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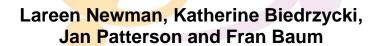http://www.sapo.org.au/pub/pub9583.html

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A Rapid Appraisal Case Study
of South Australia's
Social Inclusion Initiative

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A report prepared for
the Social Exclusion Knowledge Network
of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health
(established by the World Health Organisation)

Acknowledgements

Terms

In this report the term 'Aboriginal' is inclusive of all Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people.

Disclaimer

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABS   Australian Bureau of Statistics

AC   Companion of the Order of Australia (awarded by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for "eminent achievement and merit of the highest degree in service to Australia or to humanity at large").

APOSS   Aboriginal Prisoners and Offenders Support Services

AO   Officer of the Order of Australia (awarded by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II "for distinguished service of a high degree to Australia or to humanity at large")

CALD   Culturally and linguistically diverse

CEO   Chief Executive Officer

CSDH   Commission on Social Determinants of Health

DASSA   Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia

DPC   Department of the Premier and Cabinet

ExComm   Executive Committee of Cabinet

ICAN   Innovative Community Action Network

IMC   Inter-Ministerial Committee

NGO   Non-government organisation

SA   South Australia

SACE   South Australian Certificate of Education

SALP   South Australian Labor Party

SA Plan   South Australia's Strategic Plan

SEU   Social Exclusion Unit (United Kingdom)

SEKN   Social Exclusion Knowledge Network

SI Board   Social Inclusion Board

SII   Social Inclusion Initiative

SIU   Social Inclusion Unit, Department of the Premier and Cabinet

SRAP   *Making the Connections* School Retention Action Plan

WHO   World Health Organisation

Executive Summary

The Case Study and Report

This Rapid Appraisal Case Study of South Australia's Social Inclusion Initiative was undertaken to contribute to the work of the Social Exclusion Knowledge Network (SEKN) of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health (CSDH). The CSDH was established in 2005 by the World Health Organisation to investigate ways in which international, national, regional and local bodies could take action on the social determinants of health. The knowledge networks are one of the main mechanisms by which the CSDH is gathering evidence. This report provides a rapid assessment of the ways in which South Australia's Social Inclusion Initiative has originated and operated. The report's layout follows guidelines developed by the SEKN and draws on documentary and interview evidence. The project was conducted between March and June 2007 by researchers at Flinders University of South Australia, in conjunction with senior staff at South Australia's Social Inclusion Unit, Department of the Premier and Cabinet. South Australia is a State within a federal system of government and has a population of 1.6 million. The population's average health and wellbeing are high by world standards but the State continues to record significant levels of inequality for certain groups and areas, and particularly for its Aboriginal population.

South Australia's Social Inclusion Initiative

The idea to have the Social Inclusion Initiative (SII) in South Australia (SA) came from an opposition State Labor party and the SII was then established during its first term of government in early 2002. The SII was designed to address some of the State's pressing and complex social issues and to do this in innovative ways. It has particularly sought to facilitate a whole-of-government or 'joined up' approach that is seen as better placed to address the complexity of issues than silo approaches to government policy and service provision. The SII's approach is explicitly stated to be modelled on the British Government's Social Exclusion Unit in its focus on partnerships and innovation. However, unlike the UK model, the South Australian model has an independent Social Inclusion Board reporting directly to the Head of Government and associated department. The SII has predominantly used an issues-based Reference model to scope, profile and address issues but has occasionally used a place-based model. The earliest three References of Drugs, Homelessness and School Retention which are covered in detail in this case study have received almost AUS $80 million in new funding over the five years of the SII, with other funding coming from better or innovative ways of using existing budget allocations. The SII has also undertaken considerable work on mental health, suicide prevention, disability, youth offending, youth leadership, and Aboriginal health. The SII sits within the broader context of South Australia's Strategic Plan which was developed in 2004 to drive the State towards becoming a more healthy, socially inclusive and economically prosperous society.

Key Lessons

The case study of South Australia's Social Inclusion Initiative (SII) provides a number of key lessons which may be generalisable to other settings and times.

1. Critical Importance of Political Commitment

There is overwhelming agreement that THE most critical factor in the establishment and development of the South Australian SII has been having a clear 'mandate from the top', with both political and personal commitment from the head of government, in this case the Premier of the State. This commitment has been evidenced in the expression of visionary statements in speeches and through personal attendance at meetings of the Social Inclusion Board (SI Board) and other committees. It has also been particularly important to have the Treasury regularly involved in meetings. The appointment of a Commissioner for Social Inclusion has strengthened the ability to advocate for funding and action on social inclusion initiatives. The 'mandate from the top' has been reinforced by the political and physical location of the Initiative and its administration within the head of government's department, which is close to the main offices of government departments and agencies, non-government organisations, universities and other organisations with whom the Initiative's staff need to liaise and consult.

2. Benefits of a 'Champion' for Social Inclusion

Another crucial factor in the success of South Australia's SII has been the appointment of a high profile individual to 'champion the cause' of social inclusion through the role of Chair of the Social Inclusion Board, and more recently as Commissioner for Social Inclusion. This person has standing and respect in the State, a good working knowledge of local social issues, extensive experience in social policy, and a tenacious personality in achieving change, with the skills and experience to negotiate with and be approachable to people at all levels. The Chair was charged by the Head of Government with advising the Government on whether its stated targets for social inclusion were achievable, and was asked to be fearless in challenging the public sector and the Government in undertaking their tasks. The SI Board has had the same Chair over its whole five years. The Chair has used his ability to communicate and work widely, from being involved in high level negotiations within government to going 'into the field' to talk with socially excluded people, as well as travelling overseas to investigate the potential of best practice models for application in the local context.

3. Benefits of an independent Social Inclusion Board and Unit

A third key lesson from South Australia's Initiative is that a Social Inclusion Board which is independent from, and outside of, government and the public service can play a key role in progressing work on social inclusion. The Board of South Australia's Social Inclusion Initiative was established to have much more than just an advisory role, and has been given the authority by the head of government to intervene to address social exclusion and to work with government agencies and service providers to achieve change. SI Board members are selected because they are leaders or experts in the public, private or community sector in South Australia. The SII has also functioned with an independent Social Inclusion Unit which is accountable both to the SI Board and to the government system through the head of government's department. The Unit's staff provide support to the SI Board but have no direct role in service delivery. This enables them to take a 'balcony view' in a facilitative, advisory and coordination role as they work to build relationships within and between government and non-government agencies and the community sector to research, scope and develop References to address key social inclusion issues. They also play a significant role in negotiation, monitoring of implementation, and evaluation.

4. Setting Targets For Change

The SII has found it important to set defined targets so that everyone involved knows where the initiatives are heading. The SII has chosen to focus both on achieving improved outcomes for people and on improvements in systems change. A focus on people has been somewhat easier to achieve in the shorter term, and evaluations and reports show that many thousands of South Australians have benefited from SII initiatives. Nevertheless, the SII has found that there can be competing interests in this respect, with some wanting to see numbers of people who have been assisted, while others recognise the potential difficulties in measuring and attributing change. There is a view that alongside focussing on 'those who are socially excluded' the SII should in future consider widening its focus to encourage broader cultural change within the State that will also address the beliefs, attitudes and actions of 'those who are doing the excluding'.

5. Having a Vision and Framework for Action

One factor that emerges strongly from the South Australian case study is the value of a jurisdiction having a visionary strategic plan that aims to balance economic, social and environmental goals and outcomes, and that has targets for which the whole public service of the jurisdiction is accountable. The South Australian Government developed South Australia's Strategic Plan in 2004, based on a model from Oregon USA, to provide a framework and 'goad for action' for the activities of Government, business and 'the community'. The Plan was seen as a transparent mechanism to periodically track state-wide progress on achieving measurable targets under six key objectives. The South Australian Government has enshrined some of its key social inclusion targets into this Plan, a move which also gives ongoing symbolic importance to the social inclusion agenda. Agency heads have an inbuilt incentive to achieve the Plan's targets (including those relevant to social inclusion) because they constitute part of their personal performance agreements. The overriding rationale of the Plan is that social development must go hand in hand with economic development and environmental sustainability if the State is to grow and prosper and be positioned to take advantage of opportunities in a globalising world.

6. Achieving Immediate Action

The SII has demonstrated that it is possible to streamline bureaucratic processes so that recommendations are directly translated into action, rather than remaining as a report 'on the shelf'. This is achieved by the Social Inclusion Unit assisting the Social Inclusion Board to write an SI Board Report on each Reference and simultaneously negotiating with agencies on what the Government's first response might be. This enables the release of a 'Government Response' (or 'plan for immediate action') with allocated funding at the same time as, and immediately in response to, the SI Board's Report. This process has been important in enabling the SII to demonstrate within a short period of time its ability to review an issue, conduct widespread consultation and research, negotiate innovative but achievable programs with relevant sectors, and achieve some change in the lives of individuals.

7. Having Evidence-based Action and Evaluation

A major strength of the South Australian SII has been the commitment to collect an evidence base for its work. This has been derived from quantitative and qualitative sources, from research and grey literature, and from evaluation of models of innovative ways of working

and best practice from around the world. The SA Government's 'Thinkers in Residence Program' has also provided access to world experts on certain issues who have made socially innovative recommendations appropriate to South Australia. Within its References, the SII has also developed initiatives as models to demonstrate innovative ways of working. The SIU has developed a guiding framework for evaluation of the References and has undertaken 'walk alongside' evaluation to help initiatives start off successfully, remain on track to help the group who are most in need and who are the focus of the initiative, and to provide informative input to implementation and management. There appears to be no conclusive evidence on the impact of the SII overall on increasing social inclusion at the broader level, although evaluation of individual References affirms measurable impact on the lives of thousands of South Australians.

8. The Critical Role of Good Relationships

The Chair of the Social Inclusion Board believes that much of the SII's achievement has depended on building relationships and trust. Indeed, strengthening relationships and achieving cultural change in the State bureaucracy are seen as key factors in the sustainability and success of the social inclusion agenda. Staff at South Australia's SIU have demonstrated expertise in negotiation, diplomacy and persistence through processes of consultation and discussion with socially excluded groups, specialists in particular areas, staff in government and NGOs, people in the community sector, 'the community' and the media. The success in building relationships may well have been facilitated by relative continuity of staff and the SI Board having the same Chair over the five years. The SIU has also been able to capitalise on its independent and facilitative role in developing relationships with and between staff in various government and non-government sectors in order to encourage more 'joined up' approaches to addressing complex social issues. However, the traditional silo approach of individual agencies is a key feature of the Westminster model of government that exists in South Australia and this has proven to be probably THE major barrier to more joined up ways of working. Evaluations nevertheless show that the SII has been a catalyst for some increase in partnership work and has encouraged more thought around this issue. There is however room to build greater capacity among public servants at all levels, and among service providers and the community, to better understand social inclusion and the needs of disadvantaged individuals and groups, and to strengthen the ability to work in joined up ways to increase social inclusion.

9. Sustainability

The SII is in the process of developing mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of social inclusion outcomes. There are also questions about the continuity of the SII if and when a change of government occurs. One way to increase sustainability is to mainstream initiatives into ongoing agency work. However, the SII has found that agencies often have difficulty in taking over responsibility for social inclusion initiatives if they see them as unfunded 'non-core' business. This might be overcome by finding ways to embed social inclusion into agency plans or strategic documents and by encouraging the development of line budgets to continue social inclusion work. Sustainability of the social inclusion agenda might be further supported by targets relevant to social inclusion being more widely incorporated into South Australia's Strategic Plan, with its inbuilt mechanisms to encourage target achievement by agency heads. A commitment to address social inclusion might also be mainstreamed by the building of greater social inclusion capacity and broader cultural change among public

servants, service providers and the general public so that social inclusion remains at the forefront of thinking and action.

Generalisability

These key lessons from South Australia may be limited in their generalisability due to the State's specific social, cultural, historical, geographical, economic and political context. In particular, the Social Inclusion Initiative's origin relates to a particular point in the State's political history, while its development and activities have been influenced by the State's size and geography, the size of its government and population, and the social and temporal relevance of the Reference issues. Regardless, the SII in South Australia does demonstrate successful strategies, processes and approaches which could be considered for other jurisdictions, and perhaps scaled up for larger jurisdictions, if they were appropriately adapted to their particular context. Indeed, hallmarks in the development of South Australia's Social Inclusion Initiative and South Australia's Strategic Plan have been continuing evolution and learning from their own and others' experiences.

1. Introduction to the Case Study

1.1 Origins and Aims of the Case Study

The impetus to conduct this Rapid Appraisal Case Study and others like it originated with the Social Exclusion Knowledge Network (SEKN) of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health. The Commission was established by the World Health Organization in 2005 and its aim was to draw attention to, and stimulate action around, the social factors that lead to ill health and health inequities at global, regional, national, and local levels. The Commission has established Knowledge Networks on nine themes. Their purpose is to synthesize knowledge designed to improve action on social determinants of health so as to incorporate complex social dimensions into policy and programming across all government sectors. Knowledge Networks comprise experts (scientists, policy makers, program managers) from developing and developed countries who are collecting, analysing and sharing knowledge on these themes to identify specific areas for policy and institutional change.

Part of the work of the SEKN is to assemble country case studies to provide a systems level analysis of processes and factors that enable and/or constrain the implementation and scaling up of policies, programmes and/or institutional arrangements that have the potential to reduce social exclusion and ultimately reduce health inequalities. The Social Inclusion Unit of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet within the South Australian Government was approached and agreed for South Australia's Social Inclusion Initiative (SII) to be the focus of such a study by researchers at the Australian Health Inequities Program and the Department of Public Health at Flinders University. The project was carried out between March and June 2007.

1.2 The Evidence Base and Analysis Framework

The evidence used in compiling this case study was predominantly of a documentary nature, along with interviews with selected key informants. The documentary evidence included both public and non-public information from the Social Inclusion Unit, Department of the Premier and Cabinet (SIU). These were Reference reports, government response documents and action plans, evaluation reports, minutes of Social Inclusion Board meetings, SII newsletters, conference and seminar presentations, internal reports, annual reports, the websites of the SII and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and Hansard records online. Documents were analysed using the narrative synthesis approach. Questions asked of the documents and interview respondents followed a standard template developed by the SEKN for the Case Study Appraisals. These were to provide background information, explanations of how the program/policy was developed, assessment of what factors aided its success, and the extent to which the action is assessed as transferable to other regions or countries. In South Australia the researchers worked with the Social Inclusion Unit's Executive Director and Senior Policy Advisor Research and Evaluation to amend the template wording slightly to make the template appropriate to the South Australian Initiative. The interview process and question schedule were approved by the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee at Flinders University. It should be noted that whilst this Case Study reports on the overall Social Inclusion Initiative, there is a particular focus on the Initiative's earliest three References of Drugs, Homelessness and School Retention. However, the SII has also undertaken considerable work over the past five years on mental health, Aboriginal health, suicide prevention, disability, youth offending and youth leadership.

2. Background to Social Exclusion in South Australia

2.1 The Country and Policy Context

The area which is today known as South Australia has been home for tens if not hundreds of thousands of years to an Aboriginal population of diverse and rich cultural and linguistic heritage (Ross 1984). The first recorded sighting of the coast of South Australia by Europeans was in 1627, but thorough exploration did not occur until 1802 (ABS 1996). Following exploration, plans were developed in the 1830s within the British Colonial Office in London to establish a British colony, and in 1834 the British Government passed the South Australian Colonisation Act to enable free British settlers to take up the land (ABS 1996). The Province was proclaimed in December 1836 and the city of Adelaide surveyed in 1837, when the first land allotments were made. By 1842 the Aboriginal population in Adelaide was estimated to have declined to only 700 (Ellis 1976), with many communities decimated by smallpox spreading west from other settled areas of the continent (Gara 1988). The Constitution Act of 1855 established a system of responsible government following the Westminster model, at which point the State's population totalled almost 86,000.

In 2006 South Australia had a population of 1.6 million people or 7.5% of the nation's 20.7 million population (ABS 2007a). Of these, 23,425 (or 1.6%) identified as Indigenous (Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander) people in the 2001 Census, representing an increase of 15% over the 1996 figure (ABS 2001a). The State is situated in the middle south of the continent of Australia away from the main concentration of population and economic activity on Australia's eastern seaboard. It covers one-eighth the land mass of the continent (just over 985,000 square kilometres – ABS 1996). Much of the land is covered by plains and desert, which nevertheless has significant mining development which is currently undergoing further expansion; one-half the land is devoted to extensive pastoralism and one-third has no significant economic use (ABS 1996).

Approximately 73% of the State's population lives in the capital city of Adelaide which is situated in the more hospitable area centred on a plain facing the Southern Ocean and backed by a low range of hills (this is a higher urban concentration than Australia as a whole, for which the figure is 64% - ABS 2004). Metropolitan Adelaide is one of the world's least expensive cities to live in, even though it offers a cosmopolitan lifestyle, one of the highest standards of living in the world and cheaper housing than the eastern states (Government of South Australia 2005). Immigration has always been an important component of population in the Australian context and 21% of the SA population is overseas-born (ABS 2004). The State's favourable aspects are currently being used by the South Australian Government to attract immigrants in greater proportions. The State has also been taking a significant proportion of Australia's humanitarian migrants in recent years, with the number of refugees settling in South Australia increasing to 1,588 in 2005, and nearly half being aged under 18 years (Minister for Health South Australia 2006).

In seeking to understand social exclusion and attempts to address it in the South Australian context there are several specific factors that need to be understood, in particular the system of government and the timing of the initiative in political terms. Australia is a constitutional democracy based on a federal division of powers. It has a federal system of government within which there are four divisions: Commonwealth, State, Territory, and local government (ABS 2001b). Alongside the Commonwealth Government at the national level there are six

State and two Territory Governments at the regional level. The powers of the Commonwealth Parliament are limited to areas of national importance, with powers granted by the Constitution including trade and commerce, taxation, foreign relations, defence and immigration (ibid). High Court decisions and Commonwealth-State agreements have also seen the Commonwealth gain influence in regard to various matters including industrial relations, financial regulation, companies and securities, health and welfare, and education. However, significant powers are also held by the State and Territory Governments and the extent of State legislative powers defined by the Commonwealth and State Constitutions includes education, public health, public transport, police, agriculture, roads and the overseeing of local government (ibid).

The federal-state system of government influences policy and funding for a variety of matters which affect issues relevant to social inclusion, including employment, housing, health, income and taxation. It is important to note therefore that State and Territory Governments do not directly control or have the ability to change certain factors which could address social exclusion within their jurisdiction, such as the income tax, income support and welfare/family payment systems (which are a Commonwealth responsibility). While the States and Territories are responsible for providing their populations with certain services, they are still reliant on the Commonwealth Government for funding and joint agreements in certain significant areas such as health and housing. For example the Housing Assistance Act provides the legislative basis for the Commonwealth's provision of financial assistance to the States and Territories for housing and related purposes, and the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement sets out terms for providing housing assistance for rental housing, home purchase and other programs, including crisis accommodation. Nevertheless, due to the different responsibilities and sizes of population involved, there are benefits in addressing social exclusion at a state level which may not be attainable at a Federal or national level, and these are discussed later in the report.

From 1970 to 1980 and from 1982 to 1993 the Australian Labor Party was in government in South Australia and had social justice and health high on their agenda. The legacy of the Bannon Labor Government of the 1980s was blighted by the fact that the State-controlled bank collapsed in 1991. This led to a severe economic downturn in the State and meant that the shadow of the State Bank collapse has hung heavily over each successive State Government. Partly as a consequence of that, and also because of ideological position, the Liberal governments from 1993 were strongly committed to reducing State Government expenditure and the size of the public service, which also entailed cuts to the health budget. The incoming Labor Government in 2002 clearly wanted to establish that it would be economically responsible (and so not risk another economic catastrophe like the bank collapse) but also wished to revive the State's long term focus on social justice and state investment in public assets.

The establishment of the Social Inclusion Initiative (SII) in South Australia was a key political initiative of the State Labor Party during its time in Opposition and subsequently during its first term of government in early 2002. The Initiative was established with an independent Social Inclusion Board reporting directly to the new State Premier (Head of Government) and with specific issues identified as the points for action. The Initiative was developed based on an expectation of a whole-of-government approach to increasing social inclusion through a joined up approach to service development and delivery. The Social Inclusion Initiative also sits in the broader context of South Australia's Strategic Plan (SA Plan) which was developed in 2004 and which is cast in a 10-year time frame, built around six key objectives of growing

prosperity, improving well-being, attaining sustainability, fostering creativity, building communities and expanding opportunity.

2.2 Nature and Extent of Social Exclusion in South Australia

2.2.1 A 'picture' of social exclusion in South Australia

The level of health and wellbeing of the South Australian population is high when compared to the populations of many overseas countries, and compared with the rest of the world life expectancy is among the highest (77 for males and 82 for females) and infant mortality amongst the lowest (4.2) (Glover et al 2006). South Australia has traditionally had significant investment in the public sector, with a set of health, education and welfare services that have contributed markedly to the state being an extremely healthy community by world standards (Baum 1995). Another of the State's achievements has been a relatively equitable city (Stretton 1987). However, poverty is a very real issue for a significant minority of South Australians although it is not as evident as in many other Australian cities (Baum 1995). Pockets of disadvantage are found particularly in the outer northern and southern areas of Adelaide, and this locational disadvantage has been found to negatively impact on people's health and wellbeing (Baum et al 2007).

The impacts of social exclusion in South Australia can be described by considering the current social, cultural and economic context, and by describing patterns of socio-economic disadvantage. Unemployment has generally been higher in South Australia than other States, although unemployment is currently at relatively low levels (fluctuating around 5% since 2004, while the national average has fluctuated around 4% – ABS 2007b). However, unemployment for 15-19 year olds in South Australia is currently at 19% for those not in full-time education (compared to 13.5% nationally) and the State also has significantly higher rates of long term unemployment, older age unemployment, inter-generational unemployment, and regional unemployment. For example, unemployment is almost six times higher in the most disadvantaged areas of the State, and South Australia has also experienced higher rates of workforce casualisation and underemployment (Glover et al 2006), as well as higher levels of welfare dependency and greater rates of growth in poverty and income disparity. In terms of education, the participation of 16 year olds in full-time education is almost one third lower in the most disadvantaged areas (Glover et al 2006), and relatively low levels of literacy and numeracy still require attention (interview, Chair of the Board).

Following the economic recession of the 1980s and 1990s, South Australia has also generally lagged behind other states in its economic recovery. Consecutive State Governments since that time have generally followed a neo-liberalist policy and have sought to deregulate and privatise where possible in order to cut government expenditure and increase competition (Stretton 2005). (This led, for example, to the privatisation of the State's power supply with a consequent rise in power prices for the general public, and a trial privatisation of the management of one public hospital). The overall economic downturn in South Australia over the past two decades has contributed to a loss of population (particularly young people) which is seen as undermining the state's future economic potential. The State produced a Population Policy in 2004, which included targeting an increase in overseas immigration to raise the population base as a means to improve the economy (Government of South Australia 2004a).

The *Social Health Atlas of South Australia* (Glover et al 2006) provides an overview of health and wellbeing status, patterns of use of health and welfare services, and evidence for the impact of socioeconomic factors on the health and wellbeing of South Australians. It highlights the inequalities in social, health and wellbeing indicators which exist at the state and regional levels for specific population groups or areas, and which need to be addressed if South Australia is to become a more inclusive community. These lie in inequality in access to good health care and services, inequality in health outcomes, and inequality in other modifiable factors that affect health and wellbeing (eg housing and employment) (Glover et al 2006). The State still has significant inequalities in health between men and women, the young and the aged, between different areas and neighbourhoods, between the city and the rural/remote areas, between those who have paid work and those who do not, and between people with different incomes and levels of education (Glover et al 1999).

The State's Aboriginal population (of 23,425 people in 2001) experiences considerably greater disadvantage and ill-health when compared with their non-Aboriginal counterparts (as is the case across the whole of Australia). The Aboriginal population of South Australia in particular has generally much poorer health access and health outcomes than the State population as whole, with Indigenous life expectancy at birth around 18 years lower for males and 15 years lower for females, and with infant mortality in the Indigenous population being 46% higher (ibid). They also generally experience higher overall morbidity, higher risk of chronic disease, higher risk of imprisonment, unemployment, earlier school leaving, and a high incidence of multiple and complex factors. The Aboriginal population in South Australia also has poorer life outcomes, with premature death rates 4.1 times higher for the Indigenous population, compared with 2.8 times higher for people living in the most disadvantaged areas (ibid). The Aboriginal population also has a much younger age profile, with a median age of 21 years compared with 38 years for the whole population.

The main process which has determined a life of comparable disadvantage for Aboriginal people in South Australia and Australia is historical and generational dispossession and disadvantage, originating in colonial and post-colonial marginalisation by Europeans and exacerbated by ongoing politics and racism (Raftery 2006). Furthermore, health policy and the health system has not been designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal people and until recently has often been neither culturally appropriate or socially or physically accessible (Raftery 2006). It is notable that Aboriginal Australians were until relatively recently excluded from what might be regarded as citizenship rights and entitlements and were not counted in the national census (Gardiner-Garden 2007). Raftery (2006) notes that the contemporary challenge is to find ways to support Indigenous choice that are not associated with the continuation of historically entrenched inequality, dependence and diminished life chances. It should also be noted that there is room for a significant increase in the amount of research and analysis around the health and wellbeing of the State's increasing number of refugees (humanitarian migrants).

2.2.2 Reframing the focus from social exclusion to social inclusion in South Australian policy

Documentation shows that the recent South Australian response has been to focus less on the problem of social exclusion and more on the solution of what can be done to increase social inclusion. The Rann Labor Government was elected to its first term of government in March 2002 and a major election platform had been 'Labor's *twin pillars* of social inclusion and economic development', which were described by The Hon. Mike Rann MP (then Leader of the Opposition, and later Premier) as representing a cycle of inclusiveness and economic

prosperity. Several interviewees highlighted the fact that in South Australia there has been recognition that the 'old' debate around poverty and poverty alleviation needs to inform the social inclusion agenda through an understanding of the importance of addressing both the consequences of social exclusion and the root structural and institutional causes. This then focuses on broader systems change to increase social and economic participation, engagement through skills building, and attention to complex needs (interview 4, and Chair of the Board). In his role as Premier, Rann has reflected this in stating that:

> *Social exclusion is more than just poverty, it sums up a condition of being trapped and locked out of chances to build a better future for each person and their family (Rann 2002a).*

Discussion has also focused more on the desired outcome of social inclusion:

> *You include people socially when they have a stake in the economy. When they have jobs, and hope, and can see a future for their children, they will have a sense of confidence about the future… We believe in social justice… We believe in a strong community (Rann 2002b).*

The description of 'social inclusion' along with key directions and approaches to be used by the Social Inclusion Board and the Social Inclusion Unit (SIU) were first discussed at a meeting of the SI Board on 6 May 2002. The Chair of the SI Board set the scene for a social inclusion agenda, saying "we could define social exclusion as the *process* of being shut out from the social, economic, political and cultural systems which contribute to the integration of a person into community". He outlined multi-dimensional aspects of inequality which required attention with interrelated approaches:

- Economic aspects - where citizens do not have access to employment and assets such as property and credit;

- Social aspects - where citizens do not have access to contacts, groups and opportunities which empower them to access mainstream society;

- Political/institutional aspects - where citizens do not have access to places of living and recreation with adequate facilities and services;

- Temporal aspects - where children living in poverty have a higher probability of suffering social exclusion and poverty later in life.

3. The Social Inclusion Initiative's Aims and Mode of Operation

This section of the report provides a basic description of the South Australian Social Inclusion Initiative's nature and response to addressing social exclusion. More detailed information is provided in Section 4 which explains the Initiative's origin and impact.

3.1 Nature of South Australia's Social Inclusion Initiative

This section outlines the aims of the South Australian Social Inclusion Initiative, its administrative and governance structures, and the main stakeholders, targets, and processes used to work towards these. The Social Inclusion Initiative (SII) for South Australia commenced in early 2002. SII documentation makes it clear that the SII is not in itself a program nor a statement of government policy, and that it is neither a specific portfolio or planning framework. The recommendations of the Social Inclusion Board and the discussion of policy implications are intended to facilitate and promote debate and inform future policy development. The process of addressing particular social issues through the Social Inclusion Initiative has, however, influenced the development of a number of government policies.

3.1.1 Aims and Governance

The Social Inclusion Initiative is the South Australian Government's response to addressing social exclusion through:

- Facilitating joined up implementation of programs across government departments, sectors and communities;

- Sponsoring/employing innovative approaches;

- Developing partnerships and relationships with stakeholders;

- Focusing on outcomes.

The Social Inclusion Initiative works across government and non-government sectors using a model of References referred by the Premier which reflect the South Australian Government's and public's concern for a particular issue, or for a particular group whose circumstances currently or potentially exclude them from living healthy and fulfilled lives (SI Board 2003; SIU 2005a). It has also been significant that the SII has worked on issues which are locally relevant at the time (interviews 1, 2 and 4).

3.1.2 The Social Inclusion Board

The Social Inclusion Board consists of the Chair (Monsignor David Cappo AO since its inception) and nine to ten Board members who are generally well known community members or high level experts in their field. Board members are appointed for a two year term and can be reappointed for further terms. The role of SI Board members has changed over the life of the Initiative, and a review of SI Board fees was instigated by the Executive Director of the Social Inclusion Unit in 2006 as a result of the changed and increased work profile (Board Minutes February 2006).

The Chair and SI Board are independent from Government but strongly embedded in a process which is supported by, and closely linked to, Government. The mandate given by the Premier to the SI Board is to act in a much stronger capacity than just an advisory board role so that it has the power and authority from the Head of Government to intervene to address social exclusion, to obtain information and confront issues which might otherwise be seen as too difficult or too hard, to strongly advise on joined up government at various levels and to work with government agencies and service providers to achieve change (interview, Chair of the Board). There is a close working relationship between the Chair of the Social Inclusion Board and the Premier, and also between the Chair and the Executive Director of the Social Inclusion Unit. The SI Board has stated Terms of Reference and is responsible for:

- Providing leadership to the work of the Social Inclusion Unit (SIU) to ensure that Government receives expert policy advice on identified social policy issues and a coordinated and integrated approach to developing, implementing and reviewing the directions of Government to reduce social exclusion;

- Providing recommendations, information and advice to the Premier and Cabinet, including advice on potential priorities for Government funding consideration;

- Providing guidance, support and advice to the SIU in addressing issues identified by the Premier and Cabinet;

- Developing strategies for dealing with the causes of social exclusion to provide leadership to influence and shape national social justice policy;

- Assisting the SIU to develop and maintain appropriate engagement mechanisms across government, 'the community' and stakeholders;

- Providing advice and information to the SIU to assist in research activities;

- Reporting on a quarterly basis to the Premier.

The SI Board (and more recently the sub-committees which have developed) meets at least bi-monthly, but often more frequently, to discuss and provide advice and direction on the work of the References. The Chief Executive of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet attends the meetings of the SI Board. External experts are also called to provide advice to the SI Board as necessary.

3.1.3 The Social Inclusion Unit

The Social Inclusion Unit (SIU) provides support to the Social Inclusion Board in a facilitative, advisory and coordination role and is responsible for negotiation with agencies, for researching and scoping References, for ongoing negotiation around implementation, and for monitoring and evaluation. The Unit helps to develop the SI Board's report on any individual Reference and at the same time negotiates with relevant government agencies to develop the Government's response (or 'action plan'). The SIU started with 12 core staff positions and in 2007 had 14; other staff are seconded or recruited as needed. The SIU has had relative continuity of Executive Directors in its five years, with the two most recent Executive Directors covering the last 4½ years.

The SIU's Business Plan (DPC 2003) nests within the Strategic Directions of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and is developed in consultation with the SI Board and SIU staff. The SIU contributes to the Strategic Direction of 'Strong Communities', which aims to "implement strategies that encourage a whole of government approach to volunteering, active citizenship and the creation of a socially inclusive society" (DPC 2003). The SIU's Business Plan defines objectives not only to "support, develop or implement a Reference" but also to achieve the outcomes of that Reference. Therefore, the SIU holds itself responsible for the monitoring of the implementation of programs, but does not engage in the management of program implementation per se.

Although the SIU has a strategic and coordinating role, it does not have direct involvement in service delivery because this is seen as an agency responsibility. Several interviewees felt that it was important that the SIU had been given the power to act in an independent and facilitative role to bring government agencies together to work on social inclusion but that the SIU was also distanced somewhat away from Government so that it could "ask the hard questions and name the elephants in the corner", which was less likely to be done from within any one agency (interviews 2 and 3).

The SIU is situated physically and governmentally within the state's Department of the Premier and Cabinet. The SIU is accountable both to the SI Board and to the government system through the Chief Executive of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. It reports to the SI Board at every SI Board meeting and to Inter-Ministerial Committees. Other mechanisms for reporting and action involve SIU liaison with Senior Officer's Groups and Chief Executives Coordinating Committees, and SIU staff sit on committees within individual agencies to advocate for social inclusion to be included in agency strategic directions.

3.1.4 Governance Structures

The figure below shows the governance structure of the SII and the processes through which commitment is gained and planning and reporting is achieved for a particular Reference. SII

documentation notes that the SI Board makes particular recommendations to Government (in the form of a report endorsed by the SI Board) while at the same time the Unit negotiates possible actions with agencies and conducts relevant research to inform the SI Board and discussions with agencies. This dual-track process is used to provide a faster timeframe for implementation.

An Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) exists to oversee and support the implementation of each Reference and action plan to ensure that funding is available, that responsibility and accountability are in place, that funding and barriers to joined up approaches are resolved, and that there is evaluation of outcomes (Cappo 2002a). The IMC meets as necessary to discuss the response to the SI Board's objectives and strategic directions on a particular Reference. All Ministers with portfolios in areas requiring action are called to attend, including the Premier in his role as Minister for Social Inclusion. The State Treasurer and the Chair of the SI Board also attend. A Lead Minister is appointed to undertake lead responsibility for implementation and outcomes for each Reference. For example, the Minister for Health was the Lead Minister for the Drugs Reference. The IMC is chaired by the Lead Minister, who in turn reports to the Premier and the Cabinet. The IMCs grant authority for Lead Ministers to work across portfolios and to submit multi-lateral budget bids on behalf of the committee.

3.1.5 Stakeholders

The SIU Business Plan 2003-04 (DPC 2003) summarises the stakeholders in the Social Inclusion Initiative as follows:

Stakeholders	Relationship to Unit – source of influence
Community Leaders Peak not-for-profit sector groups Peak corporate sector groups Key leaders in each sector	Consultation and advice and promotion of social inclusion principles
Community Groups Service providers Community groups Community members and those excluded from community; individuals; families; organisations in SA	Consultation and advice and promotion of social inclusion principles
Clients	*Service Provided*
The Premier, Cabinet, SI Board, Inter-Ministerial Committees	Policy Advice
State Government Chief Executives	Policy Advice and implementation options

The stakeholders fall into three broad groups:

- High level public servants and politicians who are involved in governance and leadership of the Initiative;

- The staff and leaders of agencies (government and non-government) which implement the initiatives, provide organisational leadership and commitment, and provide services to the target populations;

- Stakeholders in the broader community, particularly those citizens who are most disadvantaged in relation to a particular issue. More broadly, stakeholders also include local governments and the Commonwealth Government, research and development bodies, and cultural bodies.

<ins>3.1.6 Administrative Processes</ins>

SII documentation and discussion with SII staff indicate that the SI Board develops objectives, strategic directions and advice on specific initiatives for a particular Reference to be addressed by the Government in the immediate and medium term. These strategic directions are provided to the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) for action. A cabinet submission outlining the action plan for a Reference is more likely to have support from the portfolio areas given that all relevant Ministers and the Treasurer are consulted and actively involved in developing the response to a particular Reference.

3.2 The 'Theory of Change' Used by the Social Inclusion Initiative

The theory of change espoused by the SII is based on a particular view of the cause of social exclusion:

> *Social exclusion is created by harsh and unjust economic conditions compounded by difficult social environments and made worse by insensitive government policies and government neglect. Social exclusion is experienced by individuals, families and communities when they are denied access to the opportunities they need to live rewarding and secure lives (Rann, in South Australian Labor Party (SALP) 2002).*

The SII recognises that many 'social ills' such as poor health, crime, unemployment, drug misuse, poverty and decreased social cohesion are linked to one another and to economic factors. For example, in relation to the Drugs Reference, the First Response document noted that:

> *resilient individuals, families and communities with a positive outlook on life are better able to overcome and recover from the tough times in their lives. If we can do something about family poverty and social isolation and increase protective factors, such as access to support services and connection with the community, we can help build people's resilience and abilities to cope (Social Inclusion Initiative 2002).*

This theory of change leads to attempts to address social exclusion through preventative measures and support, and by focusing on critical transition points. The Drugs First Response document also notes that:

> *Strengthening protective factors, particularly for people at crucial times in their lives, increases the likelihood of positive pathways to full participation in society and a sense of self worth that increases resilience to the detrimental effects of adverse situations, including drug misuse… Research has shown that there are critical times*

when interventions can be most effective. For example, supporting parents and families with babies, and supporting young people when they move from primary school to high school. These are called transition points. The positive pathways approach also recognises recovery points where individuals, families and communities, with appropriate intervention and support, can turn away from a negative life course and follow more positive pathways (Social Inclusion Initiative 2002).

The SII also recognises that social inclusion is an essential basis for a sustainable society and a sustainable economy:

Social inclusion and social justice are not additions to the 'so called' main game of economic planning and growth. If we want sustainable economic growth we also need a socially cohesive society. To achieve this we must factor in the notion of interdependence; economic growth and social inclusion need each other for the good of our State (Cappo 2002b).

The theory of change is reflected in Labor party rhetoric in Rann's "twin pillars of social inclusion and economic development", which aim to not only improve the lives of those experiencing social exclusion but also to benefit everyone in the State through improved social cohesion, an increase in social capital, improved education, health and financial status, and reduced crime rates (Rann 2002a). The Chair of the SI Board has highlighted the fact that society and economics are inextricably linked by talking of some of the economic costs of not addressing social exclusion:

[The] economic cost (of not investing in social inclusion) is in two parts. Firstly the large financial cost to the community in providing an increasing number of services to meet basic needs and secondly, an economic cost in depriving the community of individuals and families, that is, citizens who could more actively participate in the life of the community and its building up, growth and development (Cappo 2003).

Another theory of change used by the SII relates to the encouragement of joined up working in order to go beyond traditional approaches to addressing social issues by providing more effective and efficient initiatives and services which are better placed to address complex issues and the complex needs of individuals, rather than each issue being addressed in a fragmented way by a range of individual agencies working alone. The SII has a particular focus on encouraging joined up government:

Social inclusion will not be achieved just through the efforts of one Unit reporting directly to the Premier. It will require an all-of-government and community-wide approach. Central to achieving this will be a reinvigorated and responsive public sector… Labor will reform and refocus the public sector towards building social inclusion so that it can better serve South Australians (Rann, in SALP 2002).

The Chair of the SI Board and Premier Rann have advocated for more innovative ways of working, acknowledging that many people in both the government and non-government sectors are keen to find joined up ways of working but that it can be difficult to "cut through red tape and bureaucracy" to do so (Cappo 2002b; Rann, in SALP 2002).

3.3 Links Between Social Exclusion and Pathways to Health Inequalities

The SII does not explicitly aim to achieve better health outcomes or reduce health inequalities or health inequities as either a means to attain, or a result of attaining, social inclusion. However, the SI Board's Terms of Reference outline a responsibility to advise and lead on issues of social policy and social exclusion, and all of the References which the Premier has asked the SI Board to consider and advise on are directly related to health and health inequalities (ie drug misuse, education, homelessness, mental health, suicide prevention, disability, youth offending, youth leadership, and Aboriginal health). While the SII itself does not have a specific focus on general health, both the SII and South Australia's Strategic Plan (SA Plan) do aim to achieve the broad goals of "better standards of living", "improved wellbeing", and "expanded opportunity", rather than a more narrow focus on health inequality and health inequity. For example, the Drugs Reference was not tackled solely because of concern for the health of drug users but had a broader goal of helping people to improve their lives so as to increase their opportunity to fully participate in, and be productive members of, society.

A number of SII documents make implicit mention of links between social exclusion, social determinants of health and health inequalities. Rann, for example, identified poor health as one symptom of social exclusion, often manifesting in issues such as substance abuse:

> *People living in the poorest neighbourhoods have the same aspirations as all South Australians: more jobs, lower crime, better health, better education, better housing and transport, and a clean environment… People living in pockets of poverty need encouragement and assistance from government to rebuild their communities and to access decent well-managed public services… Social exclusion crosses geographical boundaries and is prevalent in rural and remote areas of our state. High rates of suicide and substance abuse are symptomatic of problems faced by residents in these areas (Rann, in SALP 2002).*

The Chair of the SI Board has also identified a cycle of disadvantage which prevents individuals from becoming included in society. Although health inequality is not explicitly mentioned, the implication is that poor health is one potential effect of social exclusion:

> *This concept of social exclusion encourages us to look at how education, health and mental health, transport, crime, unemployment, locationally based disadvantaged and social networks or lack of them affect an individual's life chances. For example, how unemployment and underemployment can lead to low self esteem, poor skills, poor health, poor housing, high crime environments and family breakdown (Cappo 2002c).*

The SI Board also links its advice to health policy and in doing so acknowledges that poor health can be an outcome of social exclusion:

> *The Social Inclusion Unit is examining the Generational Health Review and the Layton Review Report to identify where recommendations may be related to those emerging through the Social Inclusion Initiatives (Board Minutes April 2003).*

The SA Plan (over which the SII had some influence) also commits the Government to a general principle of reducing health inequalities and sets targets for the ten years from 2004

which could be expected to widen opportunity for all South Australians and to improve their health and wellbeing. It also has strategies which could be expected to specifically reduce social, economic and health inequities for the Aboriginal population. The various documents associated with the SA Plan (Government of South Australia 2004b, 2006, 2007) exhibit a general goal to "create opportunities" for the State's population, to "build the foundations for a stronger economy and a stronger community", and to achieve "better standards of living" and "improved wellbeing. Other goals implicitly address social and economic determinants of health, such as providing residents with more and better job opportunities, better education for their children, quality health care, and a healthy environment. In the 2007 iteration of the SA Plan under the broad strategy of Expanding Opportunity, key initiatives include, for example, "supporting the work of the Social Inclusion Board in areas such as reducing homelessness, improving the school-to-work transition, and improving employment prospects for people with a disability" (Government of South Australia 2007:34). In many ways the SA Plan operates as a plan to address the social determinants of health at a regional level and offers itself as a potential model plan of action for the Commission on Social Determinants of Health.

The SA Plan and associated documentation are available at www.stateplan.sa.gov.au. For more detailed analysis on the SA Plan and its relevance to social determinants of health and health inequities see 'Full Summary for South Australia' under Newman, Baum and Harris 2006. Other than the targets for Aboriginal wellbeing and for income inequality, most targets in the SA Plan do not measure multiple levels of inequality.

In conjunction with the directions of the SA Plan, the Premier asked the SI Board in late 2004 to specifically consider strategies to improve Aboriginal health in South Australia. This focus had already been flagged by the Premier in July 2002 when he said that "further References down the track will include Aboriginal health–morbidity and, hopefully, we will see some pilot programs to look at how we can improve Aboriginal health in communities" (Rann, in Hansard, Estimates Committee, 29 July 2002). Following developments at the June 2002 Drugs Summit, an Aboriginal representative was invited onto the Social Inclusion Board, and there are now two Aboriginal representatives. Representation by credible, informed and experienced Aboriginal persons who can provide leadership around Aboriginal issues is essential considering the greater level of social disadvantage experienced by the State's Aboriginal population and the fact that many of the issues addressed by SII References directly affect Aboriginal people and communities.

The Drugs Evaluation (SIU 2005a) explicitly refers to health inequities and the 'health gap' which exist for Aboriginal South Australians in noting the need for programs which explicitly focus on socially excluded people:

> *improving health at the population level underpins modern evidence-based health policy and practice and is a major driver of the restructure of the health system in South Australia, one of the risks of a population health model is that, without an assertive program of interventions targeted to benefit excluded vulnerable groups, the gap between their health outcomes and the rest of the population can widen. Australians are very familiar with the concept in terms of the widening inequalities between the general health of Aboriginal peoples and the rest of the community.*

The Further Response to the Drugs Summit included as a key prevention strategy the creation of safe environments and opportunities for Aboriginal families and communities, and

the feasibility was to be investigated of establishing the first multipurpose Aboriginal sports facility in metropolitan Adelaide (SIU 2003a). The 2003-04 Business Plan of the SIU (DPC 2003) included a new Reference on 'Aboriginal Health' with the objective of improving outcomes in Aboriginal health through an Aboriginal Health Expert Group. This specifically sought to improve Aboriginal health outcomes with a particular focus on improving health and wellbeing through sports, recreation and the arts.

Therefore, while a particular Reference or initiative may have a health focus, or may contribute to reducing health inequalities, and improving health may increase social inclusion, these are not highlighted as explicit purposes of the SII.

3.4 Who is Targeted by the Initiative

The Social Inclusion Initiative has three broad areas in which it seeks to bring about change. Firstly, it aims for improvement in the level of social inclusion in the lives of individuals and groups, particularly those who are socially excluded, disadvantaged, and unable to gain access to participation in productive community life. Many of these people have already been the focus of Social Inclusion Initiative References, such as people from specific populations (for example Aboriginal people and young people), people facing particular issues (for example homeless people, people with disabilities, people with mental illness, drug users, prisoners and youth offenders) and people living in disadvantaged areas. This report focuses on the Initiative's earliest three References of Drugs, Homelessness and School Retention, as these have progressed sufficiently over time to enable an appropriate appraisal to be conducted. Secondly, the SII also aims to encourage systemic change in the way that government agencies and non-government agencies address social issues. Thirdly, and less significantly, the SII aims through its focus on social inclusion to bring broader benefits to 'the community'. Some examples and explanations of specific groups are given in the sections below.

3.4.1 The Drugs Reference

The priority groups mentioned in the strategies of the SI Board's report on Drugs include young people (building resilience through education; addressing use of amphetamine-type drugs), Aboriginal people (strengthening support) and 'the community' (increasing protection). The strategy to "Save lives through timely treatment" included focusing on the prison population. The rationale for focusing on these groups and issues was related partly to the level of drug use and to the economic costs identified by the SII.

The estimated social cost of drug abuse in Australia as a whole for 1998-99 totalled $34.8 billion; tobacco accounted for approximately 21.1 billion, alcohol for $7.6 billion and illicit drugs $6.1 billion (Department of Health 2005). These amounts include the costs relating to health, family life, workplace and crime. In South Australia in 1992 alcohol and other drug use was estimated to be costing the community a minimum of $1,569 million (Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) 2002). Of this, approximately $140 million (or 9%) was attributable to illegal drug use. The context within which the SII Drugs Reference was implemented in South Australia also included (DPC 2002; Department of Health 2005):

- more than 580,000 South Australians having used an illicit drug or used a drug for non-medical purposes at some stage in their lives;

- cannabis remaining the most commonly used illicit drug, with the lifetime use increasing from 33 per cent in 1995 to 39 per cent in 1998, and 76,000 South Australians (6.3 per cent) having used cannabis in the past week. In 1999, 11.3 per cent of schoolchildren reported recent use of cannabis.

- in 2001, 53,000 people reporting using amphetamines in the past twelve months and 25,000 people reporting using ecstasy/designer drugs; these two drug groups had seen the most significant increases between 1995 and 1998 (amphetamines up from 5 per cent to 8 per cent, and ecstasy up from 1.4 per cent to 2.8 per cent);

- in 1998, about 900 South Australians being hospitalised as a result of illicit drug use, in 2000-01 nearly 3,000 seeking help for drug-related problems, and each year about 70 dying as a result of illicit drug use, mostly aged between 15 and 34.

3.4.2 The Homelessness Reference

The groups targeted by the Homelessness Reference are defined using categorisation from the Australian Bureau of Statistics as those who 'lack a 'home' and not just a roof over their head, with this reflecting the minimum housing standard expected by 'the community' and related to the quality and appropriateness of housing for particular groups (SI Board 2003). The SI Board's Report identified a continuum of homelessness with people affected at various stages, from being housed in affordable and appropriate accommodation through to chronic homelessness (SI Board 2003). The Report also notes that

> *South Australia has an unacceptably high rate of homelessness. Based on the 2001 Census data 898 people are sleeping rough, in cars or in makeshift accommodation on any given night in this State. This equates to 6 per 10,000 people in the general population. The rate is much higher among Aboriginal people at 59 per 10,000 Aboriginal people. In addition, it is estimated that over 5,000 people are without a home of their own. They are staying in temporary supported accommodation or sheltering temporarily with friends or extended family, often sleeping on the couch and the floor.*

Therefore the Report and the Government's action plan aimed to address homelessness for particular groups, including (SI Board 2003; SII 2003, 2004a):

- School students who are homeless while attending school;

- People who sleep rough, in cars or in makeshift shelters on any one night of the year;

- People who live in boarding house accommodation that does not meet the community standard;

- Young people who are or who have been in the care of the state;

- People with disabilities, especially psychiatric disabilities

- Prisoners and offenders;

- High need homeless people who exhibit challenging behaviours and are frequently held in the City Watch House because of these behaviours;

- People with at-risk tenancies in the private rental market, living in Housing Trust regions; and

- Locations of significant disadvantage across the State.

In particular, South Australia's Aboriginal population was noted as requiring specific assistance, since

> *the rate of primary homelessness in South Australia's Aboriginal population is alarmingly high. When this is considered alongside the economic, social and health disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal people compared with the general population, it requires a particular focus on addressing Aboriginal homelessness (SI Board 2003).*

3.4.3 The School Retention Reference

The Government's Response document on School Retention, 'Making the Connections', (SII 2004b) notes ABS data which suggests that

> *too many young people are dropping out of education at 16. Some effectively disconnect from education well before then. More needs to be done to raise school retention rates. Currently, only two thirds of our young people who start Year 7 complete Year 12. The proportion of Aboriginal young people finishing Year 12 is even lower (ABS, Schools Australia).*

It also cites a Labour Force Survey which showed that in 2002 approximately 5,100 of South Australia's 15–19 year olds had been unemployed and not in full-time study. The 'Making the Connections' School Retention Action Plan therefore broadly targets young people, services and policies, and community. The plan specifically aims to improve outcomes for young people who are either disengaged, partially disengaged, or showing risk factors for disengagement from learning. Particular consideration was given to the priority groups of Aboriginal young people, young people in regional areas and young people under the Guardianship of the Minister. The Reference considers ways that young people and their families, schools, government agencies and communities can work together on the issues that cause many young people to become disconnected from education (SII 2004b).

3.4.4 Joined up government

A further important target for the SII has been to encourage the State's bureaucracy to work together more effectively to address social exclusion. The SII aims for a new and joined up way of working at multiple levels of government and with non-government agencies. Therefore, the SII aims to encourage government agency staff via Ministers and CEOs to consider changes to policy directions and resource allocation, and to work in joined up ways to deliver on social inclusion indicators, by funding such initiatives and by publicly espousing the importance of this type of work. (Joined Up Government is discussed further on pages 53 and 59-62).

3.4.5 'The community'

The Initiative also targets the broader community (ie those not socially excluded in any particular way) as recipients of the benefits of a more participatory and socially inclusive society. Potential benefits are seen in terms of increased social and economic wellbeing for all, such as reduced crime rates, lower health costs and welfare payments, fewer homeless people on the streets, and an improved skills base for business and economic growth. The

Initiative also actively targets 'the community' (the general public) to encourage engagement through the consultation process for developing References and action plans.

3.5 Who Designed and Delivered the Initiative

The concept of the Social Inclusion Initiative was designed within Labor Party discussions prior to the 2002 State election (which is discussed in greater detail in Section 4). The SI Board and the SI Unit were established immediately after the election (interview 5 and Chair of the Board). The SI Board sets directions and decides on strategic issues relating to the Initiative in response to the agenda which is broadly set by the Premier. The SIU has provided significant research, negotiation and liaison to develop the SII's References, including gaining agency commitment to References and particular initiatives. However, the commitment of agencies/CEOs to provide leadership on, or delivery of, Reference initiatives means that they ultimately hold the power to implement the response to a Reference, albeit in conjunction with negotiating with the SI Board. The process of community consultation ensures that relevant people and groups are also involved in the design of References and initiatives. The delivery of initiatives sits with organisations (government and non-government) that are funded for the life of a project. Projects are reported on quarterly to the SI Board for continuing evaluation and future directions planning. The Inter-Ministerial Committees also monitor and advise on implementation progress.

3.6 Evidence Used in Developing and/or Delivering References

This section covers the development of the SII References. The origins of the Social Inclusion Initiative itself are discussed in section 4.

3.6.1 Development of References, SI Board Reports and Government Responses

Early References were identified by the Premier for the SI Board's consideration. They had been raised as key issues in the earlier community consultation processes of the Labor Party. All the References taken up by the SI Board are referred by the Premier. The topics chosen can have different origins, with a Minister originating the Mental Health Reference, and an SI Board member recently raising Obesity as a potential Reference (interview 2). While most References have been issues-based (ie Homelessness, Disability), some have been group-based (Aboriginal young people and sport) and a more recent one is geographically based in a disadvantaged area which overlaps with issues-based References (see Community Renewal Unit 2007). References are generally worded broadly enough for the SI Board and SIU to be imaginative in addressing the issue; for example in relation to Aboriginal Health, there was room to work with Aboriginal communities to develop a new approach through establishing an Aboriginal Sports Training Academy (interview 5).

In developing responses to each Reference, the evidence gathering process consists of three aspects: profiling, researching and consulting (interview 3).

Profiling

Firstly, the SIU collects quantitative data to profile the community or group of interest and to scope the issue. This profiling is seen as particularly important to show how many people will be assisted if funding is allocated to particular initiatives, which is of particular interest to Treasury (interview 2), and to bring issues into the open by identifying the affected group

and/or more clearly identify the issue. For example, in relation to the School Retention Reference, the SIU detected some reluctance across government and within 'the community' to accept that school retention was an issue in South Australia, and the SIU's profiling of students in different categories helped to show that school retention was an issue, clarified the need for action, brought the issue to the attention of agencies which might otherwise not have prioritised it, and developed a program logic to address it (interviews 3 and 5). Profiling has also shown that manageable numbers of people are affected by what might commonly be assumed to be an extensive and unmanageable problem, particularly since, in a population the size of South Australia's, large numbers of people are not generally affected by some of the key issues (interview 3 and Chair of the Board). However, in some instances it has been difficult to obtain accurate data relating to the extent of a problem and the SIU has been involved in research partnerships with the local universities, for example in conducting research on the measurement and models for the prediction of homelessness, on identifying part-time students in the senior years of schooling, and on the more general measure of social inclusion.

Researching

Secondly, the SIU staff working on a particular Reference conduct research to synthesise the national and international literature to establish an evidence base. One interviewee felt that this was a particular strength of the SIU and three university researchers who were interviewed said they were impressed with the SIU staff's knowledge of the literature on the issues of concern and felt that they were open to suggestions from, and to engagement with, researchers (interviews 1, 2, 3 and 4). One felt particularly confident that "the results of our studies went to the SI Board and they were interested in the results" (interview 1). Another commented that the SIU used a good mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence and that staff were open to other types of information where no quantitative data existed and focussed on identifying evidence about what would really help people on the ground (interview 2). The Chair of the SI Board is also pragmatic about the evidence needed to address social exclusion in innovative ways, and to learn from those 'at the coal face'. In one speech he explained his belief that

> the greatest inhibitor to innovation is the rhetoric of evidence base. The limited evidence base available to us is the result of haphazard and unrelated decisions by funders and academics about what to research (Cappo 2005).

He goes on to emphasise the importance of gathering good evidence and expanding current evidence bases, as many good and effective interventions have never been researched. Insisting that all policies be derived from what can be very limited evidence bases may greatly reduce the scope for activity and can inhibit creativity and risk-taking. The focus needs to be on continuing to build and broaden the evidence base.

Experts, including staff from government departments, the private sector, welfare groups and the community sector can be seconded to the SIU to advise on particular References. Another strategy to gather evidence on best practice is for SI Board members to visit other projects which offer important lessons and options for the SII to consider in progressing innovative responses for the References. The Chair also makes a point of regularly travelling overseas to find out 'what works' and to hear first hand about people's reflections on their attempts to address social exclusion; he has visited both the United Nations and OECD gatherings to track down the best models and practices that can then be considered by the SI

Board in South Australia (interview, Chair of the Board). He has also visited the USA to discuss potential solutions with homelessness expert Ms Roseanne Haggerty. This resulted in Ms Haggerty visiting South Australia as a Thinker in Residence and in a 'Common Ground' project being established in the State.

Another area of expertise resides in current and past SI Board members who have professional experience spanning areas such as social, Indigenous and economic policy; service development; leadership in state government departments or non-government organisations; law, social sciences; community development, private enterprise and the media. There has been considerable continuity of service, with two original SI Board members still currently appointed. However, there is a feeling that the SII could draw more extensively on the broad expertise of its Board members (interview 8). The Initiative also benefits from, and at times is involved in, orchestrating visits to SA by particular experts. The Adelaide Thinkers in Residence programme has offered a number of experts who can provide input to specific References. For example, Baroness Susan Greenfield provided reflection on health and community services issues and Roseanne Haggerty provided reflection on solutions to homelessness. The current Thinker in Residence Geoff Mulgan is commenting on the role of government in coordinating and fostering social innovation across the State (see www.thinkers.sa.gov.au).

Consulting

Thirdly, for each Reference the SIU undertakes broad community consultation and negotiates across relevant government sectors to gather evidence. This is to define the issue from the perspective of 'the community' and to generate evidence from lay knowledge on how to best address the issue of concern. For example, the Drugs Summit included engagement with those affected by drug use and the website outlined the personal stories of a number of participants. Similarly, the School Retention Reference engaged the public via forums and personal and phone interviews with young people. One interviewee said they were "amazed at the length they [the SIU] went to to involve stakeholders… a real attempt to get like groups together [to get dialogue]" (interview 2).

The Chair believes that the SI Board has been able to put fragmented information together in a way which has not been attempted before and has gone beyond previous practice in data collection and analysis, and in developing directions based on evidence rather than ideological grounds (interview, Chair of the Board). The Chair makes regular visits to talk with service providers and the recipients of the services, which enables him to collect evidence direct from the field as well as being able to test the SII's approach to an issue (interview, Chair of the Board). For example, he has visited every initiative which received funding through the Homelessness Reference (interview 3 and Chair of the Board). One interviewee also commented that the skill of the SI Board and the SIU is critical to the success of the SII, and that they need to be "real diplomats, with enthusiasm and persistence" (interview 7). Another was also impressed with the SII's engagement with stakeholders and the community, which he felt was sincere (interview 2). Aboriginal representation on the SI Board has been important in encouraging consultations with Aboriginal people to be conducted in ways which are most likely to engage them, and has been one way of maximising the likelihood that strategies and initiatives developed from these consultations draw on the views of the Aboriginal community where appropriate. The process of gathering evidence provides advice to the SI Board and informs the Government response simultaneously.

3.6.2 Timing of development and delivery

The development of new References has generally occurred in succession. The SI Board took 'Drugs' as its first Reference in 2002 after the Premier requested that a Government response be developed following the Drugs Summit in Adelaide in June 2002. The SII's Initial Response on the Drugs Reference was released in early December 2002 (Social Inclusion Initiative 2002). By mid 2003 the Homelessness Reference action plan was developed (SII 2003b) and in October the School Retention Action Plan was announced (SII 2004b). Since then other References have been developed. In 2004, the geographically-based Parks Community Renewal Project was established, followed in 2005 and 2006 by group- and other issues-based References including Aboriginal health and wellbeing, youth offending, mental health, disability, and suicide prevention. The process of developing a Reference, SI Board Report and Government Response involves concerted SI Board and SIU effort over many months. The release of the Government Response outlining Immediate Actions for a Reference is timed to occur simultaneously with the release of the SI Board's Report on that Reference so that initiatives can commence without delay. The SI Board and SIU then monitor progress and implementation, and ongoing evaluation. A mechanism for ongoing monitoring and review of progress in achieving Reference targets and outcomes has been developed.

3.6.3 Enforcement mechanisms and incentives

The setting of targets and public reporting of the results of the SII are seen as mechanisms to attain commitment to the implementation of Reference initiatives:

> *The action plans proposed and the time lines and targets for improving conditions will be made public so that the success of the Initiative and the achievements (or otherwise) of the government in dealing with important social issues can be measured (Rann 2002a).*

> *Both the board and the unit will ensure that plans of action are not watered down or bogged down in departments. That is why the published targets will be so important. There will be no alibis accepted for unnecessary delays and no excuses accepted for a lack of resolve in delivering results (Rann, in SALP 2002).*

It appears to have been important for the SII to have clear hard targets so that staff and others involved were clear about where the SII was heading (interview 3). SII documentation also suggests that it has been important for the SII to have a clear agenda and clearly stated expectations in relation to outcomes and evaluation. However, a particular challenge to the SII has included identifying aspirational but realistic targets and outcomes that are agreed by all.

One of the key mechanisms whereby the SII is enacted with the support of government agencies is that Ministers are involved at the Inter-Ministerial Committees in providing input to planning and decision making for the implementation of Reference initiatives. The Executive Director of the Executive Committee of Cabinet (ExComm) is also a member of the SI Board (see page 57 for further details on ExComm).

Another key incentive mechanism is South Australia's Strategic Plan (SA Plan – see more detail on pages 18-19 and 57-58). This was developed in 2004, modelled on advice from

officials in Oregon, USA, who had previously developed their own similar target-based visionary plan. The SA Plan was developed through considerable consultation with and advice from the Social Inclusion Board, the Chair of the SI Board and other representatives, and as such incorporates the social inclusion agenda into global state targets. The SA Plan has been used as an opportunity to enshrine social inclusion, amongst other agendas, into government policy, which is critical in outlining the Government's commitment, and in defining accountability and attaining commitment from government and non-government sectors, business and 'the community' alike.

South Australia's Strategic Plan provides a significant opportunity for tackling social inclusion because it holds Ministers and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of agencies accountable for defined targets. Departmental CEOs, as part of their performance agreements, are required to report against the targets for which their agency has lead responsibility in the SA Plan. Some specific targets in the SA Plan directly reflect the aims of the SII, for example on reducing homelessness. Other targets indirectly reflect SII targets, for example crime rates are a target which may be reduced by increasing school retention. Therefore, both core business and initiatives funded under the SII are intended to align with Ministerial and CEO directions and incentives, so that efforts to meet targets within the SII References also contribute to meeting targets in the SA Plan. The SA Plan is based on a similar rationale to the SII, that social and economic growth must be balanced and that social inclusion is a crucial foundation for economic prosperity:

> In today's world, successful economies are based on strong, inclusive communities… where all citizens, irrespective of circumstances, have the means and opportunities to participate in the civic, cultural, social and economic life of their communities… Strong economies have grown from investing in people and communities (Government of South Australia 2004b).

The stance of the SII and the SA Plan that social development must go hand in hand with economic development is also reflected in the fact that the Executive Committee of Cabinet, which was introduced during the term of the current Government, includes two non-elected members to balance these perspectives - Monsignor David Cappo AO (also Chair of the Social Inclusion Board) and Mr Robert Champion de Crespigny AC (at that time Chair of the Economic Development Board) - a move which some might criticise as undemocratic. To ensure that discussions on economic policy work towards good social outcomes for the State's population, the Chair of the Social Inclusion Board also has a seat on the Economic Development Board**.**

An Audit Committee reviews and produces a progress report on the SA Plan every two years. Membership of this Audit Committee includes one non-government representative from each of SA's major boards, including the Social Inclusion Board. The SI Board Member is currently the Chair of the Audit Committee. The SA Plan also has a Community Engagement Board with representatives from a number of Government advisory boards and councils to act as a conduit between the Government and community, and this has at times also included a member of the SI Board. For example, the Community Engagement Board will advise the Executive Committee of Cabinet on community perceptions and other key aspects of the SA Plan. Some SA Plan targets that address social exclusion issues were clarified, reworded or reformulated after the 2006 Progress Report. For example, a sub-target to increase the level of Aboriginal life expectancy was added to the population level target of improving overall life expectancy levels. A broader 'learning and earning' target for young people 15-19 years was

also added along with a target about the completion of SA's Certificate of Education or equivalent.

3.6.4 Funding

The SII is funded by State Government budgetary allocations. There is no set budget for the whole Initiative, apart from a small allocation for the SI Board and for SIU staffing. Rather, Cabinet allocates funding for the implementation of particular References. This process is supported by an Inter-Ministerial Committee in some instances in terms of deciding what and how funding is to be used across a Reference. The issue of joined up budgeting processes was discussed early on by the SI Board (in 2002), in consideration of the desire to fund innovative cross-departmental service delivery. It is considered unlikely that funds for similar types of initiatives could have been secured if it were not for the SII (interview 8). In part, this is due to the profile of social inclusion in the Government's agenda and to the Premier and Chair advocating to secure funding.

Two interviewees felt that it was important for public perception that the Government provided significant amounts of funding for new initiatives, since this indicated that it was serious about tackling issues and also allowed the initiatives to make some difference (interviews 5 and 7). There was also a feeling that the amount of funding was not so critical and that it was as much about better or innovative use of existing funds on appropriate initiatives as it was about new funding (interviews 2 and 5), and that the amount of funding itself should not be seen without also remembering the multiplier effects that initiatives could bring (interview 3), particularly in relation to in-kind support. While new funding can be a real incentive, some progress is still seen as possible regardless and lack of new funding is therefore not seen as a reason to not encourage joined up government.

Specific funding amounts associated with the three key References which are the focus of this Case Study are outlined below. Most recently, with the newest Social Inclusion Board Reference on Mental Health, the Government has announced funding of AUS $107.9 million to support the reforms proposed in the SI Board's *Stepping Up* report (SI Board 2006).

The Drugs Reference has received $18.6 million in funding over five years (2002-2007) for the implementation of the actions outlined in the Initial and Further Response documents (SII 2002, 2003a). This included:

Building resilience in young people through education and support	$2.8 million
Young people and amphetamine type drugs use	$2.2 million
Strengthening support and interventions for Aboriginal people	$3.3 million
Saving lives through timely treatment	$4.1 million
Timely intervention linking people into treatment	$4.7 million
Community protection through improved understanding of the drug market	$1.5 million

The Homelessness Reference's initial Government Response in 2003 allocated an extra $12 million over four years to 2006-07 to commence implementation of the first 14 Immediate Actions recommended by the SI Board. The 2004 State Budget committed a further $2 million per annum to homelessness initiatives and programs (SII 2004a). Funding for the Homeless Reference over six years to 2008-09 amounts to $28 million and includes supporting:

At risk tenancies	$8.4 million
Families in housing crisis	$6.1 million
People on release from prison and remand	$4.0 million
Increased boarding house supply and supporting people in this type of accommodation	$3.4 million
Homeless students	$3.3 million
Transitional housing and throughcare	$705,000
Transient Aboriginal people	$645,000
Homeless people with multiple and complex needs	$644,000
People with health problems including mental health, on discharge	$686,000

The School Retention Initiative has received funding of $28.4 million over four years, which includes the following areas of action:

Relevance and flexibility	$5.3 million
Involving young people in decision making	$1.1 million
Integrated action and early intervention	$13.0 million
Local partnerships	$7.5 million
Aboriginal young people	$1.4 million

SII funding for Reference initiatives is used for innovative programs which may be stand-alone programs, or value-adders to pre-existing programs. SII funding is allocated to the lead agency for specific initiatives and may be further distributed thereafter. Each program may receive additional contributions from funding sources other than SII. Furthermore, agencies that receive SII funding also provide considerable in-kind support in implementing the program. For example, an initiative with SII funding to extend an already successful program into a new geographic area will use the existing agency infrastructure (administration, systems, processes) as in-kind support. This type of commitment to SII initiatives has not been costed. The SI Board also discusses strategies to ensure that the timing of budget bids coincides with appropriate advocacy and that bids are supported by strong and relevant arguments. For example:

> The Board discussed the need to balance taking time to determine the right principles to put to Cabinet for endorsement and getting homelessness on the agenda for the 2003-2004 budget (Board Minutes November 2002).

In line with the aim to increase joined up government, the SII encourages multilateral budget bids where more than one agency applies for and is granted funding for an initiative to be implemented by more than one agency. However, the multilateral budget bid process can be complex and difficult to achieve successfully, so that it can be a disincentive to joined up working. A consideration for the future will therefore be how to build in funding incentives for joined up government and how to develop structures which support multilateral funding and accountability. Treasury and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet have considered pooled budgets and associated accountability mechanisms (Annual Reports, Department of the Premier and Cabinet).

3.6.5 Monitoring and formal evaluation: aims, processes and personnel

Monitoring the Initiative itself

Initially there were to be periodic reviews of the Social Inclusion Initiative in addition to evaluation of its References. Evaluation Roundtables were held in 2004 to discuss evaluation processes for the SII and the need and potential for social inclusion indicators for the State. Discussions identified that evaluation should look firstly at the References and then monitor broader social inclusion activity across government (SIU 2004a). At the present time the SII is only just moving into this second stage.

Nevertheless, a considerable proportion of the SII's achievement and effort has been through work other than the funded projects (eg in gathering evidence, negotiation, liaison with agencies, etc). The Evaluation Roundtable (SIU 2004a) pointed out that the achievements of individual projects cannot necessarily answer certain 'bigger picture' questions such as:

- How effectively has Government, through the Social Inclusion Initiative (SII), turned policy and plans into actions on the ground?

- How has the SII added value? Are the References a better investment than what agencies are already doing in this area?

- Were the References the 'right' References to make a difference to social inclusion outcomes in the longer term and did they have the intended impact?

- From a big picture perspective, what is different since the SII started? Has there been some systemic change? What are agencies doing differently as a result of being involved in some aspect of the SII References? Is cross agency joined up working sustainable and realistic? and is this way of working cost effective?

- How good an influencer and enabler is the SII? the Social Inclusion Board? the Social Inclusion Unit? And are these mechanisms necessary? How does the SII process enable other government agencies to contribute to the social inclusion agenda?

Apart from evaluating the attainment of objectives by programs funded under the Initiative, another mechanism for monitoring social inclusion progress in South Australia is through the SA Plan review every two years, given that social inclusion targets feed into the Plan's targets.

Monitoring the References

Monitoring of the individual References and the initiatives funded through them occurs via a proforma quarterly report to the SI Board on **people centred** outcomes and **systems change** outcomes, including what has been achieved for:

- Aboriginal people
- Children and young people
- The most disadvantaged and socially excluded people for that issue

  and in relation to:

- Joined up working
- Partnerships with community
- Early intervention and effective prevention
- Innovation
- Investing wisely

The SII has developed an evaluation method so that there is consistency across initiatives within a Reference. The framework for evaluation and monitoring, review and research is outlined below (SIU 2006a).

MONITORING, REVIEW, EVALUATION AND RESEARCH TASKS FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION BOARD REFERENCES

Areas	Focus	Tasks	Responsible Body
Monitoring	Progress and achievements against targets	Monitoring of individual/ family progress (at least monthly)	Program staff, Program Director, lead agency
	Progress and achievements on development plan implementation	Monitoring of progress on development plan/ business plan implementation	Program Director, lead agency, Senior Officers Group inc Social Inclusion Unit (SIU)
	Financial accountability	Quarterly reporting to Social Inclusion Board inc expenditure reporting & case studies	Lead agency & Social Inclusion Unit
		Quarterly internal briefings on progress to Chief Executives & Lead Minister/ Inter Ministerial Committee	Lead agency & partner departments and organisations
Reviewing	Program impacts for program participants	Annual review of collated data against targets to Social Inclusion Board	Program Director, lead agency, Senior Officers Group inc SIU
	Systems impact and barriers	Annual review of progress on development plan/ business plan implementation to SIB	Program Director, lead agency, Senior Officers Group inc SIU
	Financial accountability	Annual assessment of progress towards outcomes and recommendations re any adjustments needed inc financial assessment to Social Inclusion Board & Chief Executives & Lead Minister/ Inter Ministerial Committee	Lead agency, SIU, partner departments and organisations
Evaluating	Outcomes for program participants	Evaluation framework used to set targets and program design and to determine data collection processes and baseline data	Lead agency, Senior Officers Group & SIU
	Systems innovation and change outcomes		
	Cost benefit assessment	Assessment against outcomes at specific critical points in time of program & budget cycle inc recommendations for future directions to Social Inclusion Board	Internal &/ or External (Lead agency, SIU, partner departments and organisations, academia /researchers, contractors)
	Future directions		
Research	Longer term outcomes	Longitudinal follow-up of program participants	Likely to need additional research funding.
	• program participants;	Broader impact on longer term outcomes	
	• benefit for Aboriginal people; young people; most disadvantaged	Conceptual models for broader systems application	Lead agency, SIU, partner departments and organisations; academia/ researchers
	• systems change/ sustainability		

SII evaluations are not traditional end-point evaluations but are designed to constitute action research evaluative processes. They aim to build a picture of changes that are occurring and to consider evaluation in the broadest sense. They are seen as much as a method of achieving continual improvement in working to address social inclusion as they are about evaluating whether or not an individual initiative 'worked'. Evaluation is also seen as a way of generating real time evaluative knowledge for management and corporate decision-making. Evaluation and research is to some extent limited by the availability of staff with appropriate skills, and the allocation of funding for these purposes. The SII's documents 'Approach to Evaluation and Research' (SIU 2005b) and 'Evaluation and Research Guiding Framework' (SIU 2004b) are available on the SII website. A process is also currently being developed for the ongoing monitoring of References in terms of state level indicators. For example, the School Retention Action Plan has priority indicators relating to young South Australians' participation and achievement in education, training and employment. The sections below give some examples of evaluation processes and findings from the evaluations of the Drugs, School Retention and Homelessness References.

Evaluating The Drugs Reference

Evaluating the outcomes of the Drugs Summit initiatives was seen as an important accountability strategy and an opportunity to reflect on what had been learned so that responses could be continually improved. Individual agencies were encouraged to make plans to conduct specific evaluations at the conclusion of each initiative for which they had lead responsibility. Progress reports on the first round of Drugs initiatives were received by the SI Board quarterly. Formal evaluation of the initiatives occurred through the First Stage Evaluation (SIU 2005a), with information collected in mid-2004. A report of the findings was presented to the SI Board in October 2004 (Board Minutes October 2004). A summary evaluation was then sent to all Drugs Summit participants and other stakeholders, and was posted on the SII website (Board Minutes November 2004).

A team of officers from the Social Inclusion Unit, the Department of Health and the Department for Families and Communities conducted the evaluation. Each initiative was researched and assessed by a team member who was not involved in its implementation and/or lead agency. Information about the implementation and progress of the initiatives was gathered from a variety of sources. This included over 60 interviews with key individuals or groups from Government and 28 non-government individuals or groups (including staff in the lead agency, others directly involved in initiative implementation, people from other organisations associated with the initiative, and peak bodies and networks with a particular interest in an initiative) (SIU 2005a). Other sources of input included two presentations to the Senior Officers Working Group on Drugs to canvass the structure of the evaluation and the proposed themes, and to present an overview of the findings for discussion; review of actions sheets prepared for each initiative prior to commencement and the quarterly progress reports to establish the stated objectives, outcomes, milestones, deliverables, and documented progress against them; and other documentation such as internal reviews, evaluation reports, statistical data, annual reports, minutes, other internal reports, seminar presentations and websites.

The focus of the evaluation was on the efficacy of the processes used to implement the initiatives; their immediate impacts and outcomes achieved to that date (mid 2004); and the value added to the Government's capacity to address drug related harms. The evaluation examined all 21 initiatives announced in December 2002 and two of those announced in September 2003. The evaluation analysed progress "in terms of seven themes that were central to the spirit and intent of the Drugs Summit":

- Focus on Prevention
- Benefit for Young People
- Benefit for Aboriginal People
- Cohesion
- Joined Up Work
- Connections to People and Community
- Evidence and Evaluation

The evaluation also considered:

- The impact of adopting a whole of government approach to initiative development and implementation;

- Any adjustments that needed to be made in specific first round initiative implementation;

- Actions and directions for future initiatives as a result of implementing the first round;

- The processes needed for subsequent evaluations of the Drugs Summit outcomes.

A summary report states that the evaluation process highlighted the significant extent to which initiatives were committed to evaluation. It also noted that a critical component of the evaluation process is communicating results back to the community and that this should be a focus across Drugs Summit initiatives. The SI Board's Implementation Sub-Committee was to discuss the implications arising from the evaluation findings with the Minister for Health in the first instance. The SIU was also to review support for future budget proposals in light of the evaluation outcomes (Board Minutes October 2004).

Evaluating The School Retention Reference

The School Retention Reference initiatives report to the SI Board quarterly using a consistent proforma across the 41 different programs, with a focus on reporting against young people and systems change outputs and outcomes. The SIU has also conducted overarching evaluations of the Reference, with a 'preliminary evaluation' and a 'second stage' evaluation in February and August 2006 respectively. The preliminary evaluation set out to:

- Examine how programs are contributing to achieving the goal of securing a better future for young people in SA;

- Profile programs and young people involved – presenting the complex picture of the programs and the young people who have been participating;

- Provide an outline of the achievements across programs to December 2005;

- Provide progress on the priority outcome indicators (most current statistical data available for the suite of indicators compared with baseline data for 2001).

The Stage Two evaluation set out to assess and discuss effectiveness in five parts:

- Progress on priority outcome indicators – statistical data for 2005 on education, training and employment outcomes for all young South Australians including priority groups Aboriginal young people and young people in regional areas;

- Creating more inclusive learning environments – attendance and engagement, early intervention, youth development approach; responsive and flexible learning programs; and intensive support.

- General changes within education– formal recognition of community based learning, improvements in career advice and linking better with community;

- Joined up working across agencies – better coordination of services to common clients; joint planning, training and staff development; youth participation and government community partnerships;

- Refinement of the strategic directions for the remaining life of the program and into the future.

The Stage Two Evaluation (SIU 2006b) drew on data from all programs under the School Retention Action Plan (SRAP) that had been implemented to June 2006. The primary data sources used included planning documentation for the SRAP, state-wide statistical data provided by key government agencies (eg the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the National Centre for Vocational Education Research), internal reports by individual programs, and quarterly implementation progress 'results reports' compiled by each program for the SI Board between July 2004 and June 2006. The SRAP reporting process requires both quantitative and qualitative information to be provided along with financial records. Staff also undertook matching of enrolment and destination data from the Department of Education's February 2006 census for a sample of 3,358 students across 115 Department schools identified in August 2005 as having participated in a SRAP program. In addition, interviews and focus groups were held with 52 people and conducted by an external researcher. These included a selected sample of personnel in various positions responsible for implementing different programs of the SRAP (central agency staff, program managers, school principals and representatives of the Catholic and independent schooling sectors). A wider audit survey was also conducted with 33 organisations representing 44 partnerships, and in-depth phone interviews with 15 organisations representing 19 partnerships, all conducted by an external researcher. Additional information came from the findings of the School Retention Action Research study conducted by a Research Fellow on secondment from June to November 2005 from the Hawke Research Institute for Sustainable Societies at the University of South Australia. Senior Officers and program managers involved in SRAP implementation also provided specific program information and clarification on request.

To track progress toward the SI Board's goal of "securing a better future for all young South Australians", a suite of indicators was developed that reflects the picture of engagement and outcomes for young people in relation to education, training and employment. SII documentation states that an upward trend in the suite of 35 priority indicators reflects the success of the collective effort from a wide range of initiatives, policies and programs being implemented across South Australia. The complexity of young people's lives and the greater interweaving of education, training and employment, particularly for young people aged 15-19 years, has required ways of tracking engagement and achievement that reflect more than simply apparent school retention rates. The suite of indicators has therefore been considerably refined since the SRAP Preliminary Evaluation Report (February 2006 – SIU 2006c) and are grouped under 5 outcome areas:

- An increase in the proportion of young people staying at school to Year 12;

- An increase in the proportion of young people taking up vocational education and training;

- An increase in the proportion of young people successfully completing the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) or equivalent;

- A decrease in the proportion of young people being suspended or excluded from school or other learning environments;

- An increase in the proportion of young people in full time employment, education or training.

Two sub-set suites of indicators have also been developed for Aboriginal young people and regional young people. The sub-set indicators track the results for these two groups and, as

well, identify the gaps – positive or negative - that may exist with the results for all young people.

Evaluating The Homelessness Reference

The approach to evaluating the Homelessness Reference has been strategic rather than broad-based. The focus was on those strategic directions that used demonstration projects to determine best investment. Evaluation used a program logic realistic methodology to find out "what worked, for whom and in what circumstances" and how the service elements contributed to the success or otherwise of the intervention. Evaluation activity was funded for four strategic directions:

- Strategic Direction 5: Support for families in crisis;

- Strategic Direction 8: Psychiatric assessment and discharge;

- Strategic Direction 11: Support for people in boarding house style accommodation;

- Strategic Direction 13: Support for homeless people with multiple and complex needs.

Together these comprised 12 demonstration projects. Evaluation activity commenced at the same time as funding and was undertaken using a 'walk alongside' approach until the end of the first 6 months of the live phase. At this point, a progress report was prepared and submitted to the SI Board and feedback was provided to all projects about the report itself, and about the issues and concerns raised. Each project was then monitored for a further 12 months through the normal IMC reporting process. The SI Board then received a final report with recommendations.

The evaluation activity resulted in all of the demonstrations projects under Strategic Direction 13 which had one-off funding being mainstreamed, albeit with some changes to the models. The projects under Strategic Direction 8 were mainstreamed to two of Adelaide's major public hospitals, and two of the projects under Strategic Direction 5 were extended with changes to the model which resulted from the evaluation. One project was not extended and is currently being recommissioned by agreement with the Department for Families and Communities and the Social Inclusion Unit. The 'walk alongside' evaluation approach has proven particularly useful in allowing SIU staff to see whether the skills and experience of a particular service provider are matched to meeting the intention of the initiative or the needs of the socially excluded group in question. It also allows SIU staff to work with service provider staff from the beginning to explain the intent of the initiative, keep the intention on track, and build service provider confidence, whereas an end-point evaluation would only have found out at the end if directions or skills were out of line with the original goals. This approach has also allowed for progressive analysis of findings, and for informed commentary on the Government's broader evaluation of the SII.

3.6.6 Evidence on impact of the Initiative and robustness of evidence

Although the Social Inclusion Initiative itself has not been evaluated for outcome or process impacts, programs which have been initiated within each Reference have been monitored quarterly and evaluation reports have been compiled by the SIU. SII documents state there are significant indicators of success for 'people-outcomes' for the three References of Drugs, Homelessness and School Retention and record that many thousands of people have

benefited from SII initiatives. Since social inclusion targets feed into targets in the SA Plan, the Plan's two-yearly review should also reveal broader level achievements in addressing targets which are directly or indirectly relevant to social inclusion. It was noted in 2002 that some "headline and sub-domain targets include a focus of specific outcomes for the most disadvantaged areas and populations". There has been some discussion regarding the importance of improved data for measuring the impact of Social Inclusion initiatives. The SI Board has expressed concern that in order to prove success, benchmarking targets need to be identified and linked to Census data (Board Minutes September 2005). It is also important in identifying improved outcomes that data is collected at a level that allows change to be measured for that proportion of any group which is socially excluded, rather than for the whole group; for example, not all members of South Australia's Aboriginal population are socially disadvantaged or socially excluded, and data which indicates overall improvement for 'the Aboriginal population' on a particular measure may mask a lack of change for that proportion of the population which should be the target of social exclusion initiatives.

The following sections provide summaries of evidence on the evaluated impacts (to December 2006) of each of the three key References addressed in this case study report.

The Drugs Reference

The main evidence for this Reference is from the Drugs Summit Initiatives First Stage Evaluation Report released in February 2005 (SIU 2005a) and Drugs Summit Final Report in 2006 (Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia (DASSA) 2006). The overall conclusion was that

> *the Government's funding of the Drugs Summit initiatives has been a worthy investment. Overall, the evaluated initiatives provide 'blue chip' investment potential. They are already delivering substantial results, and some initiatives are of national significance. The evaluation has highlighted ways in which this initial added value can be used to make systems-level change so as to support the Government's longer term goals reflected in South Australia's Strategic Plan.*

The evaluation states that significant value and capacity had been added to the State's existing drug programs across a number of the key directions identified as priorities by the Drugs Summit (SIU 2005a; DASSA 2006). The reports for the Drugs Reference also include some of the following specific achievements under the priority initiative areas:

Building resilience in young people through education AND
Saving lives through timely intervention

- All Government schools (640) and all Catholic schools (106) now have their own Whole School Drug Strategy, and 96 Independent schools will complete training relevant to the development of a drug strategy by the end of 2006;

- Thirty-six training sessions have been delivered to 1,072 participants on the use of amphetamine type drugs in the rave and dance party scenes;

- Almost 300 young people have enrolled in four research trials of treatment services for amphetamine users, and medical, nursing, research and allied health staff have received training to assist with delivery of the trials;

- South Australia has established new national and international networks with researchers on treatment options for amphetamine use giving the State early access to research findings;

- A new, holistic case management service model was developed by Children's Youth & Family Services for young people and their families who are considered high risk of drug related harm, to improve skill development and access to intervention and support services.

Support for Aboriginal people is being strengthened

- 600 community members, including teachers, students and community people in country South Australia and 534 Aboriginal health workers, received overdose response training;

- An Aboriginal Drug Action Team trial enabled the strengthening of skills and relationships with two Community Constables seconded to work in indigenous communities in two police Local Service Areas;

- A series of information sessions provided to Police cadets on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Focus Group and the role of Drug Action Teams (DATs) and the Aboriginal DAT trial.

Timely intervention is linking more people to treatment

- The prison based opioid substitution treatment program has been expanded and prisoners are referred on to public and private community prescribers to continue treatment on release from prison; 78% are still in treatment at 3 months, and 48% at 6 months; drug related incidents in prisons have fallen steadily, from 975 in 1999 to 560 in 2005.

Community Protection is being enhanced

- South Australia now has the first hospital based surveillance system in Australia for monitoring drug-related toxicity;

- 47 clandestine amphetamine laboratories were closed by Police in 2003 and 25 more by June 2004; 28 were discovered in 2005.

The SII's December 2005 newsletter also reported what it saw as promising results from the 2004 national household survey from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, which the SII believed showed that strategies initiated from the 2002 Drugs Summit were "beginning to produce good results". These included "a decrease in overall use of illicit drugs in South Australia from 17.8% of the population in 2001 to 15.4% in 2004", significant decreases in the illegal use of tranquillisers, hallucinogens and inhalants, and the largest reduction relating to cannabis. The extent to which such outcomes can be directly attributed to SII initiatives is unclear, however the newsletter did nevertheless state that the Heroin overdose projects for young people (in particular in Vietnamese and Indigenous communities) had been yielding results, with an 80% decrease in the number of heroin related deaths being reported, from a high of 64 in 1999 to 14 in 2003, and with 80 Aboriginal health workers having received training to identify and deal with risk factors for heroin overdose. The evaluations have highlighted some personal stories of how people have been assisted:

Graham, age 25, began using cannabis at age 10 and by 15 was using heroin. He had an active criminal history, typical of a heroin user, with a habit costing $50 to $100 a day. Between the ages of 19 and 24 Graham had been convicted of 17 offences including robbery and extortion, burglary, larceny and drug offences. Upon his release from prison, Graham would typically start using heroin again straightaway. He had over the years tried a number of treatment programs but he had not been successful.

Following an assessment, Graham was accepted into the Drug Court program as an alternative to further imprisonment. This program provided him with a combination of treatment, skills training and support under intensive judicial supervision by a Magistrate. Graham graduated from the Drug Court program 12 months later. At that point, he was continuing with methadone treatment to manage his heroin addiction; he was participating in an employment support program to increase his employment prospects; and he had commenced a full time computing course. He had also not re-offended.

The First Stage Evaluation identified several areas for further improvement. This included the need for more action to ensure tangible benefits for vulnerable populations, especially Aboriginal people and young people at high risk. While the Evaluation noted that some positive outcomes have been identified from initiatives specifically aiming to assist Aboriginal people, it also noted that "the benefit for Aboriginal people from the general initiatives is less well established; ensuring a stronger focus on the benefit for Aboriginal people should be a high priority across all initiatives". In relation to joined up work, the evaluation found "evidence of new non-traditional partnerships" but noted that "the joined up work was still largely managed in traditional ways" and steering or reference groups were the most common modes for managing collaborations between partners or stakeholders. The Evaluation found that increased focus was needed on "forming innovative partnerships and increasing the capacity for joined up work across the system" so as to realise "the potential to encourage greater innovation and sustainability". The Final Report (DASSA 2006) noted the completion of some initiatives which aimed to improve service integration, and that all had been successful in providing valuable information for the structuring of drug programs and guiding future planning decisions. The community based programs were being mapped so that by the end of 2006 a picture was available of how these programs had been structured within the State.

The School Retention Reference

The Stage Two Evaluation of the School Retention Reference (SIU 2006b) summarises outcomes for "creating more inclusive learning environments" and reports that

> all of the School Retention Action Plan programs have been successful to some degree. As demonstration programs, based on research and practice evidence, they have received funding, support and ongoing scrutiny. There is ample evidence to demonstrate that the SRAP programs have increased the capacity to respond to and make a difference to young people's education, training and, to a lesser extent, employment outcomes.

The evaluation summarises the Reference's outcomes as including increased capacity to respond to school retention issues and to make a difference to school retention outcomes. It also notes an upward trend across a range of priority indicators for all young people and suggests that the SII initiatives in this area have contributed to this trend. Some direct outcomes of the School Retention Reference are that:

- 13,936 people had participated in School Retention programs from July 2004 to December 2006, of whom 2,604 identified as Aboriginal young people;

- 1,542 young people had participated in youth development programs, of whom 159 were Aboriginal young people;

- 5,895 young people had received intensive support, of whom 1,277 were Aboriginal young people;

- Four Innovative Community Action Networks (ICANs) had been established in three metropolitan areas and one regional area to help young people work together with their families, local businesses, industry and agencies to find solutions to local issues in continuing their education; 2,560 young people had been involved since January 2005, of whom 570 were Aboriginal young people;

- A *Young Mothers/Pregnant Young Women* program to help young women complete their secondary education had 57 participants (of whom 4 were Aboriginal young people) since the program began, exceeding the original target of 30.

- Some programs have achieved up to 96% attendance rates for young people who had previously not attended school for six months or more;

- Programs have demonstrated the various factors that can make a difference to the engagement, re-engagement and retention of young people in learning and more effective ways for doing this;

- Research and policy development activities worked with many school sites to increase the awareness of what positive steps teachers can take to improve attendance, reduce exclusions and increase achievement as a foundation for improved retention;

- Mechanisms have been developed for working more collaboratively across agencies and in forming new partnerships with community.

Regarding changes to education more generally, the evaluation summarises outcomes saying that changes to systems have been more likely to occur where the directions of initiatives under the School Retention Action Plan (SRAP) coincided with the agency's own agenda. The evaluation did however report that staff across agencies had felt the SRAP to be a catalyst for change which had encouraged the acceleration of the development of new policies, structures and programs necessary to set in place these changes. The Stage Two Evaluation also noted the need for a cultural change to shift beliefs and focus towards servicing the most disadvantaged people:

> *One area of major concern is the lack of acceptance by some groups within agencies and in the community that a focus on the most marginalised and disadvantaged young people is a necessary and critical part of securing a better future for all young South Australians. This presents a significant barrier that needs to be addressed to encourage the attitudinal shifts and cultural change necessary to*

ensure that all young people are able to take up their right to the educational advantage offered by this society.

The Evaluation also states that "the strategic directions for the SRAP, determined at the outset by the Social Inclusion Board, have served the implementation of the SRAP well" and that this focus had helped, among other things, gain:

- Greater consideration of education, training and employment outcomes for specific groups, such as Aboriginal young people, young people living in regional areas and young people under the Guardianship of the Minister, and the gap between their outcomes and the outcomes for all young people;

- Significant community involvement at local level in planning and delivering responsive and flexible learning programs specific to the needs of local young people;

- New policies and structures for the formal recognition of community based learning;

- Improved availability and quality of career advice for young people that is better linked with labour market projections for South Australia;

- Increased access to and availability of responsive and flexible learning programs, with participation by over 5,600 young people at risk of disengaging from learning or already disengaged.

The SII's December 2005 newsletter reported that one important indicator of success was that 72.4% of students who started year 8 in a State high school in 2001 were retained in the public school system to year 12 in 2005. This represented a 2.4% increase from 2004 when 70% of students stayed in school and was the highest year 8 to year 12 full-time equivalent retention rate since 1995 (when it was 76.5%).

The evaluations also drew on some personal stories to highlight the impacts in individual lives:

Paul's neglected childhood had been characterised by physical, emotional, mental abuse and neglect and whilst living interstate he very rarely attended school. On his return to SA he was unable to adjust to mainstream schooling, truanting and starting to offend. Paul was offered a place in a program [under the School Retention Action Plan], which offered an alternative and flexible learning environment where he was able to develop his literacy and numeracy skills through activities such as music, art and sport. His attendance was poor to begin with until Paul gained enough confidence in himself and what the program had to offer.

Now Paul is a role model for the group and has achieved 100% attendance. He has stopped offending. He has gained the respect of other service providers, a local service club and the general community, so much so that Paul was recently nominated as the best young achiever for his town.

Progress Report, ICAN Program *'Going Somewhere, Doing Something'*

> "Being here in this program has given me confidence and self-esteem. I know I can have a chance at a good career. People think I will just stay at home and have babies, but although I love them and wouldn't change a thing, my advice is stay at school".
>
> **Young mum in "*Young Mums on the Move"* program**

The Homelessness Reference

In 2004 a preliminary report was tabled giving an initial assessment of progress from departments on each of the 37 recommendations in the Homelessness Action Plan. This reported substantial activity by agencies in implementing most recommendations and that departments had identified activities to continue progress in the next six months. As with the evaluations of the Drugs Reference and School Retention Reference, an early concern was that Aboriginal people appeared to be receiving limited benefit. The SI Board discussed this and asked the SIU to provide further information in the final report (Board Minutes November 2004).

The SI Board reports and SII newsletters show that a total of 12,130 people have to date been assisted in some way by the SII's Homelessness Reference, including:

- 1,494 people being assisted into housing and accommodation (short to long term);

- 1,589 people receiving support to avert homelessness;

- 2,193 people among at risk populations receiving support aimed to prevent homelessness;

- 1,638 people being supported to build resilience against issues such as homelessness; and

- 5,216 receiving advice, information, referral and advocacy to prevent homelessness.

One particular program, Street To Home, was established in 2004 and aims to achieve housing outcomes for people sleeping rough in Inner Adelaide. It sees the provision of housing as a first step out of homelessness. The agency provides services over extended hours and staff work to locate, identify and engage with rough sleepers through a case management response to help individuals make the transition from homelessness into secure housing. So far the service has assisted 40 of the inner city's most chronic rough sleepers into long-term sustainable housing. It has also helped 108 people into long term accommodation, with a 99.5% retention rate, and 177 have been referred to mental health services.

In February 2005 quarterly reports indicated that most initiatives were progressing well, with some exceeding their output at the six month target. However, several initiatives were experiencing difficulty in achieving targets and the SIU was working with relevant senior officers to determine solutions (Board Minutes February 2005). In May 2005 it was reported to the SI Board that in the evaluation of Homelessness initiatives it had become clear that

while there had been a number of positive programmatic outcomes, there had not been much success in influencing system change. The SI Board Minutes noted that this needed to be a feature of future work if this Reference were to achieve its own targets and those of the SA Plan (Board Minutes May 2005).

The evaluation of the Homelessness Reference also drew on some personal stories of how the Social Inclusion initiatives had brought about change in people's lives:

'Adam' is a 37 year old Aboriginal man with a 10-year history as a rough sleeper. He was taken from his mother as an infant and placed in foster care. He went through many foster placements, boys' homes and later juvenile detention centres. He has a long history of violent offending and has had significant periods of imprisonment. Adam has complex needs and extremely challenging behaviour which often bring him to the attention of the police. He is often verbally abusive and threatening, is alcohol dependent and also uses amphetamines but is not eligible for Mental Health Services or Disability Services.

Adam was allocated support provision from the Rough Sleeper Service of APOSS (the Aboriginal Prisoners & Offenders Support Services) which trialled several approaches to appropriately house him. Currently he is housed in one side of a maisonette, with support staff and another Aboriginal client on the other side. Adam continues to present challenges and has assaulted staff and damaged property. A comprehensive case plan addresses all life domains and includes a management plan for his violent behaviour and alcohol and drug binges.

Over the past 3 months Adam has had several long periods of sobriety. When he does relapse he does so off the premises and returns when not intoxicated. Since he moved to this accommodation he has spent every night there. While Adam was initially resistant to attending the APOSS day programs, more recently he has attended the gym, weekly movies, BBQ, Men's Group and cooking class. During periods of sobriety he has started to address issues of loss and grief with two of the support workers, and as a result has been treated by a group of Aboriginal spiritual healers brought down from the Pitjantjatjara Lands. Since this treatment Adam has been noticeably more settled and he plans with the assistance of workers to return to his homeland country for a trip and culturally significant activities.

Some further evidence of impact of the SII's Homelessness Reference is provided in the Progress Reports of the SA Plan. For example, the 2006 Progress Report on the 2004 iteration of the Plan noted that:

952 people in primary and secondary homelessness have been housed through the Social Inclusion programs announced by the South Australian Government in August 2003, and an additional 60 through the Street to Home program – a total of 1012... This includes 42 people who had been sleeping rough for three years or more, four of whom had been sleeping rough for between nine and 20 years (Government of South Australia 2006).

Nevertheless, the Progress Report stated that progress on the targets for Homelessness was in the 'unclear' category and that there was no way of reliably measuring progress until the release of 2006 Census. The Audit Committee recommended some modifications to targets in the 2007 iteration of the plan to reflect the availability of appropriate data. The Affordable Housing target of the SA Plan was also reviewed as being in the 'unclear' category on progress, mainly due to the lack of comprehensive data on the current quantity of 'affordable housing'.

3.6.7 Summary

The evaluations of the SII References discussed in this report show that initiatives have led to change in the lives of many thousands of South Australians. However, there is no conclusive evidence on the impact of the SII overall as evaluation of the whole Initiative has not taken place yet. Furthermore, evaluation has in itself been challenged somewhat by the difficulty of profiling and locating the people who are in greatest need, the ability to measure the extent of an issue (such as homelessness) and the degree to which this has changed. Attributing cause and effect to SII initiatives more broadly and the reduction of social exclusion could also be expected to be difficult, particularly in terms of measuring systems and cultural change. The 2006 Progress Report of South Australia's Strategic Plan discusses some of the difficulties that governments face in setting measurable targets and in monitoring progress (Government of South Australia 2006). The Report comments on the appropriateness of target wording and the suitability and availability of data for measuring change which relates to some indicators relevant to social inclusion. It has also been able to provide some transparency on progress by indicating whether targets are "on track" or whether progress is "unclear", and to offer explanations for the situation. The SII has adopted a similar approach in its Reference evaluations. Interviewees suggested that there was room for a greater level of independent evaluation of the SII's References. There may also be room to revisit the notion of evaluating the SII itself, considering that it appears to be so central to the South Australian Government's main policy directions.

4. Explaining the Origin and Impact of the Social Inclusion Initiative

The focus in this section is on identifying the factors that may help to explain why the Social Inclusion Initiative and its References came about and why the Initiative has had an impact.

4.1 Origin of the Initiative, its References and Actions Plans

The origin of the Social Inclusion Initiative lies in developments within the South Australian Labor Party during their time in Opposition and prior to their election to State Government in March 2002. In a speech in February 2000 the Hon Mike Rann MP (then Leader of the Opposition, but later the Premier) referred to the recent 'Labor Listens' process during which, he said, South Australians had told the Opposition that they wanted a direction for the future that focused on community as well as economy, on the 'big issues' of health and education, and on action to help the "weakest, most vulnerable children" and "our troubled regions, our vulnerable communities". In doing this, Rann specifically highlighted ideological and historical underpinnings which implicitly foreground social inclusion (see page 48). He also explicitly mentioned a desire to address social inclusion and said that Labor in government would want to avoid a "hand-out mentality" and use "innovative, creative and courageous ways of tackling problems old and new."

Along with this general direction, clear links are evident between the SA Labor Party's plans to develop a Social Inclusion Initiative for South Australia and the development of the Social Exclusion Unit in Britain by Tony Blair's New Labor after their election win in 1997. In a February 2000 speech Rann said that in order to find new ways to address social problems in South Australia he had been

> *looking closely in the past months at the Blair Government and its bracing, welcome initiatives in regional development and the way it is fighting social and economic inequity with its New Deal, and its social exclusion initiative, in partnership with local authorities, the community and private sectors (Rann 2000).*

Indeed, in Parliament (Hansard, 29 July 2002, Estimates Committee) he clearly stated that

> *I got the idea for the social inclusion initiative from the Blair Government in Britain which in 1997 set up a social exclusion initiative. In fact, it was first drawn to my attention by George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, during a visit to Adelaide a few years back. He told me in late 1997 about the work being done by the Blair Government to look at protracted social issues with joined up problems being addressed in terms of joined up solutions. The Blair Government was doing this because over many decades it had seen political parties and governments of all persuasions throwing huge amounts of money at the symptoms of issues but not at the causes of issues. So, the social exclusion initiative in Britain was set up. It was an embrace of government, the community sector and the private sector, but rather than dealing with things in a silo way, whereby if you had a particular problem you gave it to a department where it got locked away, you looked at an across government and across community approach.*

… Britain's social inclusion initiative… looks at the problem from the ground up, recommends a series of approaches and then reports back to government. The important thing is that government not only announces the strategy and funding needed but also the time lines for those issues which should be addressed, so in a sense the government creates a rod for its own back or, more positively, a goad for action. So, we have set up a social inclusion initiative in South Australia that reports to me as Premier.

In early meetings of the SI Board, which discussed the rationale for the South Australian initiative, the Chair of the SI Board, Monsignor Cappo, also made reference to the Blair Government's Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) (Board Minutes May 2002). These Minutes also note that Rann had been strongly advised by those involved with the UK model to look at social issues and find an alternative approach using a similar model to the UK which focused on partnerships, innovation and, importantly, directly reported to the level of Prime Minister and the Chief Executive of the Prime Minister's Department. One interviewee suggested that the SII in South Australia had gained confidence to act through its discussions with the SEU in the UK, which had also enabled it to "hit the ground running" (interview 2).

The theoretical basis for the UK model is founded in the rhetoric of The Third Way, where Anthony Giddens suggests "that it is possible to combine social solidarity with a dynamic economy, and this is a goal contemporary social democrats should strive for" (Giddens 2000:5). The South Australian Initiative was also influenced by similar initiatives in Scotland, France and Canada. In South Australia there was to be a particular focus on drawing on innovative ideas and joined up approaches to implement policy change, both economic and social, across government and non-government sectors (Board Minutes May 2002).

The key points about, and factors in the success of, the UK initiative were outlined by Rann and Monsignor Cappo (Rann, in South Australian Labor Party 2002; Board Minutes July 2002) as including:

- Direct reporting to the Prime Minister, rather than being 'locked away' in government departments or 'caught up in turf wars' between Ministers and between government departments (note however that the UK SEU has no independent Board);

- Alliance with Treasury Department to align budgets;

- Looking at joined up solutions to joined up problems rather than simply looking at problems in isolation from their causes; the SEU does not have a separate agenda but assists government to set the agenda and to influence Ministers and CEOs to facilitate change and implement a joined up approach;

- All policy development being evidence based;

- Direction by outstanding leaders and individuals with a variety of skills and expertise;

- Involving not just experts but hands on community workers, ie a bottom up approach rather than 'pronouncements from on high' by academics or consultants;

- Publication of time lines for action, targets and funding set by Cabinet so that achievements and progress can be benchmarked; and having specific projects;

- Publication of regular reports so that successes and failures can be monitored.

The SII in South Australia has adopted all of these points from the UK model, but has additionally established an independent Social Inclusion Board to drive the Initiative:

A strong and proactive board drawn from key professionals from the public, private and community sectors to ensure a dynamic mix of skills and energies (Rann 2002a).

Within days of becoming Premier after the state election in March 2002, Rann established the Social Inclusion Initiative within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (Rann 2002b; interview, Chair of the Board). The Chair of the SI Board was also appointed by Premier Rann almost immediately, receiving a personal phone call the day after the Premier took up office (interview, Chair of the Board). One of the major tasks of the Social Inclusion Board within its first six months was for the Chair to visit the UK's Social Exclusion Unit (SEU). The Premier also joined the Chair in the UK to review the progress of the SEU and meet with the British Prime Minister, the Hon Tony Blair, to discuss the issue (Hansard, Estimates Committee 29 July 2002). Other advice given at these meetings (Board Minutes July 2002) included the need to:

- Establish dialogue with departments and agencies at all levels;

- Establish dialogue with key policy people with innovative ideas;

- Establish Inter-Ministerial Steering Groups (8 Members – with an appointed lead Minister) meet 3 to 4 times per year to address boundary issues;

- Have Champion Ministers;

- Reward corporate social responsibility through promotional need

- Decide on References using a preventative focus and a joined up approach, and check where it duplicates other work (Board Minutes July 2002)

Alongside the political influence from the UK, the idea to focus on social inclusion also follows a period of economic rationalism in Australia on the part of State and Federal Governments, of both Labor and Liberal background. The emergence of the SII must also be seen within the context of a political party in Opposition developing an election platform with which it sought to distinguish itself from the incumbent government. This is evident in comments from Rann as then Leader of the Opposition in the lead up to the March 2002 election:

This is the time for boldness of vision and a time for committed action to overcome the problems created by exclusion, poor leadership and mismanagement. This is a time for change (Rann 2002a).

Prevailing economic and political conditions at the international level also appear to have played some part, as Rann sought a way to help the state adjust to the forces of globalisation:

Economic and political conditions in the world are changing rapidly and dramatically. South Australia needs to be positioned to manage these uncertainties and take full advantage of the opportunities they can bring (Rann, in SALP 2002).

4.2 The 'Case' for Having a Social Inclusion Initiative

As Premier, Rann appears to have played a key role in driving for social inclusion to be addressed in South Australia not only on historical grounds (following a state history of social reform and attention to social justice issues – see page 48) but also based on political ideology (links with a previous State Labor Government, links with UK's New Labor, and determination to be different from the State Liberals) and on moral grounds (it is "our duty, our obligation to help those in need").

Rann clearly wanted to differentiate his party's directions from the incumbent Liberal Government, and establishing the SII was to be a key development contributing to this:

> *Social exclusion in South Australia has grown at a time when the Liberal Government has also been winding back and choking off essential public services like health, education and community security... After years of neglect, privatisation and growing disadvantage under the Liberals, a Rann Labor Government will embrace a strong social justice agenda from day one… Labor's twin pillars of opportunity and security will underpin our entire social policy agenda and our Social Inclusion Initiative will be its engine room.*

A broad umbrella initiative on social inclusion was seen as a more effective way to address the complexity of social issues:

> *The Government's social inclusion initiative… recognises that issues such as poor health, homelessness, crime rates, increasing drug use and poverty are all interconnected, and their causes stem from social exclusion (Rann in Hansard, 29 July 2002).*

Rann also chose issues relevant to the State when deciding which References to ask the Social Inclusion Board to address. For example, in relation to School Retention he reasoned that "when we were last in government we [South Australia] led Australia in school retention and it was one of our proudest achievements. We want to be there again". The case was also made in terms of the contribution that increasing social inclusion could make to raising the State's economic prosperity:

> *Eight years of secrecy and exclusion has left this state trailing behind the rest of Australia. South Australia has become the poorest mainland State in Australia… Business investment is contracting. We have the lowest household income in Australia, with the highest number of long term unemployed. The gap between rich and poor keeps getting wider… At present, families [in South Australia] are struggling to make ends meet. Our share of the national economy has shrunk from 7.2 to 6.4 per cent… South Australia's average growth rate is now a third lower than Australia's… Many of the best of our young people are now forced to leave to pursue their careers interstate or internationally (Rann 2002a; Rann in SALP 2002).*

Rann also believed the State needed to draw on all of its human resources, making social inclusion an absolute necessity for economic prosperity:

> *If South Australia is to regain its strength and vitality, it must include the talents, skills and dedication of all its people. We have no people to waste, no time to waste… For too long, many South Australians... have been excluded from the*

chance of making meaningful contributions to the development of this State (Rann in SALP 2002).

4.3 Historical Links with Addressing Social Justice in South Australia

The political commitment to developing a Social Inclusion Initiative can be partly attributed to historical achievements in South Australia around social justice. In a speech in 2002 Rann referred to this, saying:

There is a lot that is good about South Australia… A proud history of social justice… the first state to introduce female suffrage… the first state to outlaw racial discrimination and to legislate for equality of opportunity… the first State to pass historic laws giving Aboriginal people title to their lands. My aim as the leader of a Labor Government is to build on our proud legacy… There is still much more to do because the economic prosperity many enjoy hasn't touched everyone… I've sent the strongest message to our Cabinet, to the Heads of government departments. They will be judged on their ability to put social justice back at the forefront of their decision making (Rann 2002b:3-4).

In pre-election speeches Rann specifically referred to the state's history of addressing social issues during the era of the Dunstan Labor Government in the 1970s, a time when South Australia had been regarded as a 'social laboratory' (Abjorensen 2007). In a speech entitled 'Don Dunstan's Legacy for a New Century' which Rann made to the Don Dunstan Foundation in February 2000 on the one-year anniversary of Dunstan's death, he referred to Dunstan's model which he intended to continue:

Labor's aim in government will be, like Don's aim in government, not only to encourage those favoured with talent to go as far as they can, but also to assist those who are left out or left behind to have opportunities to make the most of their individual potential and to enjoy a decent life… We are committed to attacking the causes of poverty… If Labor wins office next year we will… chart a course of reform that will not only honour Don's memory, but embrace his legacy (Rann 2000).

Several months after winning government Rann stated in a parliamentary speech his belief that "this Government has put social justice back on the agenda. The Government's social inclusion initiative through the Social Inclusion Unit is the cornerstone of a different way of tackling pressing social issues" (Hansard, Estimates Committee, 29 July 2002).

The various speeches by Rann and SII documents referring to the state's history of addressing social justice and combining social and economic planning are reflected in a statement included in a number of SII publications ('Growing our State: Social and Economic Links') which states that:

since European settlement South Australia has a tradition of planned development for robust participation in the institutions of our society. Planned from the declaration of the colony, our cities and towns were intended to support active and healthy families able to contribute to the social and economic life of our community through workforce and civic participation. Post Second World War, development was planned and implemented to create quality housing stock, civic and cultural facilities

and economic infrastructure that was aligned with population growth and industrial development. To be a part of a vibrant global future we must again systematically plan for a buoyant, diverse and resourceful community, aligning economic development with the way we want our community to be… We must seize the opportunity to build on the foundations of our history and revitalise our democracy by ensuring economic and social prosperity for all.

South Australia's Strategic Plan also states that South Australians are strongly committed to social justice and to all South Australians having access to a better standard of living.

4.4 Groups Influencing Development/Delivery of the Initiative and References

4.4.1 The Head of Government

As Premier, Rann appears to have played a key role in developing and progressing the vision and commitment for the Social Inclusion Initiative, openly stating that:

My vision is for a socially inclusive community. One in which through building partnerships, our combined strengths can compensate for individual weaknesses and individual misfortune (Rann 2003:3).

He also has demonstrated enthusiastic leadership for the SII and the social issues covered by the References, both before and after his Government was elected:

If we are serious about tackling social inclusion, we cannot ignore… the most historically disadvantaged group in Australia… the Aboriginal people… I want urgent action… I am hardline about attacking homelessness… I am hardline about making sure kids in our most disadvantaged areas get the best start in life (Rann 2002a, 2003:11).

Rann's personal commitment to developing SA's Social Inclusion Initiative appears to have played an important role. One interviewee commented that "one thing that has really impressed me is that there is usually a Minister and often the Premier present at SI Board meetings" (interview 2). Whilst there had been a Minister Assisting the Minister in Social Inclusion since March 2002, Rann took the opportunity to increase his political focus on social inclusion in March 2004 through developing a full portfolio for Social Inclusion, which he himself took on.

4.4.2 The Chair of the Social Inclusion Board

Another key role in the success of the SII has been played by Monsignor David Cappo AO in his role as Chair of the SI Board since its beginning. Rann wanted the Chair to be "a prominent Australian with an outstanding reputation in social policy" (Rann in SALP 2002). Monsignor Cappo was appointed as the SI Board's first Chair because of his standing and track record:

Our Social Inclusion Board is chaired by David Cappo, the Vicar General of the Catholic Church [for the Archdiocese of Adelaide - deputy to the Archbishop of Adelaide]. He's an outstanding social policy innovator and the former national head

of the Catholic Welfare Commission. With a diverse and talented Board behind him
Monsignor Cappo provides direction to the Social Inclusion Initiative (Rann 2002b:5)

Monsignor Cappo is also a qualified social worker and has made a major contribution to national debates in social policy development, has been directly involved in national strategic planning and implementation of social programs and has also been the Chairman of Centacare Australia, the national peak body of the Catholic social welfare agencies. Monsignor Cappo is also a member of the state's Economic Development Board (through his position as Chair of the SI Board) and the Board of the National Beyond Blue [overcoming depression] Initiative.

Monsignor Cappo's personal commitment to social justice appears to have been another key driving force in the progression of the SII. Interviewees pointed out that the Monsignor had been able to 'talk up the issues' to government agencies, service providers and the broader community via the media, and that he has the independent power and mandate of Government to call the Government to account (interviews 3 and 4). Monsignor Cappo has also scheduled regular meetings with the relevant government Ministers to ensure ongoing contact and he has been prepared to take a proactive approach towards driving social change (Board Minutes June 2002). In this respect, he appears to have taken up the challenge made by the Premier for the SI Board "to advise the Government on whether its stated targets were achievable… [and] to be fearless in challenging both the public sector and the Government in undertaking its tasks" (Board Minutes May 2002). Indeed, Monsignor Cappo has commented that

When the Premier Mike Rann established the Social Inclusion Board and the
Economic Development Board (EDB) he made it clear to [the Chair of the EDB] and
me and our respective Boards that he wanted frank and fearless advice. We have
always sought to provide just that.

As Chair of the Social Inclusion Board, Monsignor Cappo has been vocal in advocating for social inclusion ethos, projects and image, as well as being involved in public debate. For example the SI Board minutes of November 2002 record that "he has been public in expressing his view that the current trial dry area [in the Adelaide City Council area] is discriminatory and contrary to the principles of the Social Inclusion Initiative". Interviewees generally felt that he had the personality to encourage change but also the ability to negotiate and be approachable to people at all levels, from the people who are the focus of the initiatives to the Head of Government. After the Rann Labor Government was re-elected to a second term of office in March 2006, the Premier strengthened the focus on social inclusion by appointing Monsignor Cappo as the State's first Commissioner for Social Inclusion (Rann in Hansard, House of Assembly, 27 April 2006).

4.4.3 The Media - See 4.6 Public Debate

4.4.4 NGOs, community organisations, research organisations and private sector

People from these groups were involved in putting forward ideas about the causes and problems to be addressed, as well as potential solutions. A key stage in the development of any Reference is to hold workshops to gauge views and seek input from "people who are working at the coal face" to provide "a chance to let us know the real issues" and "their ideas

on how things can be improved". In addition, non-government welfare agencies have sometimes taken the lead in carrying out SII initiatives.

The Social Inclusion Initiative is designed to work collaboratively and support a strategic and coordinated whole-of-government, whole-of-community approach to addressing some of the major causes of social disadvantage. Government agencies and NGOs are involved with the SI Board in developing and evaluating References and action plans, and agencies are involved in negotiating and developing the Government's response. Comments and input from service providers, socially excluded people and the general community are also sought at the information gathering stage of developing a Reference (see pages 23-25 for more detail).

Innovative Community Action Networks (ICANs) are a particular example of community partnerships that have been developed through the SII. These were an important initiative of the School Retention Action Plan. The ICANs were developed to find local solutions to local issues that prevent young people from successfully completing their education. They focus on young people aged between 12 and 19 who are at risk of not completing their schooling or who have already disengaged from school. Those working together to achieve this are local young people, families, schools, community groups, and different levels of Government, as well as people from local business. Community forums were an integral part of the development of the ICANs and sought local views on ways to inspire young people to become more enthusiastic about learning or to re-engage with learning, ways to reduce the number of young people being suspended or excluded from school, and local opportunities for training, work experience and employment.

Research partnerships

During interviews, two academics talked about areas in which the SII had worked in partnership with local universities on developing an evidence base (interviews 1 and 4).These interviewees noted that partnerships are particularly easy to establish where the SII philosophy parallels that of the research institution, such as having a focus on investigating social justice issues. The SIU works with the three South Australian universities to increase the dissemination of research findings relevant to the SII, and their application in policy development. The SIU is currently a partner in a number of research collaborations, including several research projects that have received grant funding through the Australian Research Council Linkage Program. The latter require research collaborations between academic researchers and actual or potential users of research outcomes.

One project which commenced in January 2006 is investigating how young people on the margins of society can contribute to social sustainability knowledge and practices ('Doing Social Sustainability: Young People on the Margins Constructing 'Utopias''). The project is using innovative research methods to find out how young people see themselves now and in their future, and what social outcomes constitute their ideal worlds. The project is also exploring the policy implications for working with socially excluded and marginalised young people. Another project which commenced in January 2007 is a unique collaboration between university researchers, eight government agencies in New South Wales and South Australia, and two Carers Associations. The research focuses on the social policy impacts of the caring responsibilities of children and young adults. The research is to provide new knowledge on the experiences of young carers in relation to their education, training,

employment, social activities, health and wellbeing (including the costs to young carers). It will help to identify appropriate policy and practice responses.

Private sector

There has been little involvement in the SII by the private sector and this remains a largely untapped resource (interview, Chair of the Board.) It should be noted that in comparison with some areas of the world, there is no significant philanthropic history or ethos of corporate social responsibility in South Australia (interview 4, and Chair of the Board). This may reflect the fact that successive governments in South Australia from at least the 1930s until the early 1990s invested heavily in State-owned infrastructure (including the SA Housing Trust and Electricity Trust) thus the need for philanthropy may have been less than in other settings. However, the business community has had some involvement with the Homelessness Reference, with the Common Ground Housing Model being led by business while the SIU provided policy and ideas. There has also been some private sector involvement within the School Retention Reference through the ICANs, and within community mentoring programs and youth development programs.

4.5 Tensions and Conflicts in Development and/or Delivery

4.5.1 Political imperatives

Tensions and conflicts are noted in various SII documentation and were confirmed by interviewees. Some focused around 'the political imperative' and agency and service provider reactions to the SII. Interviewees noted that the political imperative in the early days of the SII was to demonstrate success as soon as possible; this was to justify the SII's existence within a new minority government and demonstrate that it could achieve change, with one interviewee commenting that "at that time it was really important to have that credibility" (interviews 5, 8 and Chair of the Board). The need to demonstrate achievement was also seen as encouraging a focus on improving outcomes for a measurable number of individuals within the political cycle, rather than necessarily encouraging systems change which is more difficult to measure (interviews 2, 3, 4 and 5) (see pages 35-43 on impacts and evidence).

To some extent the focus on individuals and a desire to improve the lives of 'real people' is seen as a strength of the SII (interviews 2, 3 and 7). In reporting, the use of qualitative data to tell individual stories and case studies has been important in connecting the SII initiatives with the reality of people's lives, rather than just focussing on statistics. However, competing interests have been recognised between those who wanted 'report cards' with numbers of people assisted, while others were aware that measuring outcomes was more complex (interview 2). The SII does however have a focus on both (see page 30 on 'Monitoring the References' for further discussion about working for 'people centred outcomes' and for 'systems change').

4.5.2 Agency reactions

There have also been tensions and conflict in terms of agency reactions to the SII. Firstly, the fact that the SII aims to work in new ways can be seen as a determination to address very complex issues, but can also be seen as implicit criticism of previous actions, with agencies feeling somewhat threatened by the existence of a separate unit responsible for certain key issues (interviews 3 and 4). Some agencies saw the SII as encroaching on their territory and

so the SI Board and SIU staff had needed to work extensively to build links with agency staff to "build a coalition which meant that we were all on the same team" (interview 7).

The SII's main focus however is on achieving systemic solutions in collaboration with all relevant agencies, using existing structures and innovation to develop comprehensive responses, and not supplanting interdepartmental approaches. There was also some tension between agencies' core business work and also being required to work on SII initiatives (interviews 3 and 8). Further pressure to achieve change may have stemmed from the fact that the SII was seen as a flagship project of the Government:

> *a lot of agencies felt like Social Inclusion had too much control once reports and recommendations and dollars were delivered.… Because there's quite a strong reporting back, quarterly, which is quite a big burden on agencies in truth (interview 8).*

However, it was also noted that there could be benefits to an initiative being seen as related to the SII rather than the agency, in that this had connotations of greater power to bring people to the table to work together on an issue in an ongoing way (interview 8). For others, the fact that the SII was addressing a key issue relevant to their area of work was validating of their efforts to work for change (interview 3).

Nevertheless, other potential sources of tension lie around government agencies being responsible for delivering on particular targets in the SA Plan whilst at the same time being required to work on SII initiatives, and around the duality of accountability of the SIU to the SI Board and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, in light of the fact that the Chair of the SI Board has been asked by the Premier to critically assess Government activity.

4.5.3 Joined up government

It should be noted that previous attempts to address social justice issues in South Australia were approached more from within the system than with the explicit and partly external approach used with the SII (interview 3). There were also some reactions to the new approach to working through joined up government (which is discussed further under 'Barriers and opportunities' on pages 59-63). In a speech, the Chair of the SI Board noted that

> *The new governance model introduced by this Government is sometimes seen as 'a bur in the saddle'. The leading role of the three key Boards, South Australia's Strategic Plan, the public sector reform agenda and the cross government committees, have caused discomfort in some circles. But what I propose is that the new governance model is ultimately about democracy. About greater transparency. Greater accountability to the electorate for the day-to-day operation of government (Cappo 2005).*

To some extent agencies saw SII work as 'additional' to their existing work and found it difficult to manage this with only finite resources and minimal incentives, and with much of the recognition for work going to the SI Board (interview 8). While staff within agencies and service delivery organisations often had an intrinsic desire to see issues addressed and to share information to this end, there were sometimes other pressures which worked against this or made this difficult (interviews 3 and 8). However, the Chair notes that to some extent

public debate was used to intentionally create internal tensions so as to generate creative opportunities about better ways that government could work to achieve change (interview, Chair of the Board).

There has also been some tension in relation to the displacement of SII goals. Whilst consultation with various stakeholders was undertaken, the way in which and extent to which the information and advice so provided is understood and then incorporated into agency initiatives can depend not only on who had attended the workshops, forums and discussions but also on bureaucratic views about social exclusion. Some agencies tried to implement SII objectives according to their traditional ways of working and allocating funding (interview 3, and Chair of the Board), which could lead to the intent of the SII goal not being addressed. However, the regular reporting and review, and the 'walk alongside' evaluation process adopted by the SIU, has to some extent been a successful way for SIU staff to work with agencies and service providers to keep initiatives and service provision in line with the social inclusion agenda as they are developed and implemented. It was also felt that service providers sometimes found it hard to think outside of their own delivery area, and that there were some vested interests in agencies continuing to work in their traditional ways (interview, Chair of the Board).

There is also room for work on boundary issues in relation to the roles of different professional groups in service delivery (interview 3). There has also been some tension in developing References and responses between the desire to focus on social issues and the tradition of focussing on other aspects. For example, in relation to the issue of keeping young people at school, there was a question of whether this was predominantly an educational issue or a youth and correctional services issue (interview 1). In other areas agencies had some difficulty adjusting away from a focus on welfare dependency (interview 8). One interviewee noted that some NGOs felt the SII initiatives focused too much on government directed initiatives which could consolidate action around a particular issue, rather than extending coverage more to the non-government sector (interview 9).

4.6 Public debate

Public debate has occurred both on the establishment and development of the SII and its References.

4.6.1 Questions in State Parliament

There was some debate early on within the South Australian Parliament to clarify the purpose of the SII, the role of the Chair and SI Board, the role of the SIU and issues of funding, for example:

> *Much has been said about this [Social Inclusion] initiative in the media… I refer to Budget Paper 4, Volume 1, where one of the targets set by the Government for 2002-03 under `Output class 1' is the development of the social inclusion… However, members of the general public — and, indeed, many members of parliament — are unclear as to exactly what the unit will do. How would the Premier best summarise the role of the unit, and can he advise the committee of the total cost of the unit and how its performance will be measured? (The Hon R Kerin, Hansard, Estimates Committee, 29 July 2002).*

Other questions have also been asked in Parliament. For example, the Leader of the Opposition queried the need for a Commissioner for Social Inclusion and asked what powers such a Commissioner would have that current ministers or the Cabinet did not already have in terms of accessing any information they required, or that Monsignor Cappo did not already have through his membership of the Executive Committee of Cabinet (Hon Ian Evans, Hansard, House of Assembly, 8 May 2006).

The Opposition has continued to ask questions in Parliament about a number of aspects of various SII References, and the SIU has responded to a number of Freedom of Information requests. For example, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised the issue that some directions proposed within the State Government's housing agenda (which are influenced by the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement) may be inconsistent with a social inclusion focus on reducing homelessness, stressing in relation to changes in the State provision of public housing that:

> *the case for a stronger, direct public role in new housing investment for lower income South Australians remains as strong as ever (Ms Chapman, Hansard, House of Assembly, 8 February 2007).*

4.6.2 Media coverage

The media has specifically sought comments from Monsignor Cappo on a range of social issues, which at the same time has helped to elevate the profile of the Social Inclusion Initiative. In his role as Chair of the SI Board, and under its Terms of Reference, he is also responsible for public comment on the work of the SI Board, under agreed protocols.

Media coverage has also occurred in relation to specific References. For example, a large increase was noticed in the number of reports on homelessness issues in the local Messenger Press newspapers (interview 3, and Chair of the Board). One interviewee felt that the media had generally sympathised with the homelessness issue and that there had been increased awareness of the issues, although there had been little debate about actual initiatives (interview 7). Another felt that the SII had provided structure to the debate on School Retention and a forum for discussion in the Drugs Summit, which had given prominence to the issues (interview 4). Certain key people brought to South Australia in the Thinkers in Residence program have also been used to encourage public debate and broaden the agenda around social inclusion issues (interview 3). At times talkback radio has also focused on aspects of the issues covered by the SII.

There has also been some negative press about some References and at times the media has sensationalised issues, for example, in relation to the issue of 'party drugs' (interview 9). In response to this, the SII has put out its own press releases to encourage more balanced reporting, and has sponsored the establishment of the Premier's Award for Excellence in Illicit Drug Reporting by the Media. (The Awards are presented as part of the annual Institute of Justice Studies Media Excellence Awards). One interviewee felt that such tensions somewhat undermine the credibility of the SII, and noted that the SII has limited ability to cover all interrelated aspects of an issue (interview 8). The Chair of the SI Board points out however that tensions and trade-offs are occurring all the time in relation to the SII and its References (interview, Chair of the Board).

Early SI Board minutes also suggest that there was a perceived risk of 'social inclusion' initiatives being misinterpreted, or that 'social inclusion' as a concept and commitment would be too diffuse, which would in turn dilute or change the intended outcomes of the Social Inclusion Initiative. For example, it was noted that:

> the general public [may be] hearing about Social Inclusion but do not have a clear understanding of the Initiative… the paper could be adapted to become a sharp public message and… the Board and other relevant people could be involved to disseminate the message (Board Minutes May 2002).

The SII also had a stated intention to use the public image of the Initiative to give the process momentum in the political arena, and also to use the media for dissemination of 'good news stories' in order to attain community engagement. The SII also produces newsletters, press releases, media coverage and fact sheets. Providing details of initiatives alongside associated new funding is considered important to keep faith with the community.

4.6.3 Summary

On balance, it is felt that reporting and comment in the media has probably fed into a greater awareness of the broader issues in other areas, for example the discussion around School Retention may have encouraged greater flexibility to be built into the senior years during the review of the State's secondary qualification the South Australian Certificate of Education (interview 1). However, another interviewee felt that whilst the public might be more aware of the SII and feel that it was generally a good thing, there had probably been "little impact on the general psyche" (interview 7) (see also comments under 4.8.3 on page 69 on a need for greater 'cultural change'). Nevertheless, there is a sense that reporting interest by the media has been useful in 'airing the issues' and providing some scrutiny to the SII's work and that overall the SII "has succeeded in putting social inclusion on the agenda and public discourse to a greater degree than previous initiatives" (interview 2).

4.7 Barriers and Opportunities in Successful Implementation and Impact

Early in the SII's development and implementation it was recognised that there were potentially significant barriers to achieving real progress in tackling social exclusion. At the same time, these barriers were also identified as entry points and opportunities to shape the Initiative such that systems and processes could be improved in the longer term. The Initiative has also aimed to maximise innovation in developing new of achieving change. Some specific barriers and opportunities are discussed in the sections below.

4.7.1 Structures to balance social and economic goals

The SII has benefited from some innovative and significant structures created by Rann as the Premier of South Australia which provide a strong supportive environment for the work of the SII. These are the two Boards for Social Inclusion and for Economic Development, the Executive Committee of Cabinet (ExComm), the position of Commissioner for Social Inclusion, and South Australia's Strategic Plan.

Executive Committee of Cabinet

The Executive Committee of Cabinet (ExComm) is unique in Australia and was established by the Rann Government to assist Cabinet in achieving the targets of the SA Plan. In order to progress the Government's desire to give balanced attention to social and economic issues, Monsignor David Cappo AO was appointed to ExComm as an independent advisor when it was established in 2005. He sits on this with Mr Robert Champion de Crespigny AC (a leading local businessman - also as an independent advisor), the Premier and State Treasurer, and two other senior Ministers. (The Premier is at the same time the Minister for Social Inclusion). ExComm offers Monsignor Cappo the opportunity to take issues in social policy and implementation direct to the heart of government (interview, Chair of the Board). Monsignor Cappo also has a seat on the Economic Development Board to advocate for socially inclusive approaches to economic development within the State, to discuss joint concerns, and to link Social Inclusion initiatives to those focused on economic and other goals. More about the desire to balance social and economic goals is discussed in the section below on South Australia's Strategic Plan. (Note that Monsignor Cappo and Mr de Crespigny also hold other key positions: Monsignor Cappo as Chair of the SI Board and Mr de Crespigny at the time as Chair of the Economic Development Board).

Commissioner for Social Inclusion

After the Rann Labor Government was re-elected to a second term of office in March 2006, the Premier strengthened the social inclusion agenda by appointing Monsignor Cappo as the state's first Commissioner for Social Inclusion (Rann in Hansard, House of Assembly, 27 April 2006). The Commissioner's role is to monitor the implementation of the Government's response to the SI Board's advice by agencies, Government and non-government; the Commissioner does not administer programs or funds (Hansard 27 October 2006). The appointment increased access to bureaucracy to more quickly progress the Government's social inclusion agenda (Hansard, 18 October 2006). Monsignor Cappo suggested that while it would be possible to only appoint a Commissioner for Social Inclusion, also having a Chair and an SI Board gives additional strength and capacity in working towards joined up government (interview, Chair of the Board).

South Australia's Strategic Plan (SA Plan)

The ability of the Chair of the SI Board to advocate for social issues is also strengthened by the three-prong approach of South Australia's Strategic Plan (see more detail on pages 19-19 and 57-58). This is designed to have two important and complementary roles: "first, it is a means for tracking progress statewide, with the targets acting as points of reference that can be assessed periodically; second, it provides a framework for the activities of the South Australian Government, business and the entire South Australian community" (Government of South Australia 2007). The ability to achieve change in these areas may be further strengthened by the fact that the Premier holds (among others) the three portfolios of Economic Development, Social Inclusion, and Sustainability and Climate Change (the latter being the first such position ever created in Australia). The SA Plan is also seen as a "larger inter-related framework [and] mechanisms will be put in place to encourage the collaborative behaviour and innovative thinking required to address some of the most complex issues South Australia faces so that one target is not achieved at the expense of another" (Government of South Australia 2007). The stance of the Plan, like that of the SII, is that in

order for the state to grow and prosper, social development must go hand in hand with economic development.

The documents associated with the SA Plan indicate that it aims to have clear measurable targets, quantifiable indicators and deadlines so that it is "a goad to action". The 2007 version states that the Plan provides a focus for addressing the questions "Where are we now, where do we want to be, and what do we have to do to get there?" The original 2004 version of the SA Plan had six key objectives and 84 targets, each with a timeframe of 10 years or more; the 2007 iteration has the same six key objectives and 98 targets. There is recognition that not all targets will be met, particularly as circumstances change, but the 'critical aspect' is seen as the commitment to plan for and measure progress. As with the SII, the 2006 Review found that targets are sometimes hard to define or measure but the Plan has reviews every two years which can refine measurement, incorporate new measures, or modify or set new targets in order to better measure desired outcomes. One interviewee suggested that if no such plan existed then the Social Inclusion Board could have produced its own such annual or biennial reviews and reports to maintain transparency of progress (interview 5).

4.7.2 Profiling socially excluded groups and developing appropriate initiatives

During the development phase of any Reference, the SII profiles the socially excluded group(s) affected by the issue and then works to ensure that these people are engaged in the SII initiatives (see page 23). However, profiling has proven somewhat difficult at times for certain groups, such as homeless people, and it has also been hard to ensure that those most in need are those with whom service providers engage. SIU staff have nevertheless found profiling to be important in knowing which groups are most in need and then in being able to monitor progress to ensure that this group is actually benefiting from initiatives. For example, in relation to the Drugs Reference, the Drugs Evaluation noted that one of the main constraints to tackling social exclusion was the difficulty of "identifying, engaging and intervening with high risk vulnerable groups, particularly young people and Aboriginal people, that was evidenced across a number of the initiatives" (SIU 2005a). It also noted the difficulty of improving health and reducing "the gap between their health outcomes and the rest of the population" through targeted interventions at a time when the South Australian health system appeared to be focusing more on improving health for the whole population than on groups with particular needs.

Even when the group is well profiled, there seems to be some inherent tendency for agencies and service providers to drift away from the original group identified as most in need and away from complex, different and socioeconomically disadvantaged people, towards designing services for people who are more like the service providers themselves (interview 5, and Chair of the Board). There is also a view that, even when appropriate consultation occurs and suitable initiatives are developed, systemic racism and discrimination continue to block real improvement on the ground for Aboriginal people and communities. This may partly account for the fact that SII evaluations have found Aboriginal people to be generally benefiting less from SII initiatives than was intended. The Chair of the SI Board is able to conduct spot-checks to monitor the progress of SII initiatives, and at one point made visits to 20 agencies involved in the Homelessness initiatives which highlighted some of the challenges for initiatives in achieving change on the ground (interview, Chair of the Board).

Evaluation and monitoring processes have also highlighted the need to develop interventions which will engage the socially excluded group and which are culturally appropriate.

Consultation with Aboriginal agencies and advocates highlighted the special vulnerability of Aboriginal young people. Evaluations have noted that some Aboriginal young people are unlikely to seek assistance other than for their immediate needs and that "the chaos of their lives will mitigate against interventions that rely too heavily on their compliance". The Drugs Evaluation in particular noted that joined up responses across sectors are more vital for these young people than for any other group and that any point of engagement (for emergency health care, homelessness, juvenile offending, income security) should be seen as an opportunity to deliver some intervention. It also noted that the best way of responding to drug use may be to not focus on it all in the first instance and to "lead with non-stigmatising, multi-faceted or family based interventions".

4.7.3 Bureaucracy and Joined Up Government

In the early days of the SII it was recognised that a significant constraint to tackling social exclusion would be the traditional public sector approach to addressing issues predominantly by individual agencies or by Ministerial portfolio areas. One of the main challenges appears to have been the desire to address social exclusion in a new way by aiming for *system change*, whereby government agencies would move from the traditional silo approach where they worked predominantly alone, to a *joined up government* approach so that the complexities of the causes of social exclusion could be identified and joined up solutions could be formulated. This goal of encouraging joined up government is one aspect of the SII which interviewees identified as clearly differentiating the SII from approaches by previous governments and "one of the good features" of the SII (interviews 1, 4 and Chair of the Board). It is an approach which has been emphasised at almost all SI Board meetings and is seen as an important way to achieve change (interview 2). Attempts at joined up government had been tried in the past in South Australia including through departmental amalgamation (such as the Departments of Health, Housing and Community Services joining together to form the Department of Human Services) but the track record of such amalgamations had not been convincing and one interviewee felt that in the early days "the public sector was somewhat curious" about the SII's joined up rhetoric (interview 5).

The Chair of the SI Board has specifically identified the silo structure of government departments as a barrier in the ability to achieve progress in addressing multi-factorial issues, and has therefore highlighted the need to find ways to make joined up government work well:

> *The silo structure of government with a high degree of functional specialisation of departments is a big problem. I am happy to say that many within the public service recognise this and are working with us on this problem. And there are many good examples of joined up service delivery already in existence in South Australia… but by their institutional nature, silo departments find it hard to recognise joined up problems, and they can't readily identify joined up solutions… silo departments are limited in how well they can respond to the pressing social problems of our time…*

> *Silo based government has become part of the problem rather than the solution. This is because in isolation, State Government departments are disempowered: they feel helpless in tackling these seemingly intractable problems. By joining up, State Government departments can become empowered to act – they are able to take action to address the real issues... A new model of joined up government is being developed that will have enormous consequences for the operation of government. We need to look at accountability, incentives and funding structures to ensure that*

joined up working is a viable and lasting solution to our most pressing social problems (Cappo 2002a, 2002b).

Early SI Board minutes indicated that it would be a key role of the SII to strategically identify blockages and intervene when existing processes could not address the issue. Indeed, one of the first steps for the SII was to establish a framework for inclusive and joined up government responses (in particular in developing the Government's Response to the Drugs Summit recommendations) (SIU 2003a).

The Chair of the SI Board confirmed that in South Australia "in the world of 'core business', service delivery agencies fear being left with sole responsibility for an initiative or target and that as a result, there can be a stand off, where each service agency waits for another agency to make the first move" (Cappo 2005). One interviewee noted that the 'silo system' of Westminster government is very strong in South Australia and has been a major issue requiring SII attention (interview 2). Another believed that joined up government is "a wonderful idea but hard to implement" in practice (interview 1). Another said some agencies had welcomed the approach while others had been somewhat resistant as they saw it as potentially undermining their individual agency's expert way of working (interview 8). A particular difficulty relates to accountability for programs which fall outside the responsibility of one Minister and how to decide who will take responsibility for an issue and take it forward, as well as difficulties in integrating work between agencies which have different ethos (interview 1).

The time consuming nature of developing agency and community partnerships has been a major difficulty to overcome in working in a more joined up way, and there have been some 'turf wars' between and within sectors. The Evaluation of the School Retention Reference (SIU 2006b) notes that some examples of collaboration and joined up working have demonstrated the value to be gained by agencies and the results that can be achieved when this works well, and that

> *Where these directions have coincided with agencies' agendas and directions (including national directions), the impact and changes to systems that have resulted have been particularly significant and, at times, have placed South Australia as a national leader in these areas.*

This evaluation of the School Retention Reference identified five areas where efforts had been focussed on joined up working. These included better coordination of services to "clients in common", common training and staff development, joint planning and implementation of education and training strategies, increasing youth participation, and partnerships between government and community. Working together was also considered beneficial because it contributed different perspectives and ways of doing things, as well as bringing additional expertise and resources that may not otherwise have been available (SIU 2006b). However, the Evaluation found that joined up working is not necessarily the preferred option for addressing all issues due to the intensity and demands required for it to work well, and that it should therefore be used only when other mechanisms will not deliver similar benefits. The Evaluation also found concern among all agencies about their ability to commit in an ongoing way to further joint working, particularly when they have other compelling agendas to implement. It has also been difficult at times for information and data in the public sector to be shared, even with other government agencies.

Documents and interviewees note that to make joined up government work in practice requires significant amounts of time and effort to be spent on developing relationships, building bridges and encouraging discussion between agencies (and possibly more so if individuals or chief executives have a long association with the traditional silo approach), as well as developing reward or funding incentives and structures which encourage greater working together (interviews 1, 2 and 7), and how to develop structures which support multilateral funding and accountability. While there are support mechanisms in place, such as the provision to have Lead Ministers on an issue, and the existence of Inter-Ministerial Committees and Senior Officers Working Groups, these can also require considerable time and effort. Evaluations found that where non-traditional approaches were taken, it could take some time for committee members to become sure of their role and work more effectively together (eg SIU 2005a). They also found that programs could require significant work on the part of a wide range of people with an equally wide range of skills and expertise. Current agency-specific information systems were also seen to impede collaborative work, and as a consequence the SI Board agreed that a subcommittee should review current practices. (Board Minutes April 2006). The Drugs Evaluation found that since the main opportunity for senior officials and the SI Board to discuss issues during the implementation of a Reference was managed at the Inter-Ministerial Committee, there were less structured opportunities for more informal discussion with the lead agencies (SIU 2005a).

The funding of programs to be delivered by multiple agencies is also problematic and there may be disincentives for agencies to seek funding through multilateral bids because, for instance, they fear it could reduce their individual funding. Particular logistical and funding disincentives were recognised in the Second Stage Evaluation of the School Retention Reference (SIU 2006b). There is a view that joined up funding is even more difficult to achieve than joined up government (interview 5). One interviewee noted that although originally it had been intended to have annual multi-lateral budget bids which all agencies were to be involved in, two went to Treasury and were not successful so that this type of bid was not developed again after the first year (interview 8). Government mechanisms such as budget cycles, tendering processes and evaluation approaches were also seen as holding the potential to either help or hinder the achievement of joined up government (interview 4). While some funding is allocated specifically to the SII References, whole-of-government initiatives have to compete with other initiatives for funding. The Drugs Evaluation found "some problem with the transfer of funds in a number of the initiatives which needs to be addressed"; that protocols needed to be reviewed, that there needed to be "some capacity to 'fast-track' where Government has established a sense of urgency", and that "agencies need to review their practices in terms of what level of confirmation is required for them to move confidently on an initiative" (SIU 2005a). It also found that requiring money to be 'in the bank' before action is taken seemed "overly risk averse where the transactions are within the public sector" and that personnel practices needed to be more responsive particularly for projects that have a relatively short timeframe.

Others noted the challenge to service providers on the ground who are used to reporting in ways which may not highlight their joined up work, or who have difficulty identifying and therefore reporting what they are doing in the field (interviews 3, 5, 7 and 8). The monitoring and evaluation processes of the SII have used both a program and a thematic approach to analyse programs and the SII has been working to identify factors which facilitate and assist joined up government. Another way has been through documenting experiences in stories and case studies, and through the development of a series of film clips, for example about the impact on young people and systems of working in more joined up ways to address

School Retention. Interviews with the Chair of the SI Board and SIU staff members suggest that the SII's concerted efforts in some areas to encourage joined up case management for a small number of people with multiple and complex needs has achieved excellent outcomes for these individuals (interviews 3, 9 and Chair of the Board). Under the City-Watch House Demonstration Project, for example, twelve people were assisted who had each been homeless rough sleepers for over ten years, and who had multiple and complex needs and were frequently detained in the City-Watch House. The ongoing case management to assist these people out of homelessness and to help them stay in housing and modify challenging or at risk behaviours was provided by a senior social worker through the Exceptional Needs Unit (which was created during the time of the Department of Human Services and is currently located within the Department for Families and Communities).

The SII Evaluations also show some evidence of interesting ways of joined up working. For example, the Evaluation of the Drugs Summit initiatives (SIU 2005a) reports on the Sentinel Monitoring Initiative which developed new relationships with the Royal Adelaide Hospital to establish the first hospital based surveillance system in Australia. Nevertheless, the Evaluation also found that traditional means of working together were still the most common, with the lead agency seeing itself as the 'prime mover' for setting the broad framework for the initiative, holding and usually expending the funding, and managing the deliverables. Steering or reference groups were also still the most common way of managing relationships with partners and stakeholders, to provide information and support to the initiative implementation staff and to provide a forum for addressing issues as they arose. This Evaluation noted that there were limited examples of different styles of partnership and gave an example of strategic partnering, where the lead agencies retained co-ordination but shared decision-making power and resources with a key partner or partners. The collaboration between the Drug and Alcohol Services Council and the SA Police for the City-Watch House trial was found to come closest to this style of partnership. It was also noted that members on committees needed to be able to represent their agencies (and where necessary their Ministers) with sufficient authority for decisions and actions to be followed through quickly.

The Drugs Evaluation found that effort to work in joined up ways could be harnessed in "a more planned way" (SIU 2005a) through:

- Targeting – to test some theories on the sorts of programs that are more likely to be enhanced by joined up work and those where there are limited or diminishing returns;

- Goal directed effort – informing the debate on where joined up work has most efficacy for different client groups;

- Evaluation of successes and pitfalls – examining the dynamics of joined up work in different settings and circumstances.

4.7.4 Responding to the challenge to think more critically

Another challenge in relation to the SII has been for public servants to respond to the Premier's request to start thinking and providing advice in a more critical way about service delivery. While the Chair of the SI Board had successfully taken up this challenge, he has observed that:

Our early experience was of a public sector struggling to be frank with us. Not because there is a lack of candour among public servants. My impression is that some people were not accustomed to providing frank and fearless advice outside of their branch or division structure and certainly not outside of their departments. Also, after more than a decade of reform upon reform the service seemed a little 'punch drunk' and unsure of how to respond to the demands of the new Rann Government and its unique and innovative Boards…Increasingly the Social Inclusion Board is able to provide critical commentary back to Ministers and Chief Executives without departmental officers being offended or defensive, and the reverse is true. The Board and the SIU will receive critical commentary in the belief that this is the best way to identify solutions that will make a difference (Cappo 2005).

The Drugs Evaluation (SIU 2005a) found, for example, that "lead agencies did not generally report that they were encouraged and given permission to think 'outside the square', [and that] some agencies felt that, if anything, there was explicit pressure to work within existing parameters". The Evaluation found that linking capacity building more specifically to innovations in terms of the context, the settings and the style of delivery could have added significant value. The Drugs Evaluation also found that there were two major difficulties with trying to encourage innovation in initiatives and ways of working through the References model:

Firstly, the Reference, in this case drugs, is already a developed topic in Government that has an evolved operational policy base, service system, practice models and conventions. Without some added strength, the initiatives are always at risk of being drawn into the slipstream of the on-going activity. It is not a matter of lack of goodwill or good intent within the service system but the sheer pressure that is a reality for systems that have to deliver a range of critical services on a daily basis.

Secondly, innovation needs to be nurtured and leveraged. Having a cross cutting agenda on innovation in social inclusion would have been one way to promote change in the implementation planning. The evidence from this evaluation suggests that there would not have been a lack of scope particularly around young people. The agenda could have included prepared think-pieces or forums or roundtables that explored the scope for innovation. Such an agenda would have application across a number of References. Similarly, such a cross-cutting agenda strategy could have been used to explore the application of joining up responses in a practical way.

4.7.5 Innovation and leading edge practice

The SII has been able to progress the social inclusion agenda in relation to certain aspects of some of the References through innovative practice. For example, funding through the School Retention Action Plan enabled the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia to accelerate their work to formalise recognition of community based learning, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's awards and the Queens' Scout awards, to be accredited towards the South Australian Certificate of Education. South Australia is now a leader in this field of developing and expanding opportunities to recognise community based learning (SIU 2006b). Other leading edge initiatives have been undertaken by the Office for Youth. The Premier's Memorandum on Youth Participation, for example, is a first in Australia and makes clear

young people's right to participate in decision making processes and the expectation that government agencies will seek ways to involve young people in government operations. The Office for Youth has also developed Youth and Business Roundtables which have broken new ground in generating discussion between young people and industry/business associations to understand what makes particular career options and workplaces attractive to young people and how young people can learn about career opportunities within an industry.

In relation to the Drugs Reference, the City-Watch House project, for example, has demonstrated significant innovation in working and achieving outcomes for a client group with exceptional high needs who have been 'at the hardest end' of primary homelessness. Some of the enabling factors in the success of this project included social workers having values that normalise rather than marginalise the client group, focused case management and persistence in the face of relapse and crises which helped build trust with individual clients that was essential to help them achieve change in their life, and cohesive co-ordinated support to help clients maintain their accommodation.

The private rental tenancy support initiative is another example of an innovative program introduced as part of the effort to reduce homelessness. This program has offered support to people who have had limited previous experience in the rental accommodation market and who need assistance and support to negotiate the complexities of the private rental market and then to maintain their newly acquired housing. Landlords who may have been reluctant to rent their properties to these tenants, particularly in the current tight property market, have been more willing to do so with the assurance of this additional support. By December 2006, the program had assisted over 430 people to gain housing, including refugee families new to Australia, young people, families with young children and Aboriginal families.

4.7.6 Accruing strength and expertise

As the SII has developed over the five years of its existence it has been able to demonstrate concrete outcomes from its approach which has strengthened its ability to take on new References. One interviewee felt that the SII has now proven itself somewhat in terms of achieving change, increasing efficiency, and increasing corporate knowledge of and relationships with government agencies (interview 2). A major strength in overcoming the various barriers described in this section has been the continuing evolvement of the SII in learning how to best develop References. Over time the SII has learnt how to better work to facilitate joined up government to achieve the dual goals of outcomes for people and systems change. As staff have developed their expertise in working on the social inclusion agenda they have been able to constantly improve the approaches used and to develop better ways of working. A key mechanism for improvement has been reflecting on: the experiences of developing the earlier References; action plan implementation progress; and the findings of the evaluations that have been conducted. The way that References are developed now differs considerably from the approaches used for the first References (which are the main focus of this case study). Later References have had considerably more scoping work undertaken than was possible with the earliest References and the SIU has taken a more system wide approach while the earlier approach which was more issues-related. For example, the latest Reference, on Mental Health, has been approached in a particularly different way by advocating for system wide reform over a five-year time frame.

The approach to Reference action plan activity has also evolved as the SI Board is moving away from undertaking demonstration projects as a key part of a Reference. Nevertheless,

the SII has found that demonstration projects can be useful to show people that it is possible to work in different ways and that this in itself can help drive cultural change towards different ways of working or addressing social inclusion issues, which can open new possibilities in the longer term. The SII's Evaluation Framework is also applied from the beginning of a Reference so that reflection and evaluation is built into the process from the start.

4.7.7 Other ideas for the future

During interviews other ideas were put forward for sustaining the social inclusion agenda in future, and included:

- developing a State 'Social Inclusion Budget Statement' to make funding more transparent (which has occurred in other areas in South Australia in the past, such as the 'Women's Budget') (interview 4);

- developing an explicit State 'Social Inclusion Strategy' and/or written 'Social Inclusion (Wellbeing) Statement' to give the SII more political authority and enable agencies to reflect this in their own strategic documents (interview 4);

- focussing more on issues across the lifecourse (interview 2);

- addressing inclusion issues for the ageing population (interview 2);

- allocating the SII its own budget which might save time 'facilitating' funding processes which may or may not be successful (interview 8).

4.8 Sustainability Issues and Possibilities in Future Directions

There are a range of issues relating to sustainability and future directions for the SII which have been identified both in documentation and during interviews. When the SII was first established there was no stated intention that it or its References should exist for a set amount of time. Questions around sustainability have therefore arisen as the SII has progressed. However, the issue is not so much about sustaining individual References or programs but about sustaining the intent and outcomes of the social inclusion agenda. Planning for these aspects of sustainability has been a focus of the SII from the beginning and those involved with the SII have been conscious about working to achieve change in practices and using opportunities to scale up demonstration initiatives and programs. The SII also operates on the basis that sustainability of the social inclusion agenda is not necessarily dependent on sustainability of funding for particular initiatives.

4.8.1 Planning for sustainability

Some issues of sustainability relate to the continuation of initiatives or programs which have had significant investment over a number of years, in both financial and human terms. However, an intrinsic tension within the SII concept is that initiatives/programs are by definition supposed to be innovative and new. The SII has therefore intentionally funded initiatives as demonstration projects, with the expectation that agencies will take on responsibility for further work and for securing ongoing funding where necessary. This may involve the agency taking over the funding for that program as part of its core business, or

seeking funding from other sources. Some of the barriers to this occurring have already been discussed in section 4.7.3 (page 59-63). The immediate actions of each Reference which the SII develops are often allocated significant amounts of funding in the Government's first response, which may be extended in a second-round Government response. Some SII programs have attracted additional funding from other organisations to complement the SII seed funding. In the absence of a mechanism to continue cross-agency implementation and funding, it seems likely that many SII programs will cease at the end of the SII funding period.

With some tension existing between 'core business' and SII initiatives, there is always the risk that an initiative funded under the SII will not become embedded into the work of an agency. SII documents therefore note a need for the SI Board to continue monitoring and ongoing negotiation to keep the SII's goals on track. The Chair is able to initiate, and the Premier can mandate, the revisiting and/or updating of a Reference where necessary (interview, Chair of the Board). Some particular comments have been made in relation to sustaining specific References. For example, the preliminary evaluation of the School Retention Reference stated that

> *with the success that the School Retention Action Plan (SRAP) programs have already demonstrated, it is important that planning for sustainability over the longer term is a priority for all programs… In particular, consideration needs to be given to how what has worked in once-off and stand alone programs can be embedded into the mainstream of educational and training activity. The on-going sustainability of this increased capacity to respond and increased capacity to make a difference will depend on additional factors that need to be assessed over the longer term, such as the impact on cultural change within organisations and systems change across organisation; the in-depth evaluation of successful programs, including cost-effectiveness of programs, particularly if they are to be replicated in other areas; and the ability to maintain the involvement and diversity of organisations and communities and capitalising on their unique knowledge and skills.*

> *The progress to date achieved by the implementation of the SRAP programs is a strong indicator of real benefits for individual young people and the school retention rates over the longer term. If this progress is maintained and enhanced over the 18 months remaining of the SRAP and if the ongoing sustainability is based on what has been learnt about what works, it bodes well for achieving the ambitious goal set by the Board of securing a better future for all young South Australians.*

Similarly, the Drugs Reference Evaluation Report (SIU 2005a) states that the real power of the investment in the first and second round of initiatives lay "not in its one-off effect but in its ability to add sustained value and capacity, and that value and capacity needs to be evidenced to have an impact on drug use and drug related harm for South Australia". It also notes that "the links between the short term added value from the initiative and sustained capacity gain at the system level in the longer term need to be better articulated [and that] as a long term investment, the initiatives need to be strategically positioned so that the change potential can be understood and carefully managed". The majority of initiatives also had 'change potential' that was "well grounded in rationale and/or evidence to impact on drug use and drug related harm." The Evaluation also noted that the Whole School Drug Strategy could achieve long term aims not only through its intrinsic capacity but also through bringing together the SII's Drugs Summit, School Retention and, in some cases, the Homelessness

References at the policy and school levels so that interventions would be targeted to benefit young people most at risk.

One example of a way to sustain the social inclusion agenda is evidenced in the recommendation of the initial Government response that a State drugs policy framework be developed (SII 2002). The Further Response document (SII 2003a) reported that

> *The development of a new whole of Government drugs policy framework is well advanced. The policy framework builds on the strong foundation set by the Drugs Summit and the Social Inclusion Board… An audit of existing Government funded prevention and intervention activities has been undertaken and the results are being analysed. This information will be used to ensure that sufficient future spending is directed towards prevention and timely intervention.*

The framework that resulted was the South Australian Drug Strategy 2005-2010 (Department of Health 2005) which is seen as "a means of developing and continuing the Government's commitment to responding to the use and misuse of drugs in our community" and the commitment to address drug misuse as "a major factor increasing the likelihood of social exclusion". The implementation of the Drugs Strategy is the responsibility of the South Australian Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse and is ongoing (DASSA 2006) The Inter-Ministerial Council also has responsibility for monitoring progress and evaluation of drug programs and relevant policy initiatives. The Drugs Strategy appears to be the main way at present that the momentum from the Drugs Summit response is being sustained, and such a Strategy is one option that other References could potentially use for ensuring ongoing support and funding. At June 2006, of the 35 Drugs Summit initiatives 18 had been completed and another was close to completion (time limited one-off projects), 5 were ongoing and supported by Social Inclusion funding, 8 had been mainstreamed within existing agency activities, and 3 had been incorporated into other projects or Drugs Summit initiatives (DASSA 2006). Some initiatives were subsumed by particular agencies, including the Chemical Diversion Desk (controlling the manufacture of amphetamines) which was mainstreamed within SA Police, and the Court Assessment and Referral Drugs Scheme which has been mainstreamed within the Justice Department.

In relation to the Homelessness Reference, one recommendation from the SI Board's 2003 report (SI Board 2003) was that "the Social Inclusion Board, in conjunction with the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on Homelessness, be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations for reducing homelessness". The Government's Response (SII 2003b) noted that the SI Board should play an oversight role on longer term initiatives that were to be actioned in a staged process, and should continue consultation and coordination with key stakeholders including government and non-government sectors, people experiencing homelessness, and the general community. The IMC was to be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of medium and long-term recommendations. The report (SI Board 2003) also recommended that "the State Housing Plan include specific strategies and targets to increase the availability of affordable housing to meet emerging need and ensure that South Australia does not fall below national poverty benchmarks." The report also recommended that the then Department of Human Services "lead the further development and implementation of integrated demonstration projects involving mental health, drug and alcohol, housing and homelessness services, building on critical success factors identified in such projects to date." The fact that homelessness targets are embedded into South Australia's Strategic Plan and that the SI Board will continue to

monitor homelessness indicators may provide sufficient incentive for Ministers to continue to work towards reducing homelessness. Another mechanism for sustainability of an issue related to a Reference is to incorporate it into other References so that a joint approach is taken. For example, several of the Reference issues are being addressed together in the place-based Reference.

In relation to the School Retention Reference, the Stage Two Evaluation also raised some issues about sustainability (SIU 2006b). For example, a need was identified to refine the strategic directions which would assist in driving action over the remaining period of the Plan's implementation and into the future. It also noted the need to consolidate efforts across government and within agencies to bring about systems change if sustained improvements for young people were to be maintained over the longer term. In particular it was seen as essential to continue action within refined directions to ensure that the full value of what had already been learnt would be sustained. The South Australian Youth Employment and Retention Strategy (SAYES) has been developed to complement the School Retention Action Plan and to extend the concept of student engagement and retention. The Strategy brings together existing initiatives and addresses gaps in provision so that all young people 15-19 years are engaged in 'learning or earning' or combinations of these. The School Retention IMC has taken on this 'learning or earning' agenda.

Another issue in sustainability is the potential conflict between initiatives which are predominantly funded for the short term, and the desire to achieve systems change (which may take considerably longer to occur). While an agency may support a program, the necessary systems change may be hard to demonstrate given that workers are not often empowered to change processes within their own agency, let alone those of other agencies and organisations. The Chair of the SI Board considers that the References and advances made so far in working towards joined up government would tend to 'unravel' without ongoing attention (interview, Chair of the Board). This leads to discussion of the need to build greater capacity in social inclusion by embedding the social inclusion agenda into the 'core business' of agencies and increasing the focus on achieving cultural change.

4.8.2 Building capacity in social inclusion

Another sustainability issue relates to the ability to build capacity and to mainstream social inclusion into agency activities when funding ceases, although this is already partially encouraged through those social inclusion-related targets in the SA Plan (interview 5). Mainstreaming the concept of social inclusion throughout government and the community, and developing the ability to design and implement programs which take a socially inclusive perspective and also attempt to achieve this through joined up work, is seen as an essential step in assuring the continuation of the SII's approach to addressing social issues into the future (interview, Chair of the Board). Building capacity and embedding social inclusion thinking into agencies, including Treasury, and embedding governance structures is an important way of enabling the SII's work and focus to be sustained in the longer term as individuals and governments come and go (interview, Chair of the Board). However, one interviewee highlighted the influence of funding issues in that

> The thing about embedding Reference work into agencies… in all honesty I have never seen that happen and actually can't see how it could. What happens is that agencies get a bucket of money but really have no ability to secure funds beyond that and nearly always can't do it within existing resources because if they could

they would have done it already. So there is a risk that a lot of initiatives will just end when the dollars run out… Some of the people they spoke to came up with things that were quite innovative and quite different… things that they hadn't been able to make fly within their own department…. They were things that the department didn't see as their core business…. So they got funded, but at the end of the day when the money runs out, the department is back in the position of saying 'they were fantastic but not our responsibility to spend our own budget on (interview 8).

Some of the issues raised in the previous section could be addressed by building greater capacity in social inclusion beyond the SIU. Interviewees suggested that the SI Board be maintained as the leader on social inclusion issues, but that Social Inclusion Officers might be developed and strengthened within individual agencies, or that people could be identified within agencies who have the authority to act at a bureaucratic level and who could become change agents on the inside (interviews 3 and 4). Secondments into and out of the SIU have occurred and have helped build and transfer knowledge, but while these may be beneficial they can also present other issues such as: continuity of staffing, both in the SIU and within the source agency; tensions between the different agendas of the SII and the source agency; and issues around personal career paths. There is also an issue in relation to ongoing staff development around social inclusion, including addressing how to get middle management within agencies on side to 'do' social inclusion (interview, Chair of the Board).

While a key to the approach of the SII has been to engage with Ministers, agency Chief Executives and Senior Officers, one interviewee highlighted the need for a greater emphasis at the same time on all staff throughout the agency and cautioned against assuming that ideas and change 'at the top' would trickle down (interview 5). More broadly, this interviewee felt that there was potential to ensure that all public servants and service providers have a good understanding of the social inclusion issues requiring attention and that these issues are well documented (interview 5).

4.8.3 Increasing the focus on achieving cultural change

Related to the issue of building capacity in social inclusion within government agencies is the question of whether the SII should place more emphasis on working to achieve greater cultural change both within government and within the broader society. Interviewees commented that the SII does focus public attention on particular issues and has made great progress in achieving change at the individual level. However, it could go further in identifying appropriate levers to facilitate broader structural change, and cultural change among public servants, service providers and the public (interviews 1, 2, 4 and 5). One interviewee pointed out that "inclusion is also about the people doing the including or excluding" (interview 2). An intention to address such change was expressed early in the SII's development:

We want to create a community which is educated about social inclusion and about their right to be included. Want to create partnerships with local leaders and local and State-wide champions to bring the community on board (SIU Powerpoint Presentation 2002).

Nevertheless, it is important to note that 'the political imperative' drove the focus of the SII's early work so that it would demonstrate the ability to achieve change in people's lives in a short timeframe (see page 52), and that cultural change is more difficult to achieve in such a short time. These pressures may have subsided somewhat now that the SII has existed for five

years and the Government has a majority in Parliament, so that the SII is now in a better position to consolidate its work and perhaps broaden the focus to address wider cultural issues more extensively. The need for cultural change is also acknowledged, for example, in the SI Board's recent report *Stepping Up: A Social Inclusion Action Plan for Mental Health Reform 2007-2012* (SIB 2006).

While the SII works well in liaising and negotiating with the staff at the Ministerial and Senior Officers levels, some interviewees felt that there was also a need for further work to change perceptions more widely across all staff levels in the public service, and particularly if social inclusion is to become embedded within the core business of agencies (interview 5, and Chair of the Board). The Second Stage Evaluation of the School Retention Action Plan (SRAP) (SIU 2006b) found that senior officers from across agencies involved in the SRAP may be well acquainted with and able to identify the benefits to their agency of a whole-of-government approach but that their understanding is not necessarily known or shared amongst other senior staff within their agencies. There has also been a need for a change of focus, away from goals for example, to "help the homeless" towards a more holistic view of "improving people's wellbeing" (interview 7). The SRAP Evaluation (SIU 2006b) also noted a need to

> *address the attitudinal barrier that currently exists among some staff within agencies and in the community to accepting that a focus on the most marginalised and disadvantaged young people is a necessary and critical component for improving school retention and educational achievement.*

There are some indications that a cultural shift is beginning to occur in some areas, for example in relation to the School Retention Reference there has already been a focus shift from addressing 'school retention' to including addressing issues of 'learning engagement', (interviews 1 and 7). Similarly, some cultural shift appears to be occurring within the area of Correctional Services, from a punitive approach to drug users towards a broader social view of the causes of drug use in the community (interview 9). The point was made, however, that the broader social determinants of health also need to be addressed to provide a supportive environment if targeted social inclusion initiatives are to improve outcomes; for example, if children are to be engaged with their learning, to learn well and to complete a useful secondary (and tertiary) education then they not only need assistance through school retention strategies but also good housing, good nutrition and good family support.

4.8.4 Expanding research and policy analysis

While the SIU is seen as very responsive to research and policy findings and actively seeks them out, several interviewees believe that in order to strengthen the sustainability of the social inclusion agenda and better inform strategic responses to social inclusion, there is room for the SII to become more active in social inclusion research and policy analysis to increase the amount of evidence-based policy and evaluation (interviews 1, 2 and 4). One interviewee noted the potential of developing social inclusion indicators for the State to highlight population level change alongside the achievements through smaller initiatives (interview 2), and indeed this was considered by the SII in 2004. However, this would require the availability of good data and for it be monitored to identify longer term trends (interview 2). There is already some work on developing broader 'priority indicators' for the Drugs Reference, the Homelessness Reference, the School Retention Action Plan, and the Mental Health Reference.

The SII has worked in partnership with local universities on research projects, has developed some Memoranda of Understanding, and has outsourced some research (see page 51 'Research Partnerships'). However, there is room to expand this to build research and evaluation capacity and expertise both in the Government in general and the SII in particular (interviews 2 and 4). One interviewee believed that there was potential for more secondment of staff or partnerships with researchers and others outside of the public service to bring in new ideas and open up thinking on social inclusion and build capacity in staff for when they return to their own department (interview 8). Another interviewee suggested developing a Social Inclusion Research Unit within the SIU or a state-specific Social Inclusion Research Centre (interview 4). Another believed that more Reference evaluation should be undertaken by the SIU in collaboration with people who are not entrenched in the culture and everyday work and who can provide a more rigorous and independent analysis which would further increase the credibility of findings (interview 8). The SIU has used various processes at different times in conducting evaluations that use a mix of internal and external evaluators and researchers. Nevertheless, there can be tensions between evaluations and reports which are written by independent researchers within universities, who may have variable knowledge of the programs under consideration, and those evaluations undertaken and written by public servants, which may need to take account of any political sensitivities that exist at that time.

5. Lessons Learned and Generalisability

The documentary analysis and interviews suggest that there are specific factors which helped the South Australian Social Inclusion Initiative to develop and progress, and these can be combined with 'lessons learned' to provide an analysis of factors that may be generalisable to other settings and that may offer guidance to the work of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health. These are followed by some explanation of factors which appeared to be more context- and time-specific. The South Australian Initiative has developed a particular model, with an independent authority having a mandate from the head of government to work on particular social issues through new approaches and encouragement for greater joined up work.

5.1 Political Commitment

5.1.1 Mandate and commitment from head of government

There is overwhelming agreement in both documentary evidence and interviews that THE most critical factor in the establishment and development of an Initiative to address social inclusion is having a 'mandate from the top', in other words having the political and personal commitment from the head of government and their ongoing commitment to give the Initiative a high profile. The Chair of the Social Inclusion Board (SI Board) in South Australia, Monsignor David Cappo AO, foreshadowed this in a 2002 speech, saying:

> *Political will and political authority [will be] the key to the success of the Social Inclusion Initiative and to successfully implementing new methods of governance.*

This will and authority can be evidenced in an overall vision (although in South Australia there is no written Social Inclusion Strategy or Policy), in speeches by the head of government and Chair of the SI Board, and through their frequent personal attendance at meetings of the SI Board, of Inter-Ministerial Committees, and at other key and high level meetings including the Executive Committee of Cabinet.

5.1.2 Location

The 'mandate from the top' can be strengthened by the political and physical location of the Initiative and its administration in the head of government's department. This may also be strengthened by the appointment of a Commissioner for Social Inclusion and/or a Minister for Social Inclusion. In the South Australian case the Head of Government (the Premier of the State) assumed the latter portfolio himself. It has also been important in South Australia for the SII to be given 'room to move, room to experiment, try different things and take risks'. The location of the Social Inclusion Unit as part of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet within the Central Business District of the capital city makes it readily accessible and close to the main offices of government departments and agencies, non-government organisations, and the state's universities, and other organisations with whom they need to liaise and consult.

5.1.3   Involvement of Ministers

The involvement of Ministers from various relevant portfolio areas through the Inter-Ministerial Committees (IMCs) has been important to gain understanding and support of the

complexity of the issues being addressed under the social inclusion agenda, and for a whole-of-government approach. The IMCs have been chaired by a Lead Minister. The Lead Minister also takes proposals to Cabinet for approval. In the South Australian case, the appointment of Monsignor Cappo to the Executive Committee of Cabinet has strengthened the ability to advocate for funding and action on social inclusion initiatives.

5.1.4 Involvement of Treasury

Since funding for new initiatives on social issues and joined up government has also been important, and there has been a desire to see real action, it has been crucial to also have the involvement of the State Treasury from the beginning (interview, Chair of the Board). Funding and budget allocation is also an important aspect of commitment to the social inclusion agenda and shows the critical importance of having Treasury involved in discussions, rather than only being involved once actions have been decided.

5.2 Independent Authority and Influence

5.2.1 Key champion

A second key lesson in the establishment and development of a Social Inclusion Initiative is the appointment of a high profile individual to 'champion the cause' of social inclusion. In South Australia this role has been played by the Chair of the Social Inclusion Board, who has also been appointed Commissioner for Social Inclusion. This person can 'talk up the issues' to government agencies, service providers and the broader community via the media, and can play a strong role if they have the independent power and mandate of government to call the government to account. The lesson from South Australia is that this 'champion' should be a person with standing and respect in the community, knowledge of local social issues, experience of social policy, and someone with the personality to be tenacious in achieving change but also the skills and ability to negotiate and be approachable to people at all levels, from those who are socially excluded to the head of government.

5.2.2 Independent Board

Another lesson from South Australia is the importance of establishing a Social Inclusion Board which is independent from, and outside of, government and the public service. This Board needs much more than an advisory role so that it has the power and authority from the head of government to intervene to address social exclusion and to work with government agencies and service providers to achieve change. In South Australia the SI Board has met at least bi-monthly to advance the work of the SII. Furthermore, the Chair, the Board and the Social Inclusion Unit need to have the authority to talk directly to whomsoever they need in order to ask questions or obtain information to progress the SII's work. It is seen as essential, and a sign of respect, for such a Board to have both male and female representation from relevant First Nations or Indigenous peoples. The establishment of an independent Board for the South Australian SII is one major enhancement to the model of the UK's Social Exclusion Unit.

5.2.3 Independent support unit

The South Australian SII has also functioned with an independent support unit (the Social Inclusion Unit, Department of the Premier and Cabinet). This has provided support to the

Social Inclusion Board in a facilitative, advisory and coordination role. SIU staff conduct negotiations with agencies, research and scoping of References, and ongoing negotiation on implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The Unit benefits from not having any direct role in service delivery so that it can focus on facilitating and advancing the social inclusion agenda. The Unit is accountable to the SI Board and to the government system through the Head of Government's department. In South Australia the Unit has reported to the SI Board at every Board meeting and to Inter-Ministerial Committees working on Social Inclusion References. It has assisted the SI Board in developing Reference reports and in negotiating with relevant government agencies to develop the Government's response.

It appears important to establish a support unit for the SI Board which is not a government agency in the usual sense, but which is nevertheless part of the government system so that it has the ability to act and to understand government processes, but can also act on behalf of the SI Board to play a facilitative role for government agencies as they work on social inclusion. This certain degree of independence also allows issues to be raised and questions to be asked which might be unlikely from within any one individual agency. In terms of building relationships and achieving change it may also be important to have considerable continuity in the key staff of the unit.

5.3 Clear Directions and Some Evidence of Achievements

5.3.1 Achieving action

Another key lesson from South Australia is the importance of setting clear goals and outcome targets so that everyone involved understands where the initiatives are heading and can have clearly stated expectations about outcomes and evaluation. In order to demonstrate the ability to go beyond rhetoric and achieve action, it is important to streamline processes so that reports on particular issues do not 'sit on shelves' but can be translated directly into action. The South Australian SII has developed a process whereby the SIU assists the SI Board to write an SI Board Report on a particular Reference whilst at the same time negotiating with agencies on what the Government's first response might be to this Report. This enables a 'Government response' or 'action plan' with allocated funding to be released at the same time as, and immediately in response to, the SI Board's Report. It may also be important in achieving commitment to change and credibility with the media and the public for a social inclusion initiative to address issues which are locally relevant at the time. While the South Australian SII has chosen to do this predominantly through an issues-based References model, it has also used a place-based model where the issues raised in several References have been addressed more holistically. It has also taken the approach of profiling groups affected by certain issues so that initiatives can give priority to those most in need.

5.3.2 Setting targets for change

There is some debate within social policy and public health arenas about whether to specifically focus on improved outcomes for socially excluded groups or whether to address issues more universally across the population. In South Australia the focus has been on achieving change in outcomes for both people and systems, even though in practice it has been harder to achieve structural change in the short term. There can also be competing interests, with some wanting reports on the numbers of people assisted and others recognising the difficulty of both measuring and attributing change. There is also a view that alongside focussing on "those who are socially excluded" there should also be a broader

focus on encouraging cultural change to address the beliefs, attitudes and actions of "those who are doing the excluding".

A particular debate in addressing social inclusion and inequities is the desirability, and possibility, of setting measurable targets. Whilst the South Australian Head of Government and the SII did seek to set targets, there were some difficulties in identifying specific groups and/or in being able to measure the extent to which they were exposed to social exclusion. The South Australian initiative particularly had some difficulty in obtaining accurate data to profile different groups, such as in measuring the extent of homelessness, as adequate data collection mechanisms were not in place. To some extent such problems can be addressed by undertaking more research, although some timeframe issues arise here, particularly in terms of balancing the planning and conducting of longer-term research with the shorter term imperative of action and implementation. A particular challenge in South Australia has included identifying aspirational but realistic targets and outcomes that are agreed by all.

5.3.3 A framework for action – South Australia's Strategic Plan

One issue that has emerged strongly from this case study is the value of a jurisdiction having a visionary strategic plan that aims to balance economic, social and environmental goals and outcomes and that has targets for which the whole public service of the jurisdiction is accountable. The SII had some influence over the development of South Australia's Strategic Plan, and the South Australian Government has enshrined some of its key social inclusion targets into this Plan which gives ongoing symbolic leadership. The SA Plan is also a mechanism through which agency heads have an incentive to achieve targets relevant to social inclusion and improvements in the broader social, economic and environmental determinants of health. This is particularly so because the achievement of SA Plan targets is written into the performance agreements of the relevant agency chief executives.

5.4 Credibility and Involvement at All Levels

5.4.1 Evidence-based action

The commitment to collect an evidence base on which to develop the work of a social inclusion initiative is also important, and this is strengthened by drawing on both quantitative and qualitative sources. It is important to have models which can demonstrate the benefit of innovative ways of working and evaluation of the References' achievements, because this is "affirming and fundamental to understanding the benefit for people" and is also essential if future action is to remain responsive. Review and evaluation mechanisms need to be put in place and should be undertaken at key points in the development and implementation of initiatives. Critical reflective and evaluative practices can be used to identify what works, for whom, and in what context, and what needs improvement. In South Australia, the Social Inclusion Initiative is more than a single policy or program, and so different ways of thinking about effective review and evaluation mechanisms have been developed. While traditional evaluation occurs at the end of an initiative against the original objectives, the SII has developed a guiding framework for evaluation and research which incorporates evaluation during the planning stage so that evaluation is built in to any Reference. The challenge for the future is to develop more independent external evaluation mechanisms which are at the same time able to effectively inform future policy directions.

5.4.2 Linking social and economic issues

A related issue has been the intentional focus on social issues in conjunction with economic considerations. The Chair of the Social Inclusion Board in South Australia commented that in his 35 years of working in social policy he felt that social issues had always previously been put second to economics, whereas the SII's work acknowledges that economic growth must lead to improved social and economic benefits for all. This balanced approach is reiterated in South Australia's Strategic Plan. The Chair of the Social Inclusion Board also has a seat on the Economic Development Board to ensure that discussions on economic policy work towards good social outcomes for the State's population. This lesson reinforces the approach taken by the Commission on Social Determinants of Health in its deliberations to date which have stressed that economic development requires action on the social determinants of health.

5.4.3 Community consultation and media support

Another supportive aspect highlighted in the South Australian case is that through its consultation processes a social inclusion initiative can develop community support and can encourage community and media debate over the issues being addressed. South Australian documents note the need to find out how to identify and connect with the population groups of interest, and how to work with them to identify not only the obstacles to change but also real-life solutions. In South Australia, the members of the Social Inclusion Board discuss communication strategies and the dissemination of the work of the SII. The lesson here is that social inclusion initiatives need to be carefully thought through if they are to gain popular support, and doing this requires careful attention to the media and the way potentially controversial issues are reported.

5.4.4 Building relationships and respect

The Chair of the Social Inclusion Board in South Australia has been keen to point out that much of the achievement of the SII has depended on building relationships and respect. In particular he notes that "networks are our most precious commodity for trust and change". Good working relationships between SI Board members may have been aided by the SI Board meeting at least bi-monthly, but often more frequently. It may also be significant to the building of relationships and establishing the profile of a social inclusion initiative for the same person to be Chair of the SI Board for a considerable length of time. Strengthening relationships and building capacity in social inclusion are seen as key factors in the sustainability of a social inclusion initiative, and in South Australia the Chair and SIU staff have particularly worked to build consensus among the variety of stakeholders. In South Australia there has nevertheless been some difficulty engaging with communities and consultation has sometimes been too often dominated by professionals. The lesson here is that some communities require support to help them build the understanding and skills to be able to be involved. This is a particularly important issue to be aware of if the views and needs of the socially excluded group are to be fairly represented, rather than always being mediated by others.

5.4.5 Building capacity in working to advance a social inclusion agenda

It is important not to underestimate the benefit of cumulative experience in achieving change in relation to social inclusion. The SI Board and SIU staff in South Australia have developed

important and significant skills in working on the social inclusion agenda over the past five years. Staff have demonstrated the benefit of expertise in negotiation, diplomacy and persistence through the processes of consultation and discussion with socially excluded groups, specialists in particular issues, staff in government and NGOs, people in the community sector, 'the community' and the media. The Chair of the SI Board in SA believes that much of the SII's achievement has depended on the SIU staff's ability to build relationships and trust.

5.4.6 Building relationships for joined up government

The findings in this section and the preceding three sections demonstrate the critical importance of developing good quality relationships within government and within the community. This means between staff within individual agencies and between staff in different agencies, as well as between government and the non-government and community sectors. The findings also suggest that good quality relationships lie at the heart of the change process that is required to bring about a more socially inclusive society, and that these will be a crucial factor in bringing about the broader cultural change which is needed around social inclusion issues. In particular, good relationships could be expected to be important channels for bringing about the changes in beliefs and attitudes, in encouraging critical thinking and new ideas, and in developing the partnerships between agencies and between staff levels which are required for this broader cultural change to occur. It also suggests that the SII might initiate and be involved in research or might mediate best practice opportunities for these relationships to be built more widely.

Alongside the focus on addressing social inclusion issues through a References model, the SII also had a major focus on encouraging a more joined up approach to work within and between government agencies, and also between government and non-government sectors. The traditional silo approach of individual government agencies/departments is a key feature of the Westminster model of government and has been the major barrier to change that the South Australian SII has faced. The South Australian case study shows that considerable effort can be required to overcome constant blockages, such as the way in which agencies perceive the scope of their core business, bureaucratic processes preventing rapid shifting of resources, and budgetary processes that work against investing in longer term outcomes. Nevertheless, the SII in South Australia has demonstrated that it can act as a catalyst for change and that SII actions have gone some way to encouraging more thought around these issues, as well as in demonstrating some successful partnerships. To this extent the SIU has been able to capitalise on its independent and facilitative role, particularly as it is not caught up in day-to-day delivery issues and has been able to take a 'balcony view'.

The SII has also been able to successfully engage with Ministers, Agency Chief Executives and Senior Officers through the governance structures that are established, but there appears to be room to build greater capacity among public servants more generally and among service providers to understand social exclusion, the needs of disadvantaged individuals and groups, what it means to address social inclusion and to work in a joined up way towards this, and to strengthen the ability to work to increase social inclusion.

5.4.7 Sustainability

Finally, it remains unclear how sustainable the social inclusion agenda will be in South Australia. The SII has existed now for five years and has accumulated significant expertise

and knowledge in relation to addressing social inclusion, and has built a network of relationships with government and non-government agencies. The SII is now at the stage of working out processes to ensure the sustainability of individual References. Whilst this could occur through ongoing funding being provided by lead agencies, there appear to be some difficulties with agencies taking on what they see as 'non-core' business. This might be addressed by the facilitation of broader cultural change within the public service so as to embed social inclusion into the core business of all agencies. There is some incentive for this because some specific targets related to social inclusion and to improving standards of living and opportunity for all South Australians are also written into the South Australia's Strategic Plan. The SII has also been able to mainstream some Reference issues into lead agencies through the development of broader government Strategy documents around the issue.

At this stage it is unclear whether the SII will continue to monitor and review all initiatives and actions generated through References in an ongoing manner. The case study report would suggest that the SII has an important role as a catalyst to facilitate and negotiate change. However, if multilateral budget bids cannot be effective, then it will be imperative for social inclusion to become embedded into the core business of agencies with line budgets to fund this. It is also unclear whether the SII would survive a change of government. The building of social inclusion capacity within government departments, the rewriting of agency visions and strategic directions to encapsulate social inclusion, and the encouragement of broader cultural change to increase awareness among public servants, service providers and the general public of social inclusion issues are some ways that a social inclusion agenda might be ensured beyond the life of the existing Government. The lesson here is that achieving sustainability for a social inclusion agenda requires complex and sustained political and bureaucratic change, action and commitment.

5.5 Limits to Generalisability (context specific factors)

Limits to generalisability relate to several areas including the political timing of the SII in South Australia, the State's size and geography, and the size of its government and population, and the relevance of the particular Reference issues to other contexts.

5.5.1 Timing

The timing of the SII's development appears to have been important, in that the idea for it grew during the Labor Party's time in Opposition so that it was established immediately within the first term of a new government. While it appears that agencies faced a major challenge in being called to adjust to the new Government's vision for joined up approaches, the Premier and the Chair were nevertheless determined that the SII would be a key driver of the new government in the area of social policy. The SII was also able to be strengthened by the Premier taking on a new portfolio as Minister for Social Inclusion, and through appointing a Commissioner for Social Inclusion on gaining a second term in government (interview 3). At the time of writing the SII has been existence for five years.

5.5.2 Size and geography of the jurisdiction

South Australia's geographical situation away from the main Australian population in the eastern states with a concentration of the population in one major metropolitan area, its overall smaller population size (1.6 million in 2006) and associated smaller size of government, may all have facilitated cross-government and cross-sectoral discussion and

negotiation on ways to address social inclusion which may not have been possible in a larger or more populous locality. The smaller number of Ministers, agency heads and staff may also have facilitated discussion at meetings and have enabled progress to be made relatively more quickly. Furthermore, initiatives which may have appeared as less significant or too difficult to start up in a larger state were perhaps more easily able to be tested and carry more weight in a smaller state.

The size of the population has also meant that in regard to most issues, the References and funding have been directed at a more manageable number of people and that this can be done in a time frame which provides politically acceptable results (interview, Chair of the Board). The SII has focused its efforts on achieving impact through a relatively small number of References (interview 3). The smaller size of the jurisdiction has perhaps also enabled the SII to have one key champion in the person of the Chair of the SI Board (and subsequently as Commissioner for Social Inclusion), rather than requiring a number of people to take on these roles to cover a larger area or larger population. Finally, one potential barrier, which has also been a specific opportunity, is that as a small state South Australia has a relatively small government budget. This has forced a focus on new and innovative ways of addressing issues and the need to find ways to use existing funding more effectively (interview, Chair of the Board).

5.5.3 Level of government

South Australia is a state within a federal system of government. While this has had benefits in terms of being able to address locally important issues and within a relatively small population, there are also limitations in that the SII is only able to focus on issues that the State can address within a Federal system (interview 4). Goals and progress towards these goals can also be either assisted or hindered by Federal Government policies and actions. For example, current directions in housing at the state level are strongly influenced by the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. This shapes the degree of scope for action at the State level (interview 4).

5.6 Conclusion

The one outstanding lesson for the success and sustainability of a Social Inclusion Initiative is to have strong political commitment from the head of government, with an independent board, and with a support unit which has a facilitative rather than direct bureaucratic role to act as a catalyst for change. A second important lesson is that that particular personalities and champions play a key role in continuing to advance the social inclusion agenda across government agencies and the media. Other important lessons are: that agency heads and staff at all levels play an important part in the adoption of a broad social inclusion agenda and broader cultural change; that the support unit needs to be able to acquire skills and knowledge to develop and progress evidence and action around issues or areas; and that there is a need for ongoing funding and shared funding across government, and between government and non-government agencies.

A strategic plan for the whole jurisdiction can also play a vital role in encapsulating a vision for a socially inclusive community and providing mechanisms of accountability for government agency heads to achieve the plan's targets. For longer term sustainability it appears important to find opportunities to embed social inclusion more broadly within both government work and community thinking.

However, there are also key factors which may limit the generalisability of South Australia's Social Inclusion Initiative to being used as the model for addressing social exclusion in other times and places. Those involved with the SII are keen to point out that while the South Australian Social Inclusion Initiative has developed successfully, perhaps for some of these time and place specific reasons, it has also demonstrated successful strategies, processes and approaches which could be scaled up for larger jurisdictions if they were appropriately adapted to their particular social, cultural, economic and political circumstances. Indeed, hallmarks in the development of the South Australian Initiative and of South Australia's Strategic Plan have been the continuing evolution and willingness to learn from their own experiences, as well as learning from the successes and barriers experienced by other initiatives in Australia and overseas.

Key internet sites

South Australia's Social Inclusion Initiative - www.socialinclusion.sa.gov.au/

South Australia's Strategic Plan - www.stateplan.sa.gov.au/

Australian Health Inequities Program - http://som.flinders.edu.au/AHIP

Public Health Information Development Unit - www.publichealth.gov.au/
(including interactive tool to measure inequality against targets in South Australia's Strategic Plan – to be fully operational by October 2007).

Social Exclusion Knowledge Network
www.who.int/social_determinants/knowledge_networks/en/

Commission on Social Determinants of Health
www.who.int/social_determinants/en/

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