



A SOLID STATE PRODUCTION FOR THE SMITH FAMILY

ALICE & THE GIANT EMPTINESS

A SHORT FILM OF HOPE



everyone's family



**OVER 638,000 CHILDREN ARE LIVING IN JOBLESS FAMILIES
IN AUSTRALIA TODAY¹**

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013. Labour force status
and other characteristics of families, June 2012).



A contemporary tale about a young girl living with the burden of disadvantage, who overcomes a negative self-image and the taunts of classmates to live a life full of possibility.



**ONE IN
TEN**
AUSTRALIAN
CHILDREN LIVE IN
DISADVANTAGED
FAMILIES¹

Tales of the
ONE IN TEN
PRESENTED BY THE SMITH FAMILY

ALICE & THE GIANT EMPTINESS

A SHORT FILM OF HOPE

Alice & the Giant Emptiness is the first in the Tales of the 'One In Ten' series of short films created to raise awareness of the effects of disadvantage on children.

¹ AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS 2013. LABOUR FORCE STATUS AND OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES, JUNE 2012).



TALES OF THE 'ONE IN TEN'

Tales of the 'One In Ten' is a new animated web series based on the real stories of Australian children from disadvantaged backgrounds who struggle daily with the effects of financial hardship.

With one in ten Australian children (638,000) living in disadvantaged families today, the series aims to raise awareness of disadvantage and its effects.

The stories are drawn from the case studies provided by children's education charity 'The Smith Family' who regularly come across challenging but inspiring, stories of children overcoming adversity.

Using a simple animated style together with elements of traditional fairy tales, the series draws the viewer into the inner world of the children to reveal their stories.

The series begins with **Alice & the Giant Emptiness** and will continue with further stories about other children and their experiences of disadvantage and how they overcome them.



THE STORY



Alice & the Giant Emptiness is the story of a girl who finds herself socially outcast at school as a result of being labelled as 'the poor kid'.

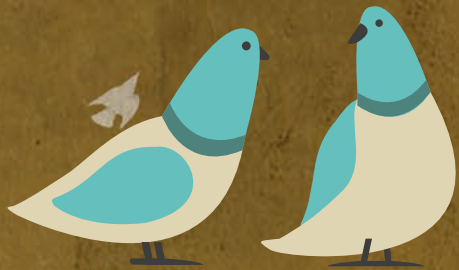
Alice's oversized, tattered uniform, worn shoes and old school bag are a daily source of embarrassment. When her toe breaks through her shoe on the way to school Alice tries her best to avoid being seen by her classmates.

Eventually she is confronted by two tormentors who ridicule her in front of a crowd. This is Alice's worst nightmare. In her imagination she sees the children's harsh jibes emanating from their mouths as black and dangerous looking words – 'loser', 'reject', 'povo'.

As the bullies run off to school the words form a huge swirling cloud with a life of its own. It swoops upon Alice and pierces a large hole right through her body. Although startled she appears physically unharmed. Unsure of what to do she continues on to school.

Alice's difficult day only continues. Bad grades, disappointed teachers and a lack of friends are further reminders of how empty and alone she feels inside. She is not sure if anyone can see the large hole but just in case she does her best to conceal it.



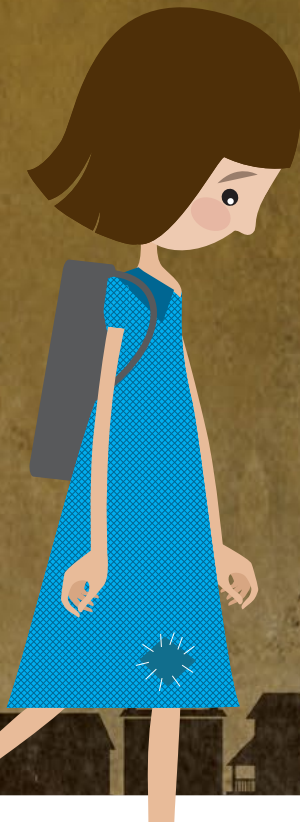


When the possibility of a genuine friendship arises in the school playground, Alice doesn't know how to respond and disappears into the quiet of the school hall. Being alone is what she is used to.

In the darkness, Alice glimpses an image of herself reflected in a tilt mirror reminding her of why she is the odd one out.

In the midst of despair a gust of wind flows in through the window. It circles the room and seems to bring some red stage curtains to life. They reach out to her like a pair of comforting hands. As the curtains flap magically in the breeze they flip the tilt mirror over. In the reflection Alice sees a transformed vision of herself – her uniform no longer has patches, her bag is repaired and her shoes are shiny and without holes.

She cannot believe her eyes. She stares down at herself to check if the reflection is real and indeed it is. With these basic changes to her uniform and bag Alice begins to feel differently about herself. As her self-esteem rises the gaping hole in her stomach begins to close. She runs excitedly into the light of the playground, ready to give the day at school another chance.



Tales of the **ONE IN TEN**

PRESENTED BY THE SMITH FAMILY



CREATIVE STATEMENT



Alice & the Giant Emptiness focuses on issues facing children from disadvantaged families. These problems are far-reaching and affect all areas of their lives including their social and educational development and their self-esteem.

Alice & the Giant Emptiness attempts to capture how disadvantage affects a child emotionally by using some of the storytelling tools often found in fairy tales. These traditional stories have enormous power and impact and connect so many of us of different ages and nationalities. Symbols like mirrors, dark clouds and holes are simple and immediate in conveying certain ideas and emotions.

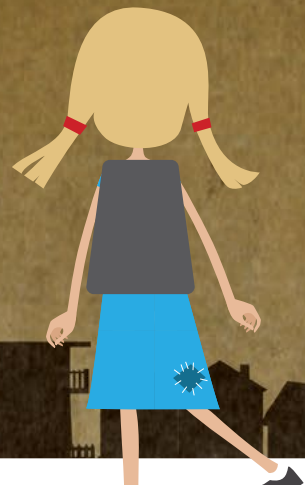
Children who are the victims of name-calling often describe how the words cause them physical pain. The film attempts to capture this with the black 'word' cloud that attacks Alice like the 'Dementors' in Harry Potter. The force of the attack leaves her with a giant hole which is symbolic of the self-esteem she now lacks.

The film however is not all about the difficult areas of disadvantage – it is also about some of the solutions.

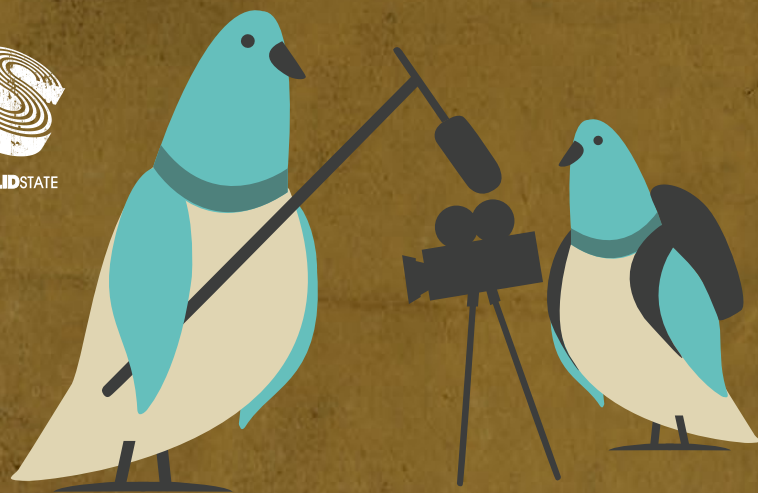
Disadvantage is a complex topic and there are many approaches offered by organisations which support children from struggling families. To the children experiencing the disadvantage however the first step is simple - they don't want to stand out in a social environment or be picked out as the 'poor kid'. Often they just want a school uniform that fits them or a bag just like the other kids. While something like a new uniform doesn't fix everything it is often a first step in the right direction and has an enormously positive effect on the child's outlook.

The transformation of Alice is symbolic of the deeper change that is possible in these children when people come together to offer help and support. Ultimately we wanted this film to raise awareness of the statistic that 638,000 children live in disadvantage and give people an opportunity to make a difference to these children's lives.

The Solid State
February 2014



THE FILMMAKERS

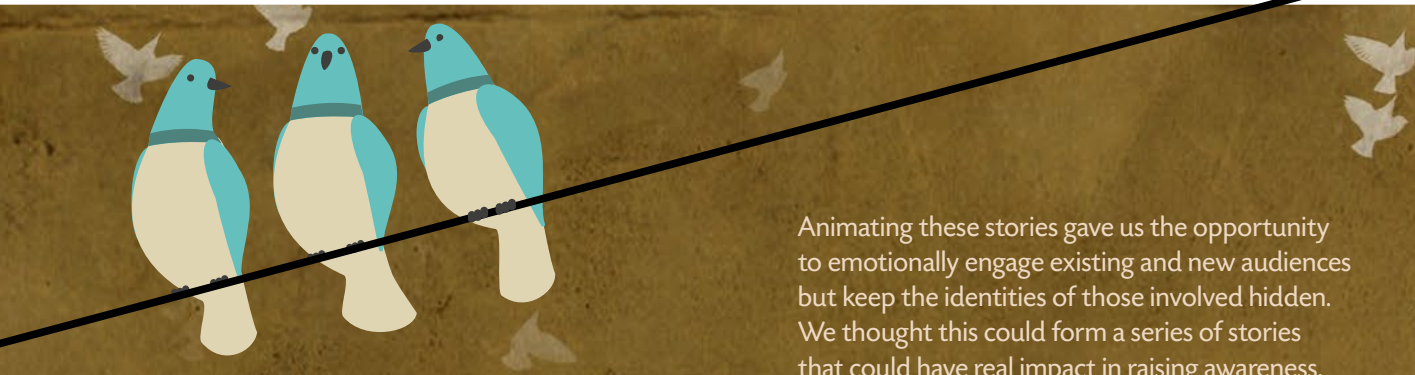


The Solid State is an award-winning creative agency from Sydney, Australia specialising in film and television campaigns. They work closely with filmmakers, distributors, sales agents and networks at all stages of film and television production – from pitching and presales, to sales at market as well as theatrical campaigns. Their work crosses a broad range of disciplines encompassing marketing strategy and positioning as well as the production of trailers, posters, websites and social media campaigns. Recent projects include Tim Winton's **The Turning**, **Redfern Now**, **Kill Me 3 Times** and Warwick Thornton's **The Darkside**. Since establishing in 2007 they have won over 20 Golden Trailer, Promax and AEAF awards for their work.

www.thesolidstate.com

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"The 'One In Ten' series is an exciting opportunity for us to apply what we have learned from many years of marketing and positioning film and television projects to a cause we are passionate about. We've produced a number of promos and television commercials for The Smith Family. They do a fantastic job of helping children and their families through some very difficult issues and we've always enjoyed working with them on their campaigns.

Alice & the Giant Emptiness was an idea we had based on a promo we produced for them a couple of years ago. It combined very simple illustrations with voices of children talking about what they would do to change the world. We thought that approach would be a good way to tell some of the real and inspiring stories they have witnessed in their work.

Animating these stories gave us the opportunity to emotionally engage existing and new audiences but keep the identities of those involved hidden. We thought this could form a series of stories that could have real impact in raising awareness. We hope that proves to be the case!

Our team got behind this project in a big way - from our team of designers and animators to sound studio *Zig Zag Lane* who mixed the film, as well as *Big Bang & Fuzz* who generously donated the track 'Find the Light' to help raise donations. We'd like to thank them all for their hard work and generosity."

Danny Lachevre
Creative Director



THE SMITH FAMILY

The Smith Family is a national charity helping young Australians in need to get the most out of their education, so they can create better futures for themselves.

The Smith Family believes every child deserves a chance and that circumstances should never limit potential. With research showing education can transform lives, the charity's *Learning for Life* program enables disadvantaged young people to get the opportunities they need to fully participate in their education and create better futures for themselves.

Learning for Life provides long-term support for young Australians in need, all the way through their schooling years: from primary school to senior school and on to tertiary studies if they choose. This approach gives ongoing assistance to disadvantaged students so they can develop vital life skills, stay engaged in their education and have the best opportunity to break the cycle of disadvantage.

www.thesmithfamily.com
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everyone's family

**EDUCATION
HAS THE POWER
TO CHANGE LIVES
NOT JUST MINDS.**





OVER 638,000 CHILDREN ARE LIVING IN JOBLESS FAMILIES IN AUSTRALIA TODAY¹

"What excited us about this idea was the potential to reach the public in a way that our traditional advertising cannot.

Every day we are inspired by stories of children from disadvantaged families dealing with some very difficult circumstances. We are there to see some amazing transformations where children and their families can make huge changes to their lives when given opportunities that others might take for granted. Over 638,000 children are living in jobless families in Australia today. We find this statistic staggering but we've also found many people are unaware how large this group is. The impact of disadvantage on a child's education can be profound, often resulting in disengagement from education, unemployment and poor health in adulthood.

We see first-hand the impact of disadvantage on children, especially with their education. These kids often have responsibilities beyond their years. They miss out on the learning experiences and support that other children may take for granted. With no opportunity to improve basic skills they can easily fall behind at school. It's hard to catch up when there is no extra available support outside of school. Falling behind and losing interest at school, can lead to a pattern of under-achievement right through school, and beyond into the after-school years. We want to stop this happening.

Telling these stories of children has always been difficult, as most people understandably don't want their personal lives exposed to the public. So when The Solid State suggested this approach we

were keen, as it provided a way for us to tell these stories and still retain the anonymity of the subjects.

Animation was the perfect vehicle for this as it captures the emotion of the stories in a very honest way but also allows us to tell the stories from a child's point of view.

We believe the best way to break this cycle is through education. That's why we focus on supporting the education of disadvantaged children. We hope these short stories will connect with people and help them to know they can help make a difference – especially through the Back to School time of the year."

Rhys Kelly,
Head of Communications
The Smith Family



THE FACTS ON DISADVANTAGE

WHO ARE THE 'ONE IN TEN'?

Not all children get an equal start in life. Today, one in ten Australian children are living in jobless families¹, where even life's basics are hard to come by.

Many of these kids don't have something as simple as a school bag, complete uniform or the schoolbooks they need to make the most of their education. They are often teased or left out by other students. And because they don't fit in, they end up struggling at school, or failing altogether. For some, it can set up a pattern of under-achievement that can last the rest of their lives.

Research shows children and young people living in disadvantage have access to fewer books and learning materials in the home. Access to support and resources forms the foundation for learning.

In many cases, the parents of disadvantaged children may not have the skills or experience to support their child's education.

As these children get older, they have fewer role models, and access to mentors and networks that are critical for creating educational opportunities to help them build their aspirations and be motivated to learn.

THE IMPACT OF DISADVANTAGE

Disadvantaged students are on average 2-3 years behind in reading and maths by the time they are 15 years old.²

The reading gap between the most disadvantaged students and their better off peers is equivalent to almost three years of schooling.³

Year 12 completion rates are significantly lower (58%) for students from disadvantaged backgrounds than for students from more advantaged backgrounds (77%).⁴

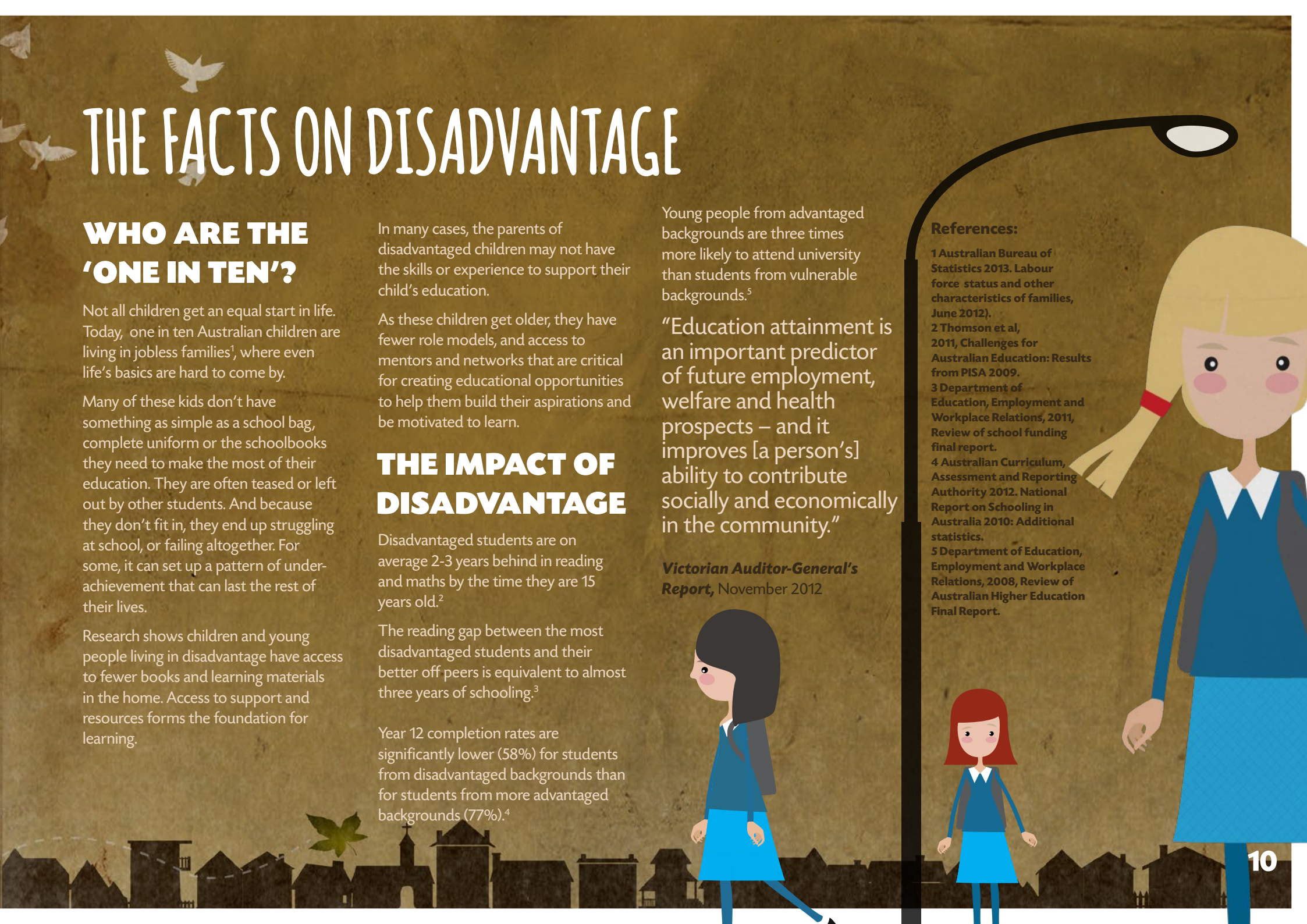
Young people from advantaged backgrounds are three times more likely to attend university than students from vulnerable backgrounds.⁵

"Education attainment is an important predictor of future employment, welfare and health prospects – and it improves [a person's] ability to contribute socially and economically in the community."

Victorian Auditor-General's Report, November 2012

References:

- 1 Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013. Labour force status and other characteristics of families, June 2012).
- 2 Thomson et al, 2011, Challenges for Australian Education: Results from PISA 2009.
- 3 Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2011, Review of school funding final report.
- 4 Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority 2012. National Report on Schooling in Australia 2010: Additional statistics.
- 5 Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2008, Review of Australian Higher Education Final Report.



BUY THE SINGLE
**Find the
Light**

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