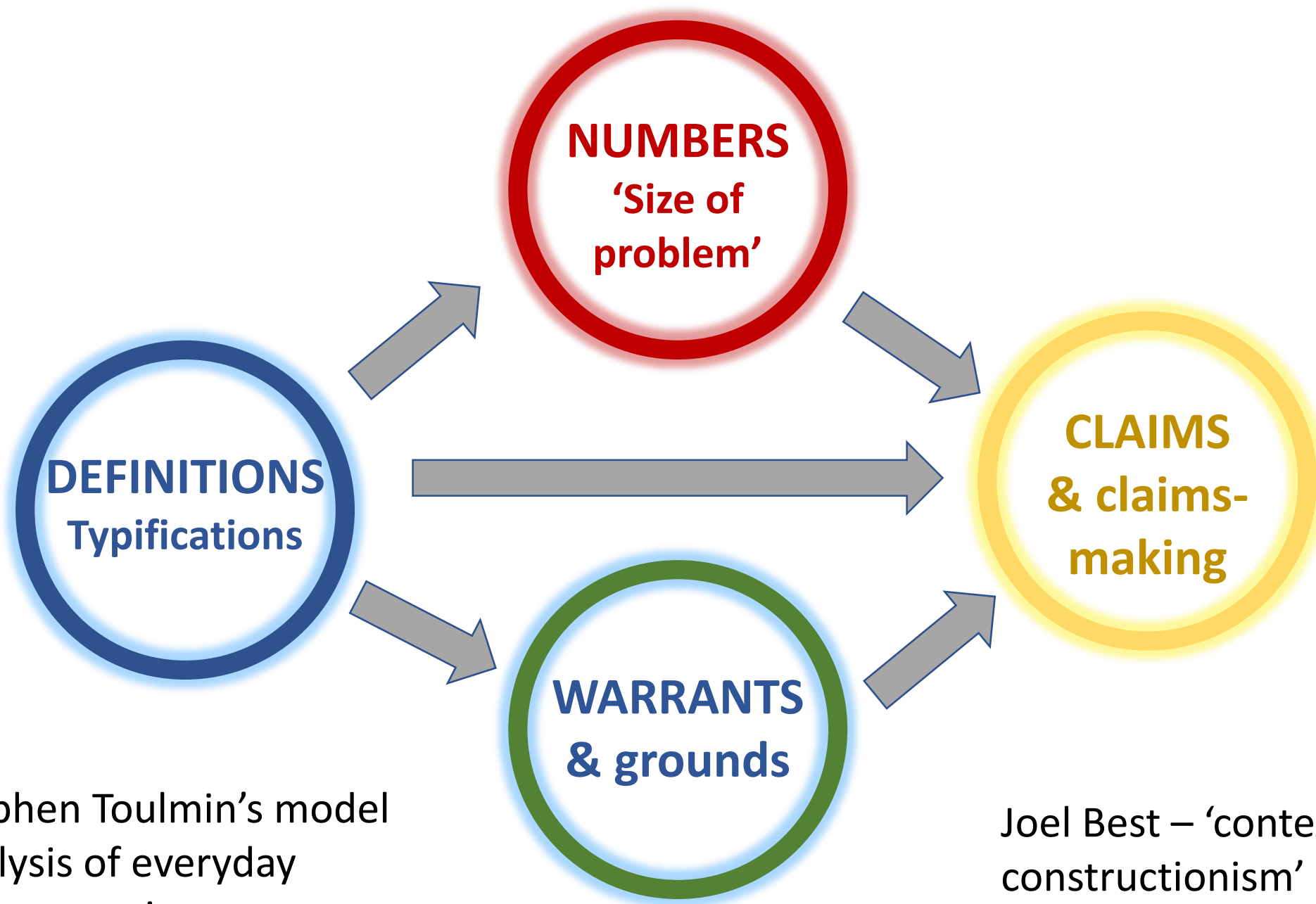
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What is a social problem?

Social problems are not just out there as objective realities; social problems are constructed by human actors making claims about what is a problem and what should be done about it



Stephen Toulmin's model
analysis of everyday
argumentation

Joel Best – 'contextual
constructionism'

Cultural Definition of Homelessness?

...homelessness and inadequate housing are socially constructed cultural concepts that are located in time and in certain social and cultural contexts. The concepts are socially relative in the sense that they refer to realities that change over time, but not absolutely relative or arbitrary in a philosophical sense

Reference: Mackenzie, D. *Homelessness: Definitions – An International Review*. In Smith, S. et.al (2012). International Encyclopedia of Housing and Home, Elsevier.

Table 2: Australian cultural definition of homelessness: A revised model of homelessness based on shared community cultural standards embodied in housing practices.

Categories	Living Situations	Operational Definitions
<p>Marginal Housing</p>	<p>Living situations close to the margin of the minimum community cultural standard for housing and living arrangements in Australia</p>	<p>A highly overcrowded household</p>
		<p>Living in improvised dwellings on land the resident owns or is purchasing</p>
		<p>Renting a dwelling not meeting regulations for a habitable dwelling</p>
		<p>Living in a permanently in a caravan park</p>
<p>Tertiary Homelessness</p>	<p>People living in single rooms in private boarding houses without a bathroom or kitchen and without security of tenure</p>	<p>Living in boarding/rooming house with shared facilities and no security of tenure</p>
		<p>Permanent/semi-permanent household (no members employed) renting in a caravan park</p>
<p>Secondary Homelessness</p>	<p>People moving between living in various forms of temporary shelter including with friends and relatives with no where to live, emergency accommodation, crisis accommodation, hostels boarding houses used as crisis accommodation or caravan parks used as crisis accommodation</p>	<p>Transitional accommodation while waiting for access to affordable housing</p>
		<p>Temporary tent free occupation of house or flat by person(s) with no other usual address</p>
		<p>Temporary accommodation with friends/relatives/acquaintances 'couch-surfing'</p>
		<p>Emergency accommodation in hotel/motel or caravan park with a voucher from homeless agency</p>
<p>Primary Homelessness</p>	<p>People without conventional accommodation living on the streets, in squats, railway carriages, in cars, under bridges or in parks</p>	<p>Occupation of temporary improvised dwelling by a person with no usual address</p>
		<p>Sleeping in a disused building/ railway carriage etc</p>
		<p>Sleeping in a caravan</p>
		<p>Sleeping through in parks, on the street or under bridges</p>

by David MacKenzie
and Chris Chamberlain

HOW MANY

HOMELESS

YOUTH?

A major problem for policymakers is how to assess the size of the homeless population. The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission report, "Our Homeless Children", suggested two estimates of the number of homeless youth on an average night: 20,000 to 25,000 based on informed guess-work and a higher range of 50,000 to 70,000 based on a complex analysis of Australian Bureau of Statistics data. This paper attempts to adjudicate between the two estimates, by undertaking a critique of the method by which the higher figure was developed, and then producing an alternative estimate based on a new approach. The 50,000 to 70,000 figure is found to be too high, and a more realistic estimate is in the range of 15,000 to 19,000 per night.

IN AUSTRALIA, it is the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission report *Our Homeless Children*, which has set the agenda for public debate about youth homelessness in the 1990s. In the context of a wide-ranging inquiry, the commissioners ordered a specialist enquiry by Dr Rodney Fopp "to examine all available data and prepare an estimate of the numbers of homeless children and young people" (Burdekin 1989, p.5). Fopp concluded

that the minimum figure was 50,000 and that there could be as many as 70,000 homeless young people aged 12 to 24 each night (Burdekin 1989, p.365). On the other hand, the commissioners proposed a figure between 20,000 and 25,000 (Burdekin 1989 p.69). These dissonant estimates have created considerable confusion in the community. As Fopp has pointed out:

...the press had a great deal of difficulty in coming to grips with

IS IT A CASE OF CHALK AND CHEESE, APPLES AND ORANGES?

A response to David MacKenzie and Chris Chamberlain
by Rodney Fopp

*Dr Rodney Fopp is a senior lecturer in sociology at the University of South Australia.
Dr Fopp is co-author of the 1992 publication 'Homelessness in Australia—
Causes and Consequences'.*

Introduction

This following is a response to the paper by David MacKenzie and Chris Chamberlain entitled, 'The Number of Homeless Young People in Australia', published in this edition of *National Housing Action*. Their paper is a shortened version of a longer critique published last year in *Youth Studies* (MacKenzie and Chamberlain 1992).

The process adopted in this response is to deal, firstly, with the basic argument in their paper. After a brief outline of several less fundamental but nonetheless important issues, this response moves to an examination of the methodology used by David MacKenzie and Chris Chamberlain to establish their own estimate.

David MacKenzie and Chris Chamberlain's stated aim

In two places in their paper, the authors state their aim. In the first instance it is 'to assess the size of the youth homeless population using [their] definition, and to *adjudicate between the estimates of 20,000 to 25,000 and 50,000 to 70,000 contained in the Burdekin Report*'. (emphasis added). The second time the aim to 'adjudicate' occurs is in the

work' and Fopp's 'higher range of 50,000 to 70,000 ... on a complex analysis of Australian Bureau of Statistics data'. David MacKenzie and Chris Chamberlain have gone to considerable lengths to understand the methodology used to make the estimates for the Burdekin Report.

On the face of it, David MacKenzie and Chris Chamberlain seem to have a point: there does seem to be a discrepancy between the estimates made by Burdekin and Fopp. Moreover the media has used every possible variation of the figures, type of homelessness, and age, to sensationalise the issue and usually to demean and belittle young people and their parents. But who is to blame for the irresponsible coverage of the release of the Burdekin Report? Certainly, the media did not contact me!

Responding to this adjudication

Of central importance to this response are the estimates and the apparent discrepancy between Burdekin and Fopp. To that issue our first question is: do the estimates by Burdekin and Fopp refer to the same social reality? Or: do the two seemingly disparate estimates purport to estimate the same thing? Such questions are based on the premise

National Census of Homeless School Students 2006

1. Name of School:

State: Postcode:

Name of person filling out form:

Telephone Number:

2. Number of students in your School:

Males

Females

Total

3. Is this a rural/remote school with mainly Indigenous students?

YES NO

If YES, include Indigenous young people as homeless if they move around frequently.

4. To the best of your knowledge, how many homeless students are currently attending your school? [Include those who have found accommodation, but who are in need of continuing support]

Males

Females

Total

• If you have no homeless students please answer Question 5 and then you are finished. • If you have homeless students go to Q6.

5. If you have no homeless students during census week, have you had any homeless students in the past 12 months?

YES NO Don't Know

6. Indicate where your homeless students are currently staying:

A. Temporary accommodation or no conventional shelter

	Estimated numbers
Friend's place	<input type="text"/>
Relative's place	<input type="text"/>
Moving around frequently	<input type="text"/>
Government supported accom. (eg. crisis refugees, hostels, transitional housing, or SAAP community placement)	<input type="text"/>
Boarding house room	<input type="text"/>
On the streets/ squat/car/tent etc	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>

B. Longer term arrangement, but homeless within last 3 months and needing continuing support

Private rental flat/share house	<input type="text"/>
Boarding with friends/ family	<input type="text"/>
Foster Care	<input type="text"/>
Back with parents	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>

7. Estimate how many students are in each age group:

Estimated number in each age group			
12 years	<input type="text"/>	18yrs	<input type="text"/>
13 yrs	<input type="text"/>	19yrs	<input type="text"/>
14yrs	<input type="text"/>	20yrs	<input type="text"/>
17yrs	<input type="text"/>	20 yrs	<input type="text"/>
16yrs	<input type="text"/>	21yrs +	<input type="text"/>

8. Homeless students' family situation before leaving home:

	Estimated numbers
Biological parents together	<input type="text"/>
Single parent only	<input type="text"/>
Blended family (a parent with a new partner, either married or de-facto)	<input type="text"/>
Foster parent(s)	<input type="text"/>
Other situations	<input type="text"/>
Please specify.....	

• The following questions ask about factors thought to be associated with students becoming homeless.

9. How many of the homeless students in your school are Indigenous students?

10. How many of the homeless students have spent periods in the state care and protection system [currently or in the past]

Thank you for your cooperation

Survey estimates 30,000 students homeless

By ERVICA LONGO,
social welfare reporter

Up to 30,000 young people could be homeless while trying to finish secondary school, according to a national survey.

The study in one week in May found that nine out of 1000 secondary students were reported homeless by their schoolteachers.

The study will be released at the Year of the Family Conference in Adelaide today, and shows that Victoria has the greatest number of homeless youth in secondary schools, totalling 3540 between 23 and 27 May.

New South Wales had the next-highest number — 2910, followed by Queensland.

The research, by Dr Chris Chamberlain, a sociologist from Monash University, and Mr David MacKenzie, of the faculty of social sciences at RMIT, found that there were 11,000 homeless secondary students at 1948 schools across Australia in that week.

In their report, *The National Census of Homeless School Students*, obtained by *The Age*, they estimated there would be between 25,000 and 30,000 homeless secondary students nationwide a year.

Most schools had more than 10 homeless students and complained that they could not provide adequate support and welfare.

Most homeless students came

from one-parent families, or from those where parents were in a de facto marriage or had remarried.

The average number of homeless was 21 a school, but some had up to 70 students without an adequate home.

Dr Chamberlain and Mr MacKenzie said the main problem was that Australia lacked a national strategy on how schools should deal with the problem.

They will today call on the Federal Government and state governments for immediate action to tackle the problem, which they found crossed socio-economic and geographic boundaries.

The high levels of homelessness extended to provincial cities,

including Ballarat and Bendigo, not only metropolitan areas.

"Homeless youth have generally been thought of as 'street kids'. The fact that many young people become homeless while still at school has been overlooked," they said.

The key to tackling the problem was early intervention and prevention programs focusing on schools.

The possibility of intervention passed when homeless students dropped out of school because they left behind their social ties.

They then risked being caught up in the homeless subculture, which involved petty crime, prostitution and drug dealing. Sixty-one per cent of govern-

ment and Catholic secondary schools reported that they had had homeless students. The rest of the schools surveyed said they occasionally had homeless students.

The homeless study found that:

- Two-thirds were born 17 per cent of all schools.
- Most teenagers were first-time homeless at secondary school.
- Most were between 16 and 17 years old; the youngest was 12.
- 44 per cent were living in temporary accommodation with friends or relatives.
- 30 per cent had recently become homeless.
- Eight per cent had no accommodation.

- One per cent lived in boarding houses (a total of 130 people).
- 17 per cent lived in government-supported accommodation.

Only 1 per cent of schools surveyed did not take part. The researchers visited 160 schools in the middle of the year.

The youth worker at Prahran Secondary College, Mr Mike Loughman, said the problem was complex and serious because students had to cope with study devoid of any family support, such as a parent cooking evening meals and taking them to the library. The school has 40 homeless students out of a total school population of 380.

HOMELESS SECONDARY STUDENTS

In one week, May 1994, there were nearly 11,000 homeless Aust. studs.

VICTORIA has the highest level of homeless students.	3,540
NSW	2,910
QLD	1,760
SA	1,000
WA	760
TAS	500
ACT	170
NT	100

*More adjusted figures

WHERE THE YOUNG PEOPLE LIVE

- 44% temporary accomm, mainly with friends and relatives.
- 30% recently homeless
- 17% in Gov. supported accomm.
- 8% no accomm, moved during the census week.
- 1% boarding houses.
- Most of the homeless were aged 16 and 17 years.

Source: The National Census of Homeless School Students

Picture: SIMON ODWYER



Homeless students set their sights firmly on a university place

Home-cooked meals and a domestic chauffeur service are not part of the deal for the thousands of Australian secondary students who are homeless.

Dora Mills, Kevin Connors and Irene Hue, all 18, have been homeless throughout their VCE. All three have got through and are hoping for a place in university.

Ms Mills, a student at Princes Hill Secondary College, shared a flat with friends in Elwood and St Kilda after leaving home because she could not get along with her parents. She survived through most of her secondary education with Government student support.

She dropped out of school soon after becoming homeless but went back when she was again motivated.

The biggest problem she faced as a secondary student without a family home was that she had "very little family support". "I had to deal with everything myself. I didn't have people to cook for me, pay my rent ... and it's harder to concentrate on studies."

She is hoping to get into an arts degree course at Melbourne University.

Kevin Connors, who has completed the VCE at the Northern Metropolitan College of TAFE, is also hoping to get into an arts degree course. He wants to major in history and archaeology.

"I miss my dad and I do feel I've missed out on all the love and stuff like that"

— Irene, 18

He has been homeless since the beginning of the year because his father left Victoria for Queensland. Before then, he periodically lived on the streets.

"I got my own flat for a while but that all blew up because I didn't have enough money. I lived with Hanover Youth Welfare Services in a flat with a friend," he said. "I would be better off if I had my family around."

Irene Hue, a student at Prahran Secondary College last year, has lived in a flat not far from her father and his new family's home for two years.

She considers herself luckier than many homeless secondary students because she can go to her father's house even though she has found it difficult to get along with her new family.

She has lived on her own since she was 16. "I miss my dad and I do feel I've missed out on all the love and stuff like that."

Mike Loughman, left, a welfare worker, plays parent to homeless students Dora Mills, Kevin Connors and Irene Hue. All three had to move out of home after experiencing difficulties living with their parents.

The Age
22nd November 1994

Homeless study shows need for school welfare

By ADELE MORIN

Up to 140 students in any typical city high school of 1,000 students are at risk of becoming homeless and up to 60 of them are at serious risk, according to a major study to be released today.

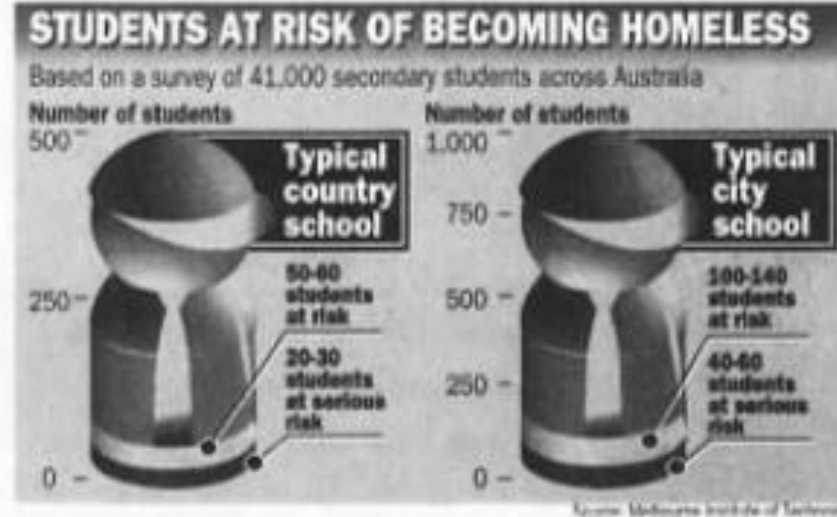
The 40 to 60 students considered at serious risk of becoming homeless would be experiencing family problems. Many of them would feel unsafe, some would have run away at least once, and most would be unhappy at home.

The study of 41,000 secondary students from 63 Australian schools reveals a higher than expected group experiencing serious family difficulties.

It shows the need for all schools to have effective welfare or pastoral care services, according to the authors, Dr Chris Chamberlain, of Monash University, and Mr David MacKenzie, of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

In the Budget, the Federal Government abolished the \$7 million-a-year Students at Risk program, which provided early intervention for students with family trouble.

The study, to be released at the First National Conference on Homelessness in Melbourne, also shows that in a typical country high school of 500 students, 50 to 60 students are potentially at risk of homeless-



ness, including 20 to 30 in serious trouble at home.

The study shows that 60 per cent of the at-risk students are girls, contrary to teachers' views that boys are more in danger.

It shows that the biggest group of students - 45 per cent - is happy at home and appear in no danger of leaving or being thrown out. But a minority are at serious risk.

The students, from years seven to 12, filled out questionnaires designed to detect their vulnerability to homelessness. They were asked whether they had run away from home in the past 12 months, felt safe at home, would like to move out of home soon, felt happy at home, or got into a lot

of conflict with their parents. Of the seriously at risk group, 90 per cent did not feel safe at home, 58 per cent had run away, 89 per cent reported a lot of conflict with parents, and 94 per cent felt either unhappy or ambivalent about home.

In each of the nine communities surveyed, some schools had higher or lower than the average numbers of at-risk students. But in about 80 per cent of the schools between 10 and 14 per cent of the students were potentially at risk of homelessness.

Students in middle-class suburbs were only slightly less at risk than students in working-class areas.

Sydney Morning Herald
5th September 1996

Homeless children on streets younger

By JULIE LEWIS
Education Writer

Homeless children in NSW are dropping out of high school younger than in other States, many to live on the streets, a new study suggests.

School support services for homeless students in NSW are "probably the least adequate in the country", Melbourne-based researchers Mr David MacKenzie and Dr Chris Chamberlain claim in the first national census of homeless school students.

If they remain at school, the slide into a street subculture may often be averted and a return to the family is more likely, say to the researchers.

There are 2,910 homeless students in NSW high schools, according to the census figures.

While Sydney schools have 1,200 homeless students, there are also 100 in Wollongong, 200 on the Central Coast, about 120 in Newcastle and between 20 and 30 in country towns such as Wagga Wagga, Moree and Murwillumbah.

"If we don't do something about early intervention the problem is going to get worse and worse," Mr MacKenzie said.

The study, conducted in the final school week of May 1994, identified 10,440 homeless schoolchildren in the country. Not all students who are homeless are on the streets. They may be moving around between friends or living in refuges and temporary accommodation.

The researchers present their NSW findings for the first time today at a conference held by the Council of Social Service of NSW, titled *The Home/School Divide: Where Welfare and Education Meet*, at the University of Sydney.

The census of 1,948 high schools Australia-wide found that the level of homelessness among students in NSW schools was lower than the national average. Seven in 1,000 students in NSW schools were homeless compared with a national average of nine in every 1,000.

However, this was cause for concern not congratulation, Mr MacKenzie said. The researchers concluded that the lower level was due to homeless students in NSW schools dropping out sooner than in other States.

The numbers of students on benefits such as Austudy for homeless students and the homeless youth allowance in NSW

also suggested the number of homeless youth overall was higher than the numbers in schools.

"When you look at statistics for benefits they don't give any indication that homelessness in NSW is lower than other States," he said.

He called for a school counsellor to be appointed to every school rather than one counsellor responsible for several schools, as at present.

A spokeswoman for the Minister for Education, Mrs Chadwick, strongly questioned the study's findings.

Stressing that the minister had not seen the study, she said: "If they are saying we have one of the lowest levels of homelessness in our student population then that is good news."

The argument that this meant homeless students in NSW were leaving school earlier than in other States "did not make sense", she said.

The State Government had recently appointed an extra 200 counsellors and the ratio of students to counsellors, now one to 1,000, was the lowest in the history of public education in NSW.

Sydney Morning Herald
17th February 1996



Australian Government
Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare

Counting the homeless 2006



Victoria

‘a policy dark age’

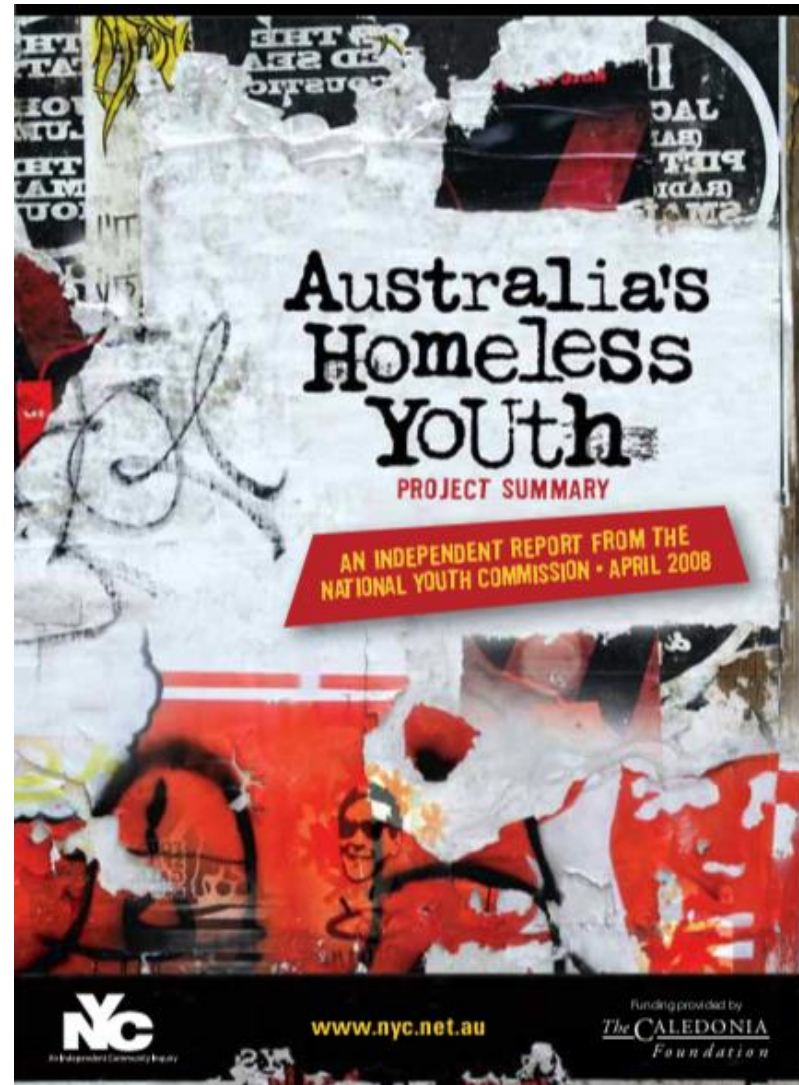
Australia's Homeless Youth

A Report of the National Youth Commission
Inquiry into Youth Homelessness



An Independent Community Inquiry

Funding provided by
The CALEDONIA
Foundation



**National Youth
Commission into
Youth Homelessness
[NYC]**

2007-2008

Launched first week
of April 2008



ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This Project Summary represents a snapshot of the Australia's Homeless Youth Project 2008, a collaboration between:

The National Youth Commission (NYC), the first national independent inquiry into youth homelessness since the Burdek Inquiry in 1989. The National Youth Commission comprised of Major David Eldridge, Associate Professor David MacKenzie, Ms Narelle Clay AM and Father Wally De thlefs. In 2007, the NYC held 21 days of hearings across all States and Territories. Altogether, 319 people gave formal evidence and 91 written submissions were received from community organisations, individuals and government departments. The NYC's findings, including over 80 recommendations, are published in a major report, *Australia's Homeless Youth* © National Youth Commission, 2008, downloadable from www.nyc.net.au

The Oasis, a major feature documentary, made by Shark Island Productions, in collaboration with ABC Television. Homeless young people participated in the film for over two years, courageously sharing their life experiences. www.theoasismovie.com.au

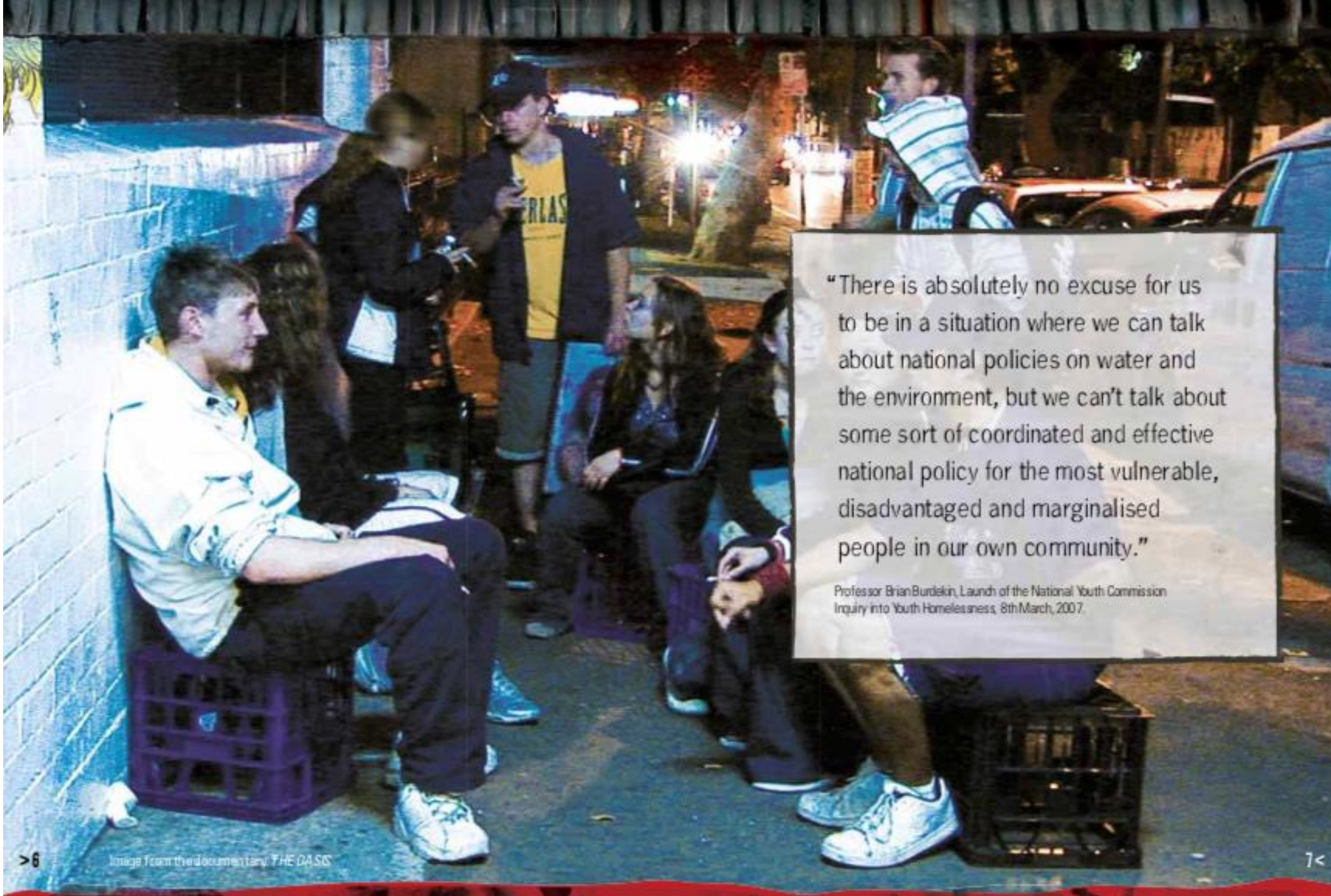
The Caledonia Foundation is a private philanthropic foundation with a focus on sustainable futures for young Australians, which funded the NYC, the education and outreach component of *The Oasis*, and the development of this report. www.caledoniafoundation.com.au

The National Youth Commission's *Australia's Homeless Youth Report*, and the feature documentary *The Oasis* were both launched during National Youth Week in April 2008.

AUSTRALIA IS FACING A CRISIS IN YOUTH HOMELESSNESS.

- Every night 22,000 teenagers are homeless - twice the number there was 20 years ago.
- One in two homeless youths are turned away from emergency accommodation every night because services are full.
- This is totally unacceptable in a country as prosperous as Australia.

THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW.



“There is absolutely no excuse for us to be in a situation where we can talk about national policies on water and the environment, but we can’t talk about some sort of coordinated and effective national policy for the most vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised people in our own community.”

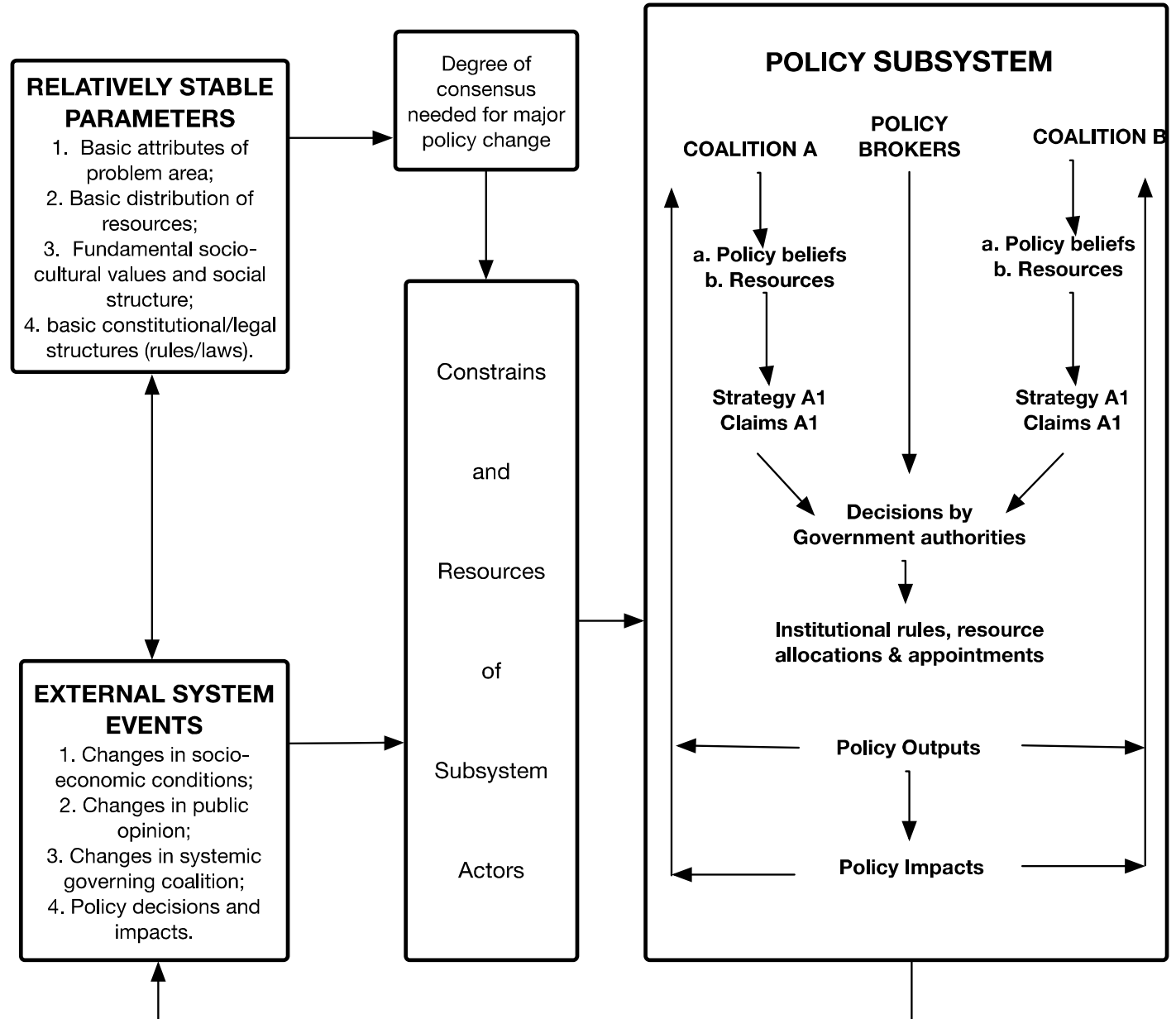
Professor Brian Burdekin, Launch of the National Youth Commission Inquiry into Youth Homelessness, 8th March, 2007.



“It is a national disgrace that there are twice as many homeless young Australians now than in 1989 when the Human Rights Commission undertook its landmark inquiry. We need to set a national aspirational goal to address this situation. No young person should be homeless in a country as economically prosperous as Australia. Part of the economic surpluses from our prosperity needs to be used to eliminate homelessness. This is an achievable national goal.”

Associate Professor David MacKenzie, NYC Commissioner 2008.

Theory of Change: Policy Formation





1973-1980: reports of Young people becoming homeless

1980: Senate Inquiry into youth homelessness

1985: National Homelessness Program SAAP

1995: House of Reps 'The Morris Report'

1994: Census of homeless school students

1989-1990: HEROC 'The Burdekin Report'

1997-2003: Reconnect Program

2007-2008: National Youth Commission (NYC) into Youth Homelessness

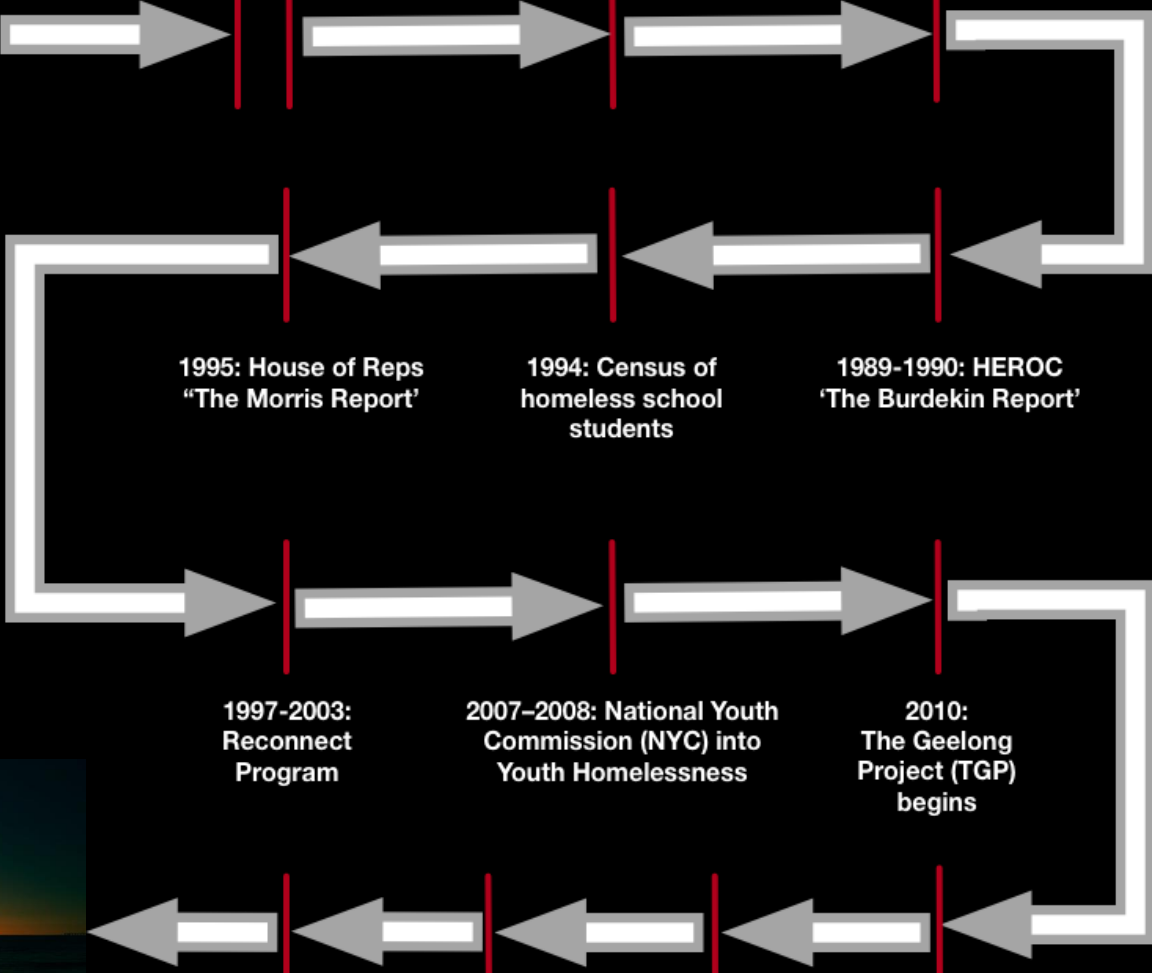
2010: The Geelong Project (TGP) begins

2018: Upstream Project Australia

2018: COSS Model scale-up beginning!

2018: NSW funding - \$4.7m over 4 years

2018: TGP funded - \$2.8m over 2 years



CHANGE MATRIX

RESEARCH

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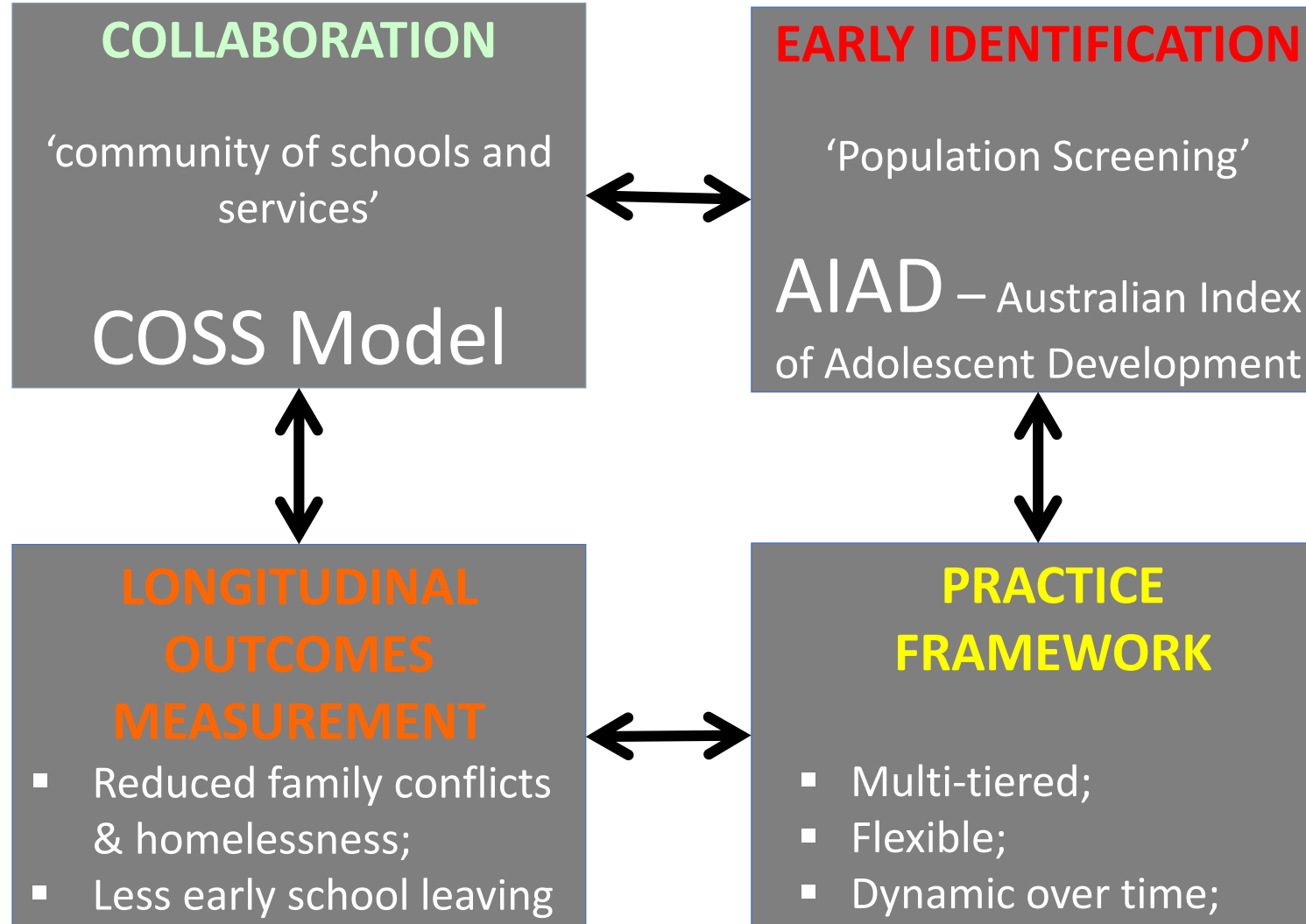
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	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Services put up funding proposal for 'new; service models;▪ Not usually strongly evidence-based;▪ Agency-focused.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Embedded R&D;▪ University as partner;▪ Experimental in real world – 'living labs';▪ i.e. THE UPSTREAM PROJECTS.

The Geelong Project

A 'community of schools & services'
[COSS] model

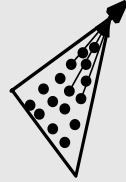
'Collective Impact'

Foundations of the COSS Model



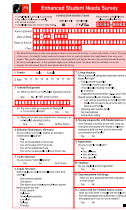
'Collective Impact

Common Agenda



All participants have a shared vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to its solution through agreed upon actions.

Shared Measurement



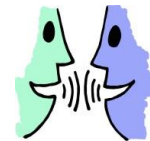
Data collection and measurement of outcomes consistently across all participants to ensure efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.

Mutually Reinforcing Activities



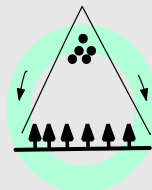
The activities of participants may be different while still being tightly coordinated through a mutually agreed common plan of action.

Continuous Communication



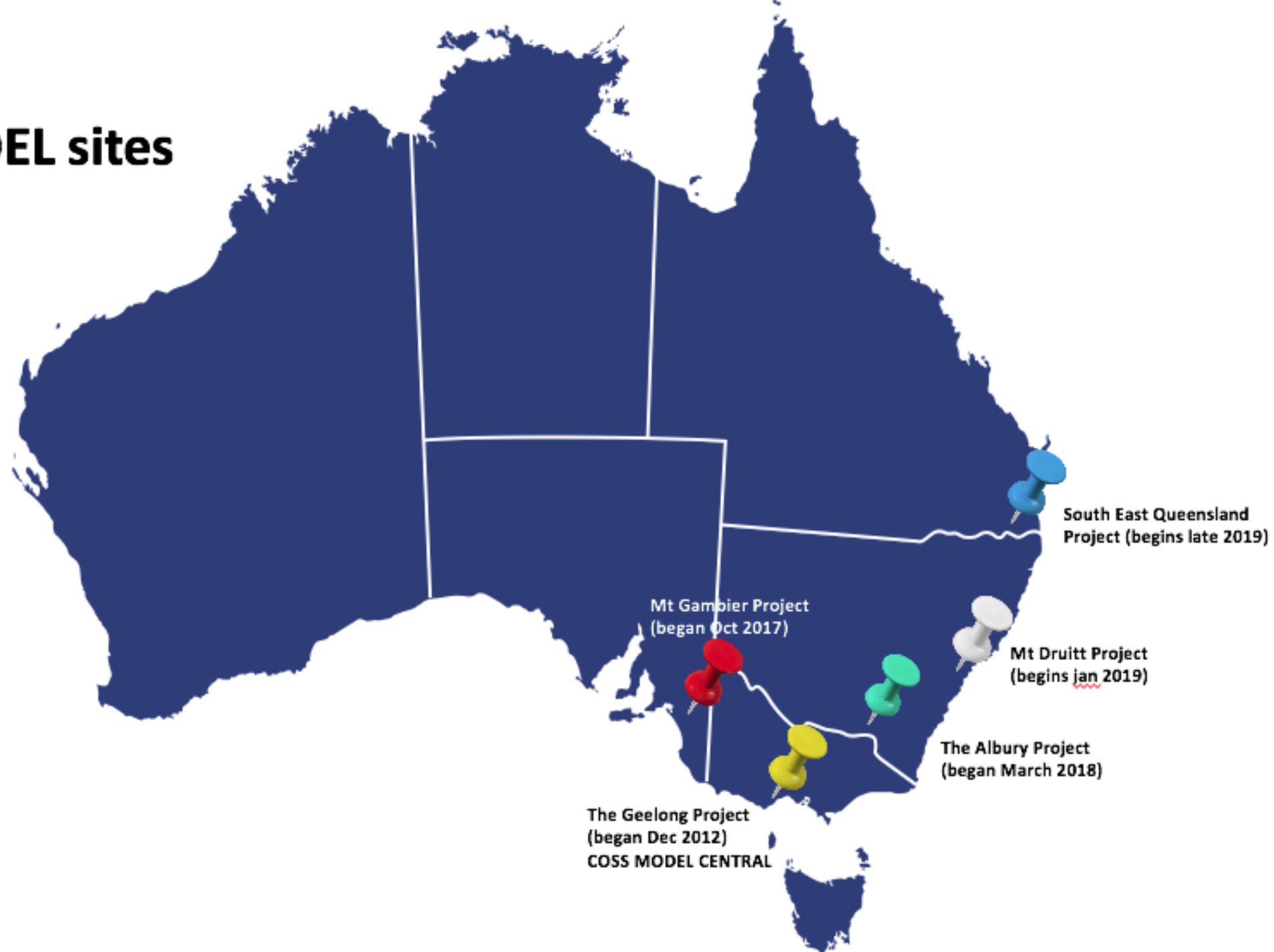
Consistent and open communication amongst participants to build trust, assure mutual objectives and build common motivation.

Backbone Support



A skilled staff and organisational form to build and manage the entire collective impact initiative by coordinating the participant organisations and activities.

Australia: COSS MODEL sites





**The future requires
system reform**

Place-based Collective Impact!

This is the Upstream Project!