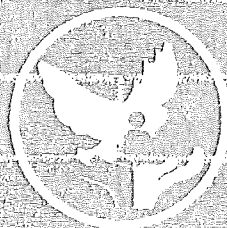


A Year
on the
streets



PERTH INNER CITY
YOUTH SERVICE

Norm Williams editor

CONTENTS

	Page
1. PREAMBLE SHERYL CARMODY - CHAIRPERSON OF P.I.C.Y.S. STREETWORK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	1
2. INTRODUCTION - A YEAR ON THE STREETS NORM WILLIAMS (EDITOR)	3
3. REFLECTIONS ON THE NATURE OF DETACHED YOUTH WORK SHELLEY DAVIES	5
4. STREET WORK DEVELOPMENT IN W.A. GEORGE DAVIES, NIC JAMES AND NORM WILLIAMS	7
5. A YEAR ON THE STREETS - A COLLAGE OF FRAGMENTS VARIOUS SOURCES	18
6. HEALTH BRIAN FITZGERALD-DYNON, NIC JAMES AND HILARY SWAIN	27
7. DRUGS SHELLEY DAVIES AND GRAHAM NICHOLLS	35
8. ACCOMMODATION ROSIE CABLE, JOANNE JAMES AND SHERYL CARMODY	45
9. EDUCATION BRIAN FITZGERALD-DYNON, WILL LUNDY, NORM WILLIAMS AND GENEVIEVE ERREY	53
10. YOUNG WOMEN SHELLEY DAVIES AND GENEVIEVE ERREY	63
11. YOUNG OFFENDERS MIKE EVANS, WILL LUNDY AND NORM WILLIAMS	71
12. REFLECTIONS FROM THE HOUSEHOLD NETWORK PEG HUDSON	79
13. REFLECTIONS FROM THE CAVE RUPERT GERRITSEN	80
14. COUNTRY AND SUBURBAN NETWORKS RUSSELL NEILSON AND GEORGE DAVIES	83
15. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS NORM WILLIAMS	97
16. REFLECTIONS ON COLLECTIVE MANAGEMENT NORM WILLIAMS	103
17. THE STRUCTURE OF P.I.C.Y.S. GEORGE DAVIES AND PEG HUDSON	111
18. FUTURE STRATEGIES NORM WILLIAMS	115

PREAMBLE:

The decision to write this report was made in August 1984 when we recognised that we were in the final phase of funding for the program through the Community Employment Program. The key reasons for the report were: (i) to ensure that the insights and experiences of the year's work were not lost to the wider community, and (ii) to provide a medium for workers and management to draw together the learning from the streets.

It has truly been a year of blood, sweat and tears at all levels of the project. In many ways the task of writing this report was an enormous burden to place on a voluntary management committee and tired streetworkers. Nevertheless, the fact that we have something to present is due to the motivational force deriving from the fact that we knew the Perth Inner City Youth Service Streetwork Project was the first collective and comprehensive program to get to know some of Perth's most alienated youth and their settings.

This report should not be viewed as that of a scientific research project, but rather as the insights and perspectives of the streetworkers and their consultants gained from case studies, gut feelings, and analysis where possible. We can only whet the appetite of people in this report as the lack of time and resources prevent any more detail.

The subject areas relating to street youth (for example accommodation, education, drugs...) show that young people on the streets struggle with aspects of human living, as we all do, but they are more vulnerable, and the denial of access to life's essentials is severe.

There are chapters related to our reflections on collective management and a proposed model for 1985. The historical overview of streetwork, the explanation of the structure of P.I.C.Y.S., and input from the services of P.I.C.Y.S., aim to show the context the streetwork project has developed from and the context in which it is currently situated.

Our analysis and intervention during this project was marked by limitations but we have made a start, and invite the Perth community to support and extend our efforts to understand and bring about positive change for young people who end up on the streets.

I sincerely thank streetworkers Rosie Cable, Shelley Davies, Mike Evans and Brian Fitzgerald-Dynon for their contributions to this pioneering program. I know that this experience of twelve months, in various ways, brought you much pain and stress. For staff co-ordinator Will Lundy, your efforts kept the wheel turning during the difficult periods. Debbie Taylor your administration and typing back-up to the project was essential. Management persons George Davies, Nic James, Genevieve Errey, Joanne James, Peg Hudson and Graham Nicholls, your commitment and sharing of skills has been tremendous. For those who left us before the project was completed, Graham Wilson, Tracey O'Dea, Peter Oliver and Newland Hutchinson, I acknowledge your work in the early part of the project. Finally, I thank Norm Williams, the editor of this report, whose skill and energy in the last three months were crucial to its compilation and presentation.

Sheryl Carmody
Chairperson

A YEAR ON THE STREETS

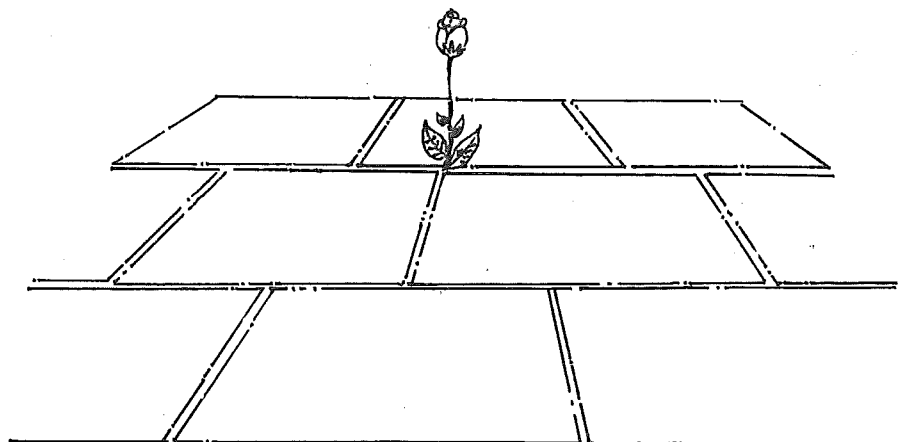
This past year we have been there
sharing the life of the street
caring for the life on the street
being there, with and for those
who call the inner city home.

We came not as experts but rather
as learners who might also bring
knowledge, skills and the care
which might lead some to step
out of an aimless, destructive existence
to one with hope of a real future.

We shared the support of many
who were committed and experienced
and through them we learnt to
understand the street culture and how to
perceive its strengths and its values
so as to nurture them into a positive force.

A year has gone and we have only
just begun to effect the potential
role a streetworker can fulfil.
May we and others continue
to further develop this presence on the streets.

N.W.



INTRODUCTION - A YEAR ON THE STREETS

Through the Wage Pause and Community Employment Programs the P.I.C.Y.S. received funding for a streetworker team consisting of a co-ordinator, 4 streetworkers and a developmental assistant. Their employment was for twelve months. The focus of the project was on the inner city streets of Perth.

It has long been recognised that over the past 10 years a number of people involved in P.I.C.Y.S. have maintained support networks for young people who live much of their lives on the streets of Perth. The Streetwork Project enabled us to consolidate this work and implement for the first time a team approach. An evaluation of the past year, indicates that the P.I.C.Y.S. Streetwork Project has achieved the goal of improving the awareness of detached youth work within the wider community and the social welfare field. This in particular was achieved by the fact that for the first time a team of streetworkers was readily accepted by the young people and the potential for effective intervention emerged much earlier than had been expected. The mutual support and shared knowledge offered by the team approach has been one of the major assets to this project and every attempt should be made to maintain this for the future.

An estimated 750-800 individuals were contacted on the street and a wide range of needs were uncovered. We believe our presence was effective in going some way towards meeting these. We have also been able to identify major gaps in the services currently available, especially for those individuals and groups with least motivation towards formal services and who are least appealing to such services.

As a legacy to what has been achieved in this past year and as an incentive for the community, organisations, governments and P.I.C.Y.S. itself, this report has been compiled documenting and evaluating the year in an honest and open manner. We expect that this report will enable all of us to improve our awareness of detached youth work and to further develop appropriate models, ideals and strategies to make current and future streetwork projects more effective.

Within the report we attempt to present as much of the raw experience of the street as we can, through case-studies and reflections from the streetworkers. Each of the streetworkers and their consultants addressed major issues confronting young people on the street - drugs, health, education, accommodation and the law. The special needs of young women are highlighted. Some attempt has been made to document and to clarify the nature of this particular form of work with young people. A close examination is made of how the project fitted within the broader P.I.C.Y.S. structure and an honest appraisal made of our efforts to manage the project. Each of these matters issues challenges for both P.I.C.Y.S. and others who are or wish to engage in this work.

Many of the comments and expressions of view are personal and it has not been possible to extensively seek a consensus across the range of people involved. Neither did we have the capacity to seek directly the participation of those with whom we seek to work, the young people on the street themselves. This is indeed a complex process and we found great difficulty in maintaining an appropriate balance in a parallel project - that of making a film on streetwork in W.A. More effective consumer feedback and direct participation in evaluation and project management by those seen as the targets of the service, remains a future challenge for P.I.C.Y.S!

It is necessary to recognise that while there has been an emphasis throughout the project that information and the recording of data are paramount to the project, these will primarily remain qualitative rather than quantitative. Streetwork is about working in informal settings and not about over structuring or prying into young people's privacy. Therefore while for social planning and government funding purposes, it may be important to have detailed statistics, the methods necessary to obtain that information may virtually destroy what a project is attempting to achieve.

This in effect was one of the negative consequences of deciding to produce this report. After eight months on the street and the emergence of some internal problems within the team, it was decided to withdraw the workers from the street to concentrate on documenting what had been achieved. This led to considerable frustration amongst the workers and disillusionment amongst the young people on the street. While we believe that this document is a most valuable outcome of the project we also must recognise that we may have achieved much more on the streets had it not been written. We are still learning about how to find the right balance.

We hope that the contents and our personal perspectives (and there are numerous different ones within this report) will challenge you to re-examine your own personal assumptions about those on the streets and about how we should be relating to them. We also hope that it will generate new and creative approaches to working with these young people to ensure their respect for their own dignity, self-worth and participation in the full life of our community. The past year on the streets has done it for us, we hope it may do likewise for you.

Norm Williams

REFLECTIONS ON THE NATURE OF DETACHED YOUTHWORK

Detached Youth Work is an established method of contacting "unattached" young people, i.e. those who do not make use of traditional youth services such as recreation centres, voluntary youth clubs or uniformed youth organisations in their free or "discretionary" time. Recent estimates indicate that such youth are, at any one time, about 85% of the total youth population.

The use of free time by young people is wider than a recreation issue. It provides a key indicator of the nature of youth culture and subcultures; the relation of youth to other age groups; and the state of health of the key social institutions of family, schooling and work place. Many unattached youth spend a large proportion of their free, or even total, time on or around the streets, where they will "act out" the realities taking place elsewhere in their lives. They will also be formed in their street life by the legacy, for good and ill, of their childhood.

Unattached youth are a common phenomenon in most developed and developing countries, particularly in urban areas. Detached Youth Workers contact and work with these young people on their own ground. Initially they will identify the places where the young people congregate, typically shopping areas, amusement arcades and less expensive cafes and hotels. The workers will then spend a considerable amount of time in these places making contact with the young people and, using their interpersonal skills, gradually gaining their trust and acceptance. By this means they will begin to identify the strengths and hazards of youth subcultures, and the degree to which youth and the wider society and its services are in mutual accord.

The Detached Youth Work method has been used successfully in many countries, and particularly over the past twenty years in the U.K., the U.S.A., Canada and Australia.

ABOUT THE YOUNG PEOPLE

Many young people are found to have opted out of formal education prematurely and frequently to have come from stressed homes. On the streets they tend to seek the company of others in similar circumstances and become identified as a problem when congregating in large groups which appear to have no direction or purpose. Boredom and lack of money frequently lead them into activities which cause conflict with authorities. The groups to which these young people belong develop their own structures and values. Although this is a common phenomenon in any grouping of adolescents, it becomes more serious because the lack of regular contact with mature adults means that these values are rarely challenged. The few adult contacts which these young people do have are either perceived as authority figures, such as police or social workers, or are themselves a part of the street culture and thus have no reason to challenge the prevailing cultural norms.

Many young people are runaways, sometimes from home, sometimes from institutions or from the police. They tend to live on the borderlines or outside of the law. Consequently they have no desire to turn to the normal helping agencies, or to the police, should they find themselves in trouble, and this inevitably means that these young people are extremely vulnerable to exploitation. Not only are there numbers of adults willing to take advantage of this situation, for financial gain or personal gratification, but the young people themselves are frequently found to be exploiting each other. One member of a group providing protection, shelter or food will expect payment in one form or another. Younger teenagers of both sexes are vulnerable to this form of exploitation, but young females are unquestionably the most at risk.

Unattached young people are usually severely under resourced and receive very little of the total government funds spent on the 12 to 25 age group. This is particularly true of those young people who have failed to benefit from the education system and have left school prematurely. They are often unable to receive unemployment benefits and frequently have little or no money to live on. In contrast, a child from a secure home, regularly attending school and perhaps making use of the excellent sporting facilities provided by the Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation is in fact benefiting from a disproportionately large amount of government funding. In many cases there are, in fact, ways in which the young person could claim further money from the government, but he or she fails to do so, sometimes through ignorance of the numbers of benefits available, sometimes through fear of the contacts with bureaucracy which claiming the benefits must entail.

WHAT THE DETACHED YOUTH WORKER DOES

1. **Developmental Work with Groups and Individuals**

The norms and values of street society are considerably less rigid than those of a more structured culture and are thus more easily challenged and affected. The worker, after establishing credibility and trust with the young people, is able to encourage them to reflect upon their circumstances, lifestyle and behaviour patterns. With the worker's help the young person can then consider more realistically the likely effects of their current lifestyle on their future. In essence it is the responsibility of the worker to enable the young people to reach a point where they can make realistic and viable decisions about their own lives, based on accurate information, and thus move towards responsible adulthood.

2. **Education and Information Delivery**

Detached Youth Work is a particularly effective way of transmitting accurate information to unattached young people. Values and beliefs about circumstances, held and passed on by these young people, are frequently erroneous because they are based on inaccurate information. A young person who has, for example, a health problem, will seek and act on the advice of their peers, because they do not have a mature adult figure to whom they can turn for advice. Detached Youth Workers can fill this role, providing accurate information when requested, or linking the young person with others who can provide professional help if necessary.

3. **Linking with Other Agencies**

The problems faced by young people within the street subcultures will sometimes need specialist attention beyond the scope of a Detached Youth Worker. The young person, however, may not fully understand their problem or know where to go for professional advice. The Detached Youth Worker will have that knowledge and will be able to link the young person with the relevant professional help. Frequently this will entail accompanying the young person to the agency concerned and perhaps speaking on their behalf until suitable rapport has been established between the young person and the officer of the agency. It is essential that the Detached Youth Worker makes and maintains good contact with these agencies in order for this element of his/her role to function smoothly. The initial contact with the agencies may need to be made by a representative of the worker's management group. Because of the special needs of this group of young people, they cannot easily be accommodated by the usual formal and necessarily bureaucratic methods of processing clients normally adopted by these agencies. Some changes in the agency's structure (e.g. cutting of red tape) may be necessary if the agencies are to fulfil their function of servicing the needs of these young people. The problems experienced by this group are frequently not known to the agency personnel simply because these young people do not present themselves to the agency.

4. **Research**

Researching the needs and situation of unattached young people is a formidable task. They are naturally suspicious of unknown adults and will find it more difficult to respond positively to the usual questionnaire type of research than would a normal, mature adult. The Detached Youth Worker, being an accepted part of the street scene, is able to assess accurately the real problems, needs and circumstances of the young people, and pass on this information to relevant authorities.

5. **Advocacy**

These young people have little or no desire to stand up and speak for themselves. In fact it is usually in their best interests to attract as little attention to themselves as possible. They are frequently lacking in the types of communication skills necessary to communicate effectively with government officials and politicians. For these reasons it becomes the responsibility of the Detached Youth Worker to speak on behalf of these young people, either personally or through his or her management structure. Inevitably this type of advocacy will carry more weight if backed by the management group.

Shelley Davies

STREETWORK DEVELOPMENTS IN W.A.

Detached Youth Work has been pioneered in Western Australia by a number of key individuals and generally within isolated projects. These have been starved of resources and become dependent on the worker which has meant that a number have had only a short-term existence. In 1984, the number of detached workers has grown to a sufficient level to create the environment for an effective support network. We have seen the beginnings of this and the need for consolidation is paramount both for workers and management.

BACKGROUND TO DETACHED YOUTH WORK OVERSEAS

Joe Fabre writes...

During the 60's there emerged in the U.S. an era of awakening and consciousness among young adults manifested in the civil rights movement. They began to take notice of injustice inflicted by a dual society which discriminated against racial and ethnic minorities, the poor, the ex-convict, and those in the less technological countries of the world. With the leadership of the civil rights movement, other movements began, the Campus Community movement (protesting the war in Vietnam and Cambodia), the Grass Roots movement and others.

There was an awakening on behalf of the disadvantaged who suffered due to conditions beyond their control - environmental, social, economic and racial. This activism wanted society to answer why unemployment and illiteracy was so high, why minority groups were victimized and discriminated against, why the government was sending troops to fight in an undeclared war, and why opponents of political organisations were being sent to prison because their views were different from the traditional.

During this activism our youth, the country's future, were in the streets - young people of all ages, rich and poor, black, white, brown, yellow and red, gathering in pool-halls, drop-in amusement centres, unemployment lines, gaols and courts, drifting from here to there. In the streets doing what?

They were in the streets learning how to grow up, stay alive and just plain cope. Where were the traditional youth organisations? Why weren't these youth being programmed like the so-called "good kid"? They were in the streets because not all kinds of kids are star players or winners, nor can they afford the program costs. In some cases there were simply no programs. Or they couldn't identify with the square kids and mixed instead with others in the same plight. Regardless of the reasons why they were there, they were ignored by traditional agencies and programs and were increasing in number.

They were setting up an image and model for other kids to be attracted to. We labelled them and newspapers gave them prestige. They found identity in subculture groups and gangs. They were developing a bitterness towards the system, structure and the social worker who wanted to conform them.

They began to see the hypocrisy of society and the deceits in adults and their agencies. They were alienated by choice or design and in the struggle for self-esteem and identity found it easier to move towards the fads which justified personal retreat and escape.

They became subject to rejection, ridicule and name-calling by those whom they confronted with inconsistencies, and they sometimes resorted to smart-alec cynicism, random hostility, apathy and moral indifference; they had developed their own culture, rejecting society norms and becoming rejected in return.

It was obvious that programs for the "good kids" were not reaching these young people. It was obvious that we had to go to them, on their territory, in their environment, or lose contact with a generation.

The American detached work concept during the 1960's was specifically directed at delinquency and gang control in large urban cities. Recreation programs were often the tools used for establishing contact and relationships with young people. They were the means to an end, that is, the socialisation of these young

people. The premise was that the only effective way of dealing with increasing crime rates was to effect change in the socio-economic conditions of the client group as an alternative to increasing the enforcement and punishment component.

The streetwork of that era showed that work with difficult and/or alienated young people was possible and had similar results to those achieved by "middle class" youth clubs. The results were usually sustained for a greater period of time for the following reasons:-

1. Streetwork was seen as relevant by the young people themselves, and was need oriented and based.
2. Youth centres required large amounts of money before programs could be started, or staff could commence their work. Buildings required personnel for administration, maintenance and other factors which redirected resources away from young people.

Detached youth work invests in workers rather than capital and maintenance cost of buildings. The demand on volunteer and paid workers is considerable, but the results are observable in social behaviour and attitude changes rather than bricks and mortar. History has shown this strategy to be cost effective in that it reduces the need for expensive "ambulance" work, enables the better planning and use of public facilities and services and makes for wiser choice of site and style when expenditure on buildings is appropriate.

Detached youth work also has a history in Great Britain. The British experience indicates that those young people who have the most severe problems are precisely the ones who are the most unlikely, or unwilling to benefit from the formal provisions of services to youth. Young people who are unlikely to benefit from the services are those who lack the social skills and confidence to relate well to the workers and so to take advantage of the services available. Young people who are unwilling to benefit from existing services do not see them as being relevant to their needs. These services include careers, legal, social services, welfare, youth organisations, education and recreation.

The experience has been that the detached worker can be of benefit in issues relating to unemployment, work, the law, home, school, drugs, racial conflict and relationships with peers.

It should not be assumed that detached youth work is necessarily a problem-oriented youth work approach. Rather, the worker is ideally a facilitator for healthy development of whole persons, including preventative strategies. However, overseas research indicates that much of the time is spent in "bandaiding", assisting in immediate problems of the nature described. The work of the detached worker is conducted mainly on the territory of the young people. Wherever young people congregate the detached worker will endeavour to work with them. Locations could be cafes, bars, discos, food places and pin-ball parlours.

BEGINNINGS IN OTHER STATES

Australian conditions required the development of a "streetwork" approach which combined elements of both British and American models. The pioneering work was done in such voluntary organisations as the Service to Youth Council in Adelaide and the Newcastle Youth Service, which have been in operation since the mid-sixties.

Adelaide

The Service to Youth Council (S.Y.C.) initiated streetwork in the streets of Adelaide in 1960 after efforts to help three young people referred by street evangelists failed. Not understanding why traditional welfare services were inadequate on these occasions, the S.Y.C. located two social work student volunteers in the streets to observe the groups of young people to which the three referrals belonged. This observation continued for two years and became a valuable piece of research for the development of streetwork service in Australia. The S.Y.C. studied overseas models of streetwork, tended to reject models from the United States focussed on an authoritative approach to violent gangs and urban ghetto problems, and favoured the approach of programs developing in the United Kingdom and Canada which focussed on social casework. The approach that was finally determined has been described in a report by the S.Y.C. in 1965. This approach was also adopted by the Newcastle Youth Service, whilst other agencies such as the Young Men's Christian Association in Melbourne followed more closely the Canadian "outreach worker" approach.

The streetwork done in the 50's with gangs of boddies and wiggies was different from that done by the S.Y.C. during the height of Beatlemania in the 60's, which was different from the work in the pub scene in the 70's and what will probably be done in the 80's. A streetwork program must be prepared to change and evolve if it is to be responsive to human needs. While society changes, social agencies should also change. New ideas, the outcomes of honest evaluation, changing values and objectives all need to be translated into the programs those agencies are offering.

Gary Killington writes...

A survey in Adelaide of a group of young people who frequented a section of the streets, showed that the group was likely to need welfare service, eager to seek help, and able to use assistance to their own advantage. From this the Council decided to promote a program of providing a worker in situations continually frequented by adolescents. The area is selected. The social worker hangs around, is tested by the frequenters of the area and conveys his role to the group. The individual members of the group then use the services offered if they so desire.

Newcastle

In 1965 the concept of detached youth work (otherwise referred to as separated youth work or streetwork) was adopted as an operational model for a newly founded youth service agency which became known as the Newcastle Youth Service. The agency began in a modest fashion employing one detached youth worker and was administered as a registered charity receiving, in the main, support from Hamilton Wesley Methodist Church whose Superintendent Minister, Rev. John Mallison, gave the prime impetus for the idea, with, at first, limited and cautious community support.

Since then, the agency has grown to a stage where it now fulfils an important role in the overall welfare program of the City of Newcastle.

The agency employs a director, an administrator (full-time), one senior detached youth worker, two detached youth workers (all full-time), a liaison officer (20 hours per week) and a secretary (30 hours per week).

Essentially, the Newcastle Youth Service is in the business of providing an information-cum-counselling service to the unattached or so-called "hard to reach" or "unclubbable" young people of its operating district. Its clientele are young (15-23) and either approach agency staff in the natural streetwork setting, are referred by their peers or, on rarer occasions, by other agencies. The full-time detached youth worker is allotted a suburban region and co-operates whenever possible with other local organisations operating among youth.

By using a full-time worker, consistent and on-going contact work is being developed enabling the worker to become recognised and trusted more readily. Working in a region, the worker becomes recognised as belonging to that region and has the added advantage of being available for much broader periods of time.

The streetwork setting utilises concepts of availability, flexibility, and above all, a philosophy best described as "unqualified friendship" in its attempts to provide a realistic service to often otherwise alienated young people.

Because of its unique experiences, the result of "front-line" involvement, the agency is also called upon to relate its insights into modern adolescence through the various teaching facilities ranging from small home gatherings, community organisations, to institutions of higher learning. (N.Y.S. materials)

We can see here the genesis of a "community development" role for detached work.

Along with the Newcastle Youth Service, New South Wales has several community groups which have employed detached youth workers to develop services and facilities for youth in their communities. Several church congregations have embarked on detached programs and at least two state government bodies have employed detached workers as well.

Brisbane/Melbourne

There is an established "outreach" program originated by the Y.M.C.A. in Melbourne. A youth service which works on the streetwork model was established in Brisbane in 1977 by six city churches in conjunction with the Brisbane City Council. This Brisbane Youth Service was followed by a Gold Coast and other Queensland projects.

St. Kilda

In the late 70's Brother Alex McDonald, a Jesuit, along with helpers began streetwork in the St. Kilda district. This service was an influence in the formation of the police "Delta Squad", and in the production of the film "Street Kids" in 1983. It became known at this time as the Open Family Foundation.

At the present time the major emphasis of work is with lonely, displaced, homeless, or exploited young people in the St. Kilda, South Melbourne and City areas by means of streetwork contact.

A team of fifteen workers (two full-time, the others volunteers often unemployed themselves), together with a team of four Good Shepherd nuns, are active in these inner city places making contact and developing caring relationships with these young people. This is done in conjunction and liaison with other relevant workers and agencies such as social workers and the police.

A further three full-time and several part-time workers are providing a similarly based function with young people in the inner city neighbourhoods on an outreach basis in conjunction with other youth agencies and local communities. In both areas of work there is close liaison with police special task forces, such as DELTA, and with local police groups.

At this current stage, over 140 young people are being contacted or housed or fed or otherwise supported through the caring relationships developed between the worker concerned and the young person. These workers are being supported and managed by a core group who provide the back-up and training to ensure that the work carried out is in accordance with the Foundation's basic philosophy. (Open Family Foundation)

Welfare Departments

The Victorian Department of Community Welfare Services established an Inner City Street Kids Project in mid 1983 to "address the increasing problems related to the sexual exploitation of children/young people and their involvement in other high risk activities". This service was primarily aimed at departmental clients and the unit, consisting of a supervisor, 4 youth workers, a day worker and clerical support, retained their statutory powers. The unit was the state government's response to pressure exerted on the department by the Open Family project (Brother Alex) and the Delta Squad within the Police Department and their claims regarding the numerous "wards" on the street.

In South Australia the Department for Community Welfare employed an outreach worker in 1980 to begin some research and work in the Hindley Street area. This led to the setting up of the Hindley Street project which involves a number of inner city churches, the Adelaide City Council and the department. Volunteers and part-time staff form the team which works out of a shop front. One of the positions is a secondment from the department.

Alice Springs

In the early 1980's following a visit to Perth, Peter Lorraine commenced voluntary streetwork in Alice Springs under a Streetwork Support Group based with the John Flynn Uniting Church. Following a seminar on glue-sniffing in May 1981 the Child and Family Services Annual Report recommended that the Town Council seek funding to employ a streetworker. In February 1982 Phil Bungey began as a streetworker employed by the St. Vincent de Paul Gap Centre. In 1983 the Flynn Memorial Church received funding to maintain a streetwork ministry and employed Peter Lorraine. Streetwork in the Alice has included extensive contact with Aboriginal young people.

Summary

The standard of work in Australia is high. In 1966 Mr Gary Killington, the Director of the Adelaide Service, received a world award for his work. In 1965 Canada sought advice from Australia to establish a service there in Edmonton. Mr Killington was appointed in 1966 by the Governor in Council to the South Australian Social Welfare Advisory Council.

The Hon. A.D. Bridges, Minister for Child and Social Welfare (N.S.W.) said: "This venture is really paying dividends and I am delighted indeed to be associated with it."

Judge J.M. Brennan: "This is the only method that I have heard devised to contact youths before mischief occurs . . . it is a credit to the community at large . . . a very real tribute indeed to be associated with such an organisation."

Mr C. Edwards, S.M.: "The value I see as a magistrate in a youth advisory service of this nature is that it prevents youth appearing before the court . . . it is a service to be greatly encouraged by the community."

DEVELOPMENTS IN W.A.

Drop-in Centres

The beginnings of work focussed on unattached young people within W.A. can possibly be traced back to the drop-in centres which existed in the early 70's, i.e. "The Door", "The Melting Pot", and later "The House" at Maida Vale, "House of Zoe" at Victoria Park, and others at Belmont, Carlisle and elsewhere. These were initiated by church groups with some adopting a low key and others a more clearly defined evangelistic approach. They were identified as "alternative" and therefore attracted those who rejected the more formal youth programs.

Y.M.C.A.

In 1974 the Perth Y.M.C.A. employed Nic James as its first outreach youth worker. Whilst developing projects involving school drop-outs and young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds he made contact with many inner city street youth. This led to detached work on the streets during the evenings where much contact and communication was made with young people, the main centre of contact being the Crystal Palace pin-ball parlour. Through this contact a process of identifying which suburbs the significant groups were migrating from was developed.

He then began initiating local youth activities aimed at drawing the more unattached/unclubbable teenagers off the streets, the "tool" involved here was generally a "disco". The first initiative was Melville, closely followed by Scarborough, Bentley, Wanneroo and Midvale. Over a period of two years he drew on young people from the Y.M.C.A. and "unattached" youth who attended the discos. These he trained in the basic skills of detached work to assist run the programs. There was extensive follow-up and on-going contact during normal work hours with those who attended the discos. Further streetwork was developed around the localities where discos functioned. Melville ran for four years. By 1976 the Y.M.C.A. outreach program was forced to close due to lack of funds. When Community Youth Support Scheme funds became available in 1976, the Y.M.C.A. took advantage of this and obtained one of the first grants which was used to re-employ and extend the mode of operation already established by Nic James. The focus was centred on unemployed, unattached youth in the Perth inner city area. Again the streetwork principle was utilised and links to the suburbs identified and C.Y.S.S. projects were developed in Cannington and Melville, further disco/club activities evolved in Bayswater and Maylands.

Fremantle

In late 1977 Nic James moved to the Fremantle City Council C.Y.S.S. funded streetwork model. The Y.M.C.A. inner city C.Y.S.S. continued with the same emphasis under Vic Whittome until the C.Y.S.S. guidelines were tightened in 1981. Nic James continued to develop the Melville activity in a voluntary capacity for the Y.M.C.A.

From 1977 to 1979 Nic James along with John Martin identified the "natural spots" for unattached youth around Fremantle and adopted a community development model. Along with part-time workers Moira Goldney and Peter Snowball the two project officers developed programs and activities on the teenagers' home ground, i.e. the streets, pin-ball parlours and in nightclubs. Meanwhile, in addition to his work role Nic James broadened the Melville Y.M.C.A. involvement to Riverton where, in conjunction with Ross Oliver, he developed "Misty's Disco", drawing teenagers off the streets from Langford, Lynwood, Riverton and Wilson. South Fremantle High School was also cajoled into joining the disco "club". It is interesting to note that the discos became known as the "dollar discos" and although they covered costs were all run on a non-profit basis.

By 1979 Nic James had burnt out and withdrew to a tertiary institution to get rejuvenated.

Subsequent Fremantle history has been patchy. A worker with the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme sought to use a streetwork model to offer the Duke of Edinburgh scheme to a wider range of young persons. The model was given only a short life. Christian church initiatives towards a drop-in centre and street contact did not come to fruition. The Fremantle Youth Service funded by the Fremantle City Council employs a youth housing officer, but is not resourced for streetwork. The Citizens Against Crime group which formed in 1984 as a response to street violence amongst young people has initially promoted the strategy of additional police. International experience suggests that this is likely to be the dominant approach as the America's Cub draws near. A commercial disco, "Angels", in 1984 attracted criticism as a magnet for "undesirables", despite its provision of a moderate-cost alcohol-free alternative for young people already on the streets of Fremantle and Perth inner city. A second disco proposed by the same group in the inner city of Perth met opposition for similar reasons.

Brentwood

In 1970 Jean Allen, a local parent, approached Melville City Council with the suggestion that a service be developed to address the needs of unattached youth in the Brentwood area. A community meeting followed, from which the Brentwood Youth Centre was established utilizing an old tennis club building. Jean Allen managed this project on a voluntary basis for ten years, during which time she identified wide ranging family and peer stresses, social alienation and sexuality dilemmas amongst young people of the region.

Over this period the Council-endorsed Melville Youth Committee changed its orientation from the more recognised sporting and recreational activities for youth towards unattached youth work. The committee unsuccessfully submitted in 1984 to the Community Employment Program (C.E.P.) to employ two streetworkers in the Melville City area.

Wagin

Around the mid 70's the Methodist Church in Kondinin and Wagin districts employed youth workers with a strong emphasis on contact with "downtown" young people, i.e. youth of the district outside the agency from which the workers were employed. These projects, because of the quality of the workers employed, were able to make substantial contact and build effective relationships with youth and adults in their region. Significant issues were identified, largely to do with family stresses and the quality of life for young people in small rural communities.

Bryan Penn, building on the foundations laid in the region by Des Perry experienced the stresses of a solo worker in a small community over-accessed by young people whose trust he had gained.

Management in these projects faced important issues concerning consensus about agency expectations, and interpretation of the role of the workers to young people and the community at large. In the main these agendas were addressed to the satisfaction of all concerned. Management at times found itself particularly stressed in seeking to maintain adequate support to the workers, ensure continuity of finance, and locate new workers able to build on the foundations laid.

When Bryan Penn finished in 1978 no replacement worker or funding could be found, and the project went into recess.

In 1983 the project had re-emerged as a community based youth service, utilized consultant Max Kau of Adelaide and appointed Rod Boulton in early 1984. In a brief survey Boulton recommended that a worker was not needed full-time, sparked a substantial debate and moved on. The community committee's appraisal since, has been that action research on a relational model rather than questionnaire survey is needed to do justice to local needs and realities. The committee is seeking further funding and a worker.

W.A.A.V.Y.O.

In May 1977 the Western Australian Association of Voluntary Youth Organisations seminar on "Working with Today's Teenagers" included, in a workshop led by Nic James, focus on detached youth work which could be seen as providing stimulus for organisations to begin considering this as a model for intervention.

Uniting Church/Scarborough

With the arrival of George Davies in Perth in 1977, and his appointment as Uniting Church Youth Consultant, detached youth work gained a new asset and effective facilitator. His role within the Uniting Church was to prove influential in encouraging and supporting the developments that have emerged throughout the state over the past eight years.

In December 1977, in response to parish requests for action, the Scarborough Beach Contact Community combined street contact with a beachfront drop-in centre, "The Place." Multiple issues were encountered early in the project - "drag racing" controversy, police-youth conflict, media distortions, poly drug use amongst suburban youth, accommodation emergencies and family tensions, energy frustrations, socialisation needs, street violence, social dislocation and alienation.

By late January 1978 the original one month project was extended indefinitely. Accommodation provided at Oceanic Drive, Floreat, around a core of three resource persons, along with a team member's family home, were to grow over the next five years into the P.I.C.Y.S. Household Network.

The Scarborough Beach Contact Community represented a group approach to a fairly identifiable and concentrated youth population in a natural setting. We will address later in more detail how this contributed to the formation of P.I.C.Y.S.

Presbyterian Church/Balga

The Balga Presbyterian Church under the leadership of Graham Chipps took a major initiative in setting up a detached youth work project.

This project commenced in February 1978 when Howard Sercombe began work with teenagers "at risk" in the suburbs of Balga, Girrawheen and Koondoola. He worked mainly with two groups. One was a group of boys who in 1978 were in their first year at Balga High and he continued with this group until he resigned in February 1982. The other group was a number of street kids from Girrawheen and Koondoola, a mixture of white and Nyoongah teenagers. Street kids were seen as those who spend a great deal of their time on the streets, in the parks, shopping centres, taverns or the bush.

When Howard resigned in February 1982, the work was taken over by Jeremy and Helen Prince. Through them the work changed somewhat in that almost exclusively they were working with Nyoongah teenagers and children, especially with those who normally had no permanent place of residence (nor permanent adult care). As a result the work focussed much more around the home being used for accommodation and

support purposes by a number of Nyoongah young people. When they left the project early in 1983, the church was not able to find another worker and so the project went on hold. More recently in 1984 through the West Leederville parish of which Graham Chipps is also the Minister, a new worker, Sally Haynes, has commenced as a detached youth worker and works in the inner city area.

Canning

In 1978, through limited funds made available by the City of Canning, the Recreation Officer, Geoff Moor (ex-manager of "The Door" coffee shop) attempted to fund three detached youth worker positions to work in the local area. He contracted with Communicare for one of those positions and they attempted to operate a drop-in centre aimed at local young people who were generally on the streets. These attempts were frustrated by lack of suitable staff and resources. Communicare withdrew from this work in 1980.

Cunderdin

In Cunderdin, a small but strategically sited eastern wheatbelt country town, a coffee-house music program run by the Methodist and later Uniting Church ran for nine years during most of the 1970's. This was eventually to burn out the energies of the volunteers but then re-emerged as part of a wider discussion and public meeting to look at youth needs in the area.

A community committee explored the philosophy of streetwork or "detached" youth work, where a worker is not bound by program or premises and is able to meet young persons on their "own ground". Having established trust and communication lines, the worker then links young people and wider resources to help good things happen.

In early 1981, Rick Morrell, resourced by the Order of St. Stephen (a Uniting Church supported volunteer scheme) began as detached worker with the newly set up Cunderdin Youth Service.

During the first eighteen months of the project, very significant pioneer work was done. Extensive personal contact amongst young people and their families produced many lifestyle insights into country town subcultures among the young, and made available to young persons a great deal of emotional and crisis support.

Community resources and voluntary energies were triggered in the development of an effective drop-in centre, camping and training opportunities, "transition" program, information centre and special events.

When Rick Morrell left at the end of 1982 the nine months gap between workers saw a rise in vandalism and lack of cohesion amongst young people. Vaughan Glare began in September 1983 and during his nine months in town applied energies to equip young people to be their own resource.

Vaughan left in June 1984 but the confidence of some young people to prove they no longer needed a youth worker was short lived as the agendas outstripped the fragile support networks available within the youth culture. Random disorientation began to surface again.

The arrival of Trevor Tutt for a brief term in late 1984 was strategic in enabling a local initiative funded by C.E.P. to get started. The "Nutshell" health shop project, by employing three people, is set to achieve the tangible results generally expected by the public. Recognition however, should also be given to the previous and on-going agendas of family and crisis work, attitude change and personal development. The ability of a project to explain this kind of work within a small community is hindered by the fact that any case-studies would be immediately identified.

Given that prevention and early intervention work remain intangible to much of the public and to many politicians, a high level of commitment amongst management personnel has been a key factor in the continuity of the Cunderdin project. State government departments have a history of reluctance to support the project on grounds such as "there aren't enough young people", "welfare statistics are not high enough", "wheatbelt towns are dying", "good concept but we don't have a category for submissions", "it's a supportive community" and "if it succeeds, everyone will want one".

Measurement of preventative work and the maintenance of effective lobbying remain a major hurdle for 240 towns around Australia with a population of less than 3000.

Hedland

The experience and success in Cunderdin provided a valuable back drop to the discussions which led to the establishment of the Hedland Community Youth Service early in 1982.

In October 1981 a public meeting was convened by the Shire to discuss youth needs, inviting Uniting Church staff, Harry Lucas and George Davies, to interpret the detached youth worker model. A community working group sought feed-back from adults and young people. It received pledges of \$8000 from a combination of Shire, Uniting Church and the Combined Service Clubs Association, plus a rent free house from the Shire.

The youth work position was advertised in late November, and after much searching Ian Johnson commenced in April 1982 on a 12 months basis. Ian was effective in interpreting his role to young people as one of a non-authoritarian resource. He encountered major agendas to do with family stress, chemical abuse, racial tensions, police-youth conflict, accommodation, employment, social dislocation and transience, in addition to the general youth needs based around identity, energy and place in society.

With a follow-on worker hard to find, Ian extended his stay into "burn-out". The stresses on a single worker in an isolated community; the demands on management to maintain adequate support both for themselves and the worker; the "shift work" nature of coping with the random and often urgent situations of young people; unrealistic expectations and attitudes from some parts of the community; all of these contributed to Ian's being physically and emotionally exhausted at the conclusion of his term. Nonetheless, a firm footing had been gained for the project amongst youth, management and much of the wider community.

A substantial response to an advertisement for a replacement was experienced in early 1983, though all of the applicants were without experience in detached work. Michael Evans, a "graduate of the streets", began in mid 1983 and extended the contact into younger age groups. He felt keenly the combination of isolation and newness to the role and concluded after nine months. By this time the project had established emergency accommodation at "House 65" under Marc and Arena Newhouse, and in the gap between workers, mobile contact was maintained by Marc.

In May 1984 Graham Wilson transferred from the P.I.C.Y.S. project to the Hedland position, giving the project its first worker with prior training and experience. Graham brought a broad resourcefulness to the 1983 P.I.C.Y.S. Streetwork Training under Max Kau and the subsequent inner city team. The Hedland project was a natural follow on. His place at P.I.C.Y.S. was filled by Mike Evans.

Jesus People

In 1982/3 the Jesus People introduced a high profile "Street Cruiser" vehicle to the streets, along the lines of the Sydney City Mission in New South Wales, to "pick up" young people in need. In early 1984, following her voluntary work in 1983, Marti Noonan was employed as a streetworker. A graduate of the streets, Marti's orientation towards drug dependent young people revealed a need to work more intensely with a smaller number of young people including time with their families.

Kalgoorlie

A major research report led the Goldfields Youth Management Committee in 1984 to employ, through C.E.P. funding, Ian Melville as streetworker in Kalgoorlie/Boulder. Early media attention provoked wide-ranging community debate regarding youth needs. A drop-in/disco youth centre has been facilitated, and close links maintained with concurrent developments of an accommodation hostel, work co-operative and regional policy.

Norseman

A major community initiative was undertaken in 1984 towards a drop-in centre with a part-time co-ordinator.

Albany

Research by the Education Department and Y.E.S. (Youth Employment Scheme) committee in 1983 led to the appointment of Tony Collinson as a streetworker in 1984. The early picture is one of complex youth subcultures and significant needs in accommodation, employment and social integration areas.

Other Projects

There has been a number of other attempts at developing projects but which have either been short-lived or did not even get past the planning stages.

A public meeting held in early 1978 to discuss the growing teenage drug problem in the Wanneroo Shire led to a working group exploring and recommending a way forward. This "Drug Awareness Committee" consulted widely over the next twelve months and in April 1979 placed a submission with the Wanneroo Shire Council for a detached worker to be managed by a community committee in liaison with the Shire. The Council affirmed the concept as a good one, but of lower priority than the need for a number of new library staff. The proposal was shelved, media attention to vandalism and other youth problems continued, and a new \$1 million police complex was built.

In 1977 Lou Pike and Ron Banham, Recreation Officers, attempted to set up a streetwork oriented youth group out of the Girrawheen Recreation Centre but with little success. Research showed adolescent use of recreation centres to be less than 5% of patronage. Staff of the Girrawheen Family Centre expressed concern about teenage girls seeking pregnancy advice and the need for streetwork contact. In 1984 a research project sponsored by Allen Blanchard M.P. and undertaken by Beth Kirton recommended a detached worker. C.E.P. funding was not forthcoming. In the meantime a group of parents began to gather energies towards a drop-in centre, as did a Yanchep/Two Rocks community committee and Greenwood Y.M.C.A. Wanneroo Lions and Warwick Church of Christ also established drop-in centres.

In April 1978 the Stirling City Council appointed an Advisory Committee on Youth Affairs. Two consultations conducted in December 1978 and February 1979 recommended that the committee work towards the establishment of a detached or outreach worker by the City Council. The principle of such a proposal was rejected by Council later in 1979, with councillor comment that it was fruitless to spend money on "yokels and hoboes". Stirling City covered one-fifth of the Perth metropolitan area with a budget, in 1979, of \$30 million.

In 1981 a D.C.W. welfare officer in Kellerberrin sought a youth worker using composite funding sources and was successful in obtaining Mick Lee. He achieved a closeness with the substantial Aboriginal youth population in the area but experienced divergent expectations of his work from various sectors of the community. There were some role conflicts, especially when the worker was used as an extension of the statutory role of the department, i.e. as a minder of problem youth. Though the project was not continued past the trial six months it identified significant agendas and possibilities. Considerable support for the concept came from nearby Tammin.

In 1982 the Uniting Church in the Katanning District identified needs especially in the Tambellup region which were seen to be growing well beyond the voluntary energies of a local parent. However, finance and a worker for a pilot project could not be found.

In Busselton during the late 70's a drop-in centre for unattached youth was run from the Uniting Church. In 1981 moves were made to base this style of activity at the Busselton Youth Centre.

In the early 80's the Uniting Church in Coolbellup ran a drop-in centre which identified issues amongst unattached youth beyond the resources of voluntary staff to address. The Family Centre and others in Coolbellup explored possibilities for a detached worker. In 1984 new energies sought a drop-in centre with temporary assistance from an Anglican C.E.P. worker.

Steve Hall, Anglican youth worker in Rockingham in the early 80's and other Anglicans working under C.E.P. in 1984 in different centres, explored contact with unattached youth from a single agency base. The Fusion group in Victoria Park in 1984 sought to focus on street rather than drop-in centre contact with young people.

After extensive research in 1983 and early 1984, the City of Gosnells has encouraged the establishment of a youth council which has partially sponsored a detached youth worker position occupied by Darryl Milouchevich. His position is also partially funded by the D.C.W. peer group leader program.

PERTH INNER CITY YOUTH SERVICE

Beginnings

In the latter half of 1978, issues to do with young people in the inner city were emerging in discussion in various quarters. The "closure" of the Scarborough beachfront "drags" had resulted in an increase in vehicles in the city area "doing laps". In response to this and car park disturbances a city councillor suggested tougher police action. City-based youth staff of churches and other agencies were aware of substantial populations of unattached young people frequenting the inner city but also aware that no strategies were currently in place for making contact. Chris Hodgson of the Catholic Church prepared a submission for detached work but could find no sponsoring body.

City Youth Consultation

An initiative of the Anglican and Uniting Churches to bring together the city churches for a think tank on the issue quickly spread to involvement of other voluntary agencies and government personnel. A City Youth Consultation was attended in October 1978 by representatives of the major Christian organisations (Y.M.C.A., Fusion, Jesus People, Scripture Union), government (D.Y.S.R.), and others (Perth City Council, Youth Affairs Council of W.A.)

This "reference body" raised many questions, invited further persons and met again a month later to view the Canadian film "Streetworker" and discuss various strategies. The group recognised the loss of continuity and experience when projects like "The Door" finished. The Y.M.C.A. saw value in collective action in agreed areas to help overcome the limitations facing any single agency when working with unattached youth.

Action Research - Inner City Youth Project

The November meeting established an action research project, "The Inner City Youth Project" with a working group made up of Maureen Munro (Anglican Church), Mark Smith (Y.A.L.), Newland Hutchinson (Y.M.C.A.), George Davies (Uniting Church) and Rob Walster (P.C.C. Recreation Officer). The February 1979 meeting of the reference body accepted the aims of the project as: to identify lifestyle features of young people in the inner city; to discover points of two-way communication with young people; and to identify strengths and hazards in lifestyle patterns, including the relationship of suburbs and city.

In early 1979 John Creagh (Uniting Church) and Kevin Sealey (St. Andrew's parish) joined the group. Over the next six months information was gathered through street contact and observation by members of the working group, W.A.I.T. Social Work students and members of St. Andrews-Ross Memorial Youth Group. Dr. Geoff Watson (UWA) assisted in research oversight, and in June 1979 an interim report "The Beginnings of Findings" was compiled by Wendy Bytheway.

Seminars

In July 1979 a seminar for business houses introducing the developing project to Perth business persons was addressed by Michael Eastman who was visiting Perth from the U.K. for a National Youth Workers Conference. Eastman, an authority on detached work in the U.K., was well received, as was an information kit on detached work. A businessman expressed frustration that there was no tangible body to support.

The Y.M.C.A., in conjunction with its theme for the year of Juvenile Justice, presented a major seminar in September 1979 with Reuben Davis, a pioneer of detached work in the U.S.A. This further consolidated the credibility of the concept.

During the next twelve months new energies broadened the research data base. The work of Howard Sercombe at Balga was becoming well known. Perth Rotary, the Department for Community Welfare and others expressed interest in the project. Members of the working group were called on to speak at various functions.

As an alternative to a proposal for a vigilante group in the city, the need for detached youth workers was presented to the Annual Meeting of Ratepayers of Perth City Council. The meeting affirmed the concept, though the Mayor indicated that Council viewed any financing as the responsibility of state government.

Birth

A meeting was convened on 19th November, 1980 of the original reference body and additional interested parties. The meeting was well attended and the report of the two year research project was presented by Maureen Munro. The meeting resolved to inaugurate an association to be known as The Perth Inner City Youth Service (T.P.I.C.Y.S., later shortened to P.I.C.Y.S.), adopted an interim constitution and elected an interim executive chaired by George Davies. Involvement was divided into three broad categories: member agencies - appointing their own representative to the governing council; observer agencies - interested but no formal representative; and resource agencies - e.g. state government departments - actively providing resources for projects undertaken.

"The Cave"

It was reported to the inaugural meeting that volunteer persons were keen to take up an offer of space to rent at 312 Murray Street as a drop-in centre for unattached youth. The meeting resolved to adopt this venture as the first project of the new collective. It was seen to be consistent with needs identified in the research and important that persons undertaking such work should have the widest possible support. The Scarborough project began to phase itself out in order to assist with the city venue. So "The Cave" opened in December 1980 providing an alternative meeting place, entertainment venue to the streets for young people every Friday and Saturday night. Despite financial worries, a fire, a high turnover of volunteer helpers, the centre maintains a viable service to a sector (mainly Aboriginal youth) of the street population.

At the time of the formation of the P.I.C.Y.S. collective there were no grand plans or blueprints to meet the identified needs of those on the streets. Rather the intent was to continue the principles, validated in the research phase, of a detached youth work philosophy for diagnosis of needs, with further developments dependent upon initiative amongst and agreement by the collective. The general consensus was to seek to do together those things which are better done together than singly.

During 1981 "The Cave" began to consolidate, Wendy Bytheway was employed as development officer on a six months WAPSEC grant, incorporation and other processes were pursued, submissions in various directions for detached work were unsuccessful, Perth resources were surveyed and substantial consultations with country projects in Cunderdin, Kellerberrin and Hedland were undertaken.

Household Network

During 1982 the Youth Accommodation Coalition of W.A. affirmed the need for a network of non-institutional, non-threatening, self-sufficient, self-management households flexible enough to accept young people who could not fit, for various reasons, elsewhere amongst the services available. It indicated that P.I.C.Y.S. was the preferred umbrella for such a submission.

The need was consistent with the experience of the Scarborough and "Cave" projects, with the model pre-tested in the existing Scarborough network of three houses. After considerable discussion P.I.C.Y.S. undertook the project, received funding to purchase a house and appointed Peg Hudson as part-time development officer for the network.

Streetwork Training - Development of the Streetwork Programme

1982 also saw some member agencies of P.I.C.Y.S. expressing interest in single-agency management of streetworkers, provoking a reassessment of the priority of a co-operative model. In the meantime it was clear that effective training could only or best be done collectively, and significant demands for training were being felt around the state.

In June/July 1983, funded by D.Y.S.R., P.I.C.Y.S. presented the first pre-service streetwork training program in W.A. utilizing interstate consultants Max Kau of Adelaide and Alex McDonald of Melbourne. This ten-week course attracted 18 participants and also included a seminar for management personnel with regional visits by Max Kau. The momentum and success of the training provoked the P.I.C.Y.S. collective to seek Wage Pause C.E.P. funding for a team approach to streetwork in 1984. Submission was also made to implement the co-ordination and development role necessary for P.I.C.Y.S.'s own needs and to service requests from metropolitan and country regions. D.Y.S.R. funding was obtained for in-service network training and community training. An in-service course in July brought together workers from around the state, with Peter Lorraine of Alice Springs as a visiting resource. A film was commenced in conjunction with W.A.I.T., and a public seminar presented in conjunction with D.C.W.

P.I.C.Y.S. has been acutely aware that C.E.P. funding, limited to twelve months, is generally unsatisfactory and potentially counter-productive in terms of the continuity necessary for effective detached work. It was undertaken as a calculated risk to demonstrate in a more tangible way to all concerned what detached youth work can achieve. It can be seen as regrettable that such risks with the expectations of young people need to be taken in our society to make preventative work clear.

The rapid escalation to multi-staffing, utilizing personnel with limited experience (a hurdle reinforced by the C.E.P. process) to perform sophisticated roles, has stretched the management skills and energies of the relatively young collective to the limit. Testing of the model and learning experiences in administration and support have at times cut across the development of insights into youth culture. Both growth amongst the P.I.C.Y.S. collective, and impact beyond it, can be seen as important facets of "community development". This report attempts to enhance the opportunity for learning at all levels. It is also our attempt to rectify one of the greatest deficits in the development of detached work in W.A. - the documentation of our experience.

George Davies
Nic James
Norm Williams

Other sources including:

Joe Fabre
Wendy Bytheway
Patrick Wyburn
Open Family Foundation
Service to Youth Council
Newcastle Youth Service

A YEAR ON THE STREETS - A COLLAGE OF FRAGMENTS

The Year's Achievements

An overall impression is that we have registered a concept - especially with government, Rotarians and the wider community - in a way that previously hadn't been there. We have put it on the table . . .

George Davies
October 1984

We estimate the total contacts made by the team to be in the order of 4,500 to 5,000 contacts. Over a full year this would be equivalent to approximately 7,500 contacts.

We estimate that over the eight months, the team made contact with some 750 to 800 separate individuals on the inner city streets of Perth. If anyone feels that there is not a need to recognise a street culture today then they are ignoring blatant facts now available.

Analysis of Recordings, P.I.C.Y.S. Team
November 1983 - November 1984

The Young People

There's a young girl growing up in what she thinks is an okay family. In this family there is a lot of violence, and as this little girl gets to nine or ten she starts to realise it doesn't happen to her friends or other kids at school. By the time this kid is eleven, things are getting hard to handle, so she decides she will run off.

Ann, Graduate of the Streets
1984

David chooses the street life because it gives him an alternative to continuous arguments with his parents regarding his choice of lifestyle.

A street youth study

Street people often come from a home life that is unsatisfactory and unacceptable to the basic standard of what home life should be. They often have low self-confidence and self-esteem through being told they are worthless and drop-outs, etc. These types of labels, once assimilated into the person's self-image, make it difficult for them to change. Drugs are able to alter their perception of self so that they do not feel or care about their self-image. The self-image gained through drug usage is that of being "O.K.". This very fundamental response of the person towards drug usage creates an atmosphere where dependency on a substance can be of prime importance.

Shelley Davies, Streetworker
October 1984

The basic meaning of family as an extended kinship group providing sibling and other support to parents, in addition to the uncle-aunt-niece-nephew-cousin-grandparent galaxy around teenagers, was struck a severe blow by the agrarian and industrial revolutions and associated urbanisation. A new image developed of the family as the "unit" of "mum, dad and the kids". Since the Second World War fewer children per "nuclear" family, further farm mechanisation, frequent relocation of housing (average 6.5 years in one house) and employment, recombinations in adult relationships and other factors have further decimated the "extended" kinship networks. It is almost the "norm" for a nuclear "unit" to find such wider kinship persons to be sparse and distant, often on the other side of the state, the nation or an ocean.

George Davies
December 1984

Young people who appear before the courts will become damaged through this experience. When incarceration follows the damage is further exacerbated and they often have difficulty coping with society after their release. They require freedom in a system which is otherwise unfree, and need to develop a consciousness of humanity frequently denied them in their everyday lives.

Will Lundy
November 1984

Many of the young people have had problems with their families and found it uncomfortable to become too close to anyone, because of being "let down" by those they were traditionally supposed to be close to. Thus becoming close to anyone was risking being found out so that the "tough" facade was just that, a facade. The "tough" image was the presentation of being non-caring and independent. This is often shown by being loud, aggressive and dramatic about superficial occurrences. Thus subjects which are close to the heart or have caused pain are glossed over and the image tends to reflect this.

Shelley Davies, Streetworker
October 1984

I found that street youth, like all teenagers, were primarily interested in how others, i.e. their peers, saw them. They were preoccupied with questions like "Do I look good?" "Am I attractive to others?" For the boys this might mean displaying their muscles, tattoos, or combing their hair. Girls on the streets don't have much money to keep up with the latest fashions. While some attempt to make themselves attractive and project their sexuality to gain attention, other actively seek to repress their physical qualities in fear of their own sexuality.

*Brian Fitzgerald-Dynon,
Streetworker. December 1984*

Many street people have either found or are attempting to find, employment as buskers, letter-box deliverers, newspaper sales and various other low income positions (e.g. trolley collectors at supermarkets). Many make their own work, they are not all "dole bludgers".

**Graham Johnson
November 1984**

Unemployment clearly determines the circumstances of many on the streets. Those employed were generally those working as prostitutes, paper-boys, bouncers, buskers and a few in regular jobs. Our clarity on this recording item needs to be markedly improved.

**Analysis of Recordings,
P.I.C.Y.S. Team
November 1983 -
November 1984**

Youth Culture

When people speak of a subculture of the street they usually refer to those people who just "hang around" - the visible unemployed. In a lifestyle where the person or people see the street as being their "comfort zone" or their place to meet, share experiences or organise what to do next, drugs take on a major role in their day to day activities.

*Shelley Davies, Streetworker
October 1984*

In times of rapid growth and/or other changes, the transition of adolescence, amongst the continual transitions we all face, is a particularly vulnerable one. It will reflect and give visibility to realities of the wider social fabric, revealing where such fabric is thin and may be starting to tear. The loose ends are the lives of people, and are not at all easy to reweave. Often we tend to snip them off with institutional scissors, whilst the tear lengthens.

George Davies, "Servicing the Adolescents of Society - Why and How?" October 1981

The kids have no power to alter the way their lives are going wrong. They have no power to change their circumstances for the better. And that is the worst kind of helplessness of all.

**Brother Alex,
Society of Jesus
1982**

There are an estimated 100 to 200 street kids at any time and they are changing. As some move on, or are taken into custody, new youngsters float into Perth and Northbridge streets.

**Ann Matheson
"Weekend News"
26th May 1984**

Northbridge can be seen as the "embryo King's Cross" or "St. Kilda" of Perth.

**Jeff Hopp, J.P.I.
May 1984**

The latter part of 1984 saw a spate of major crimes committed in or near the city centre - bashings, rape, knife assaults. In the newspaper reports these were attributed to "hooligans and louts who frequent the city streets". A closer examination revealed that the charges laid involved adults and not those generally described as "street kids". Yet the young people who still frequent the inner city area will continue to be tainted by the view portrayed in the press.

*Norm Williams, Consultant
December 1984*

The reasons for increasing patrols can be laid down to rape, bashings, robbery and the like, which if not curbed will prevent decent law-abiding taxpayers from safely visiting Perth at night.

R.N. Hedley, Letters to the Editor,
"Daily News". November 1984

Those attitudes of young people on the streets which appear to annoy and antagonise adults, e.g. swearing, tomfoolery, drunkenness, etc., must be placed in the wider perspective of personal development. Many of these behaviour patterns are acceptable amongst adults at parties, hotels, etc., yet when young people imitate these models, they can end up in a lock-up or a court room.

Mike Evans, Streetworker
November 1984

Street women are seen as "tough". Tough young women are viewed by society at large as being unacceptable. In a society where moral values are set, young women who deviate are liable to face exclusion, and the more traditional agencies view them with a moral fear. They are truly the undeserving poor, with the pressure to prostitute themselves to raise ready cash, or at least a bed.

Genevieve Errey, Youth Affairs
Council of W.A. November 1984

From my experience it appears that those street people under the age of 20 do not have the network of drug associates to obtain the heroin from, as frequently do people over the age of 20. Young people, if they remain on the scene long enough, do make the contacts and gain confidence (through necessity) to find money outside of legal means and become linked to the heavier scene.

Shelley Davies, Streetworker
October 1984

The main abuse of chemical drugs in country areas is, without question, alcohol. Alcohol plays a major role in the "social life" of town residents. It's available at hotels, sporting activities, social gatherings, virtually anywhere people gather. Adult modelling and the use of alcohol as a symbol in sporting successes condition adolescent peer groups to adopt alcohol as a measure of their progress to maturity.

Russell Neilson, Regional Worker
November 1984

Male dominance is the general rule in country as well as city centres, but more so in the "macho" mining towns. For young persons of homosexual orientation non-participation in the heterosexual games becomes the more hazardous.

George Davies
December 1984

It appears to me that society is all too ready to lay the blame on the young person and not accept the responsibility for the failure of our systems - educational, family, community, etc. which are by far the major contributing factors in the disruption and breakdown in these young lives. So often I discovered young people whose family life had disintegrated, or where authority figures in schools had gone overboard, or where schools were unable to respond to the particular needs of the young person or when priority is given to the demands of welfare over the educational needs.

Brian Fitzgerald-Dynon, Streetworker
December 1984

It is worth noting that those who had recently come from the suburbs generally tended to return to their homes while those who have been on the street for some time or come from interstate are most reluctant to accept accommodation too far away from the inner city area.

Rosie Cable, Streetworker
November 1984

Both males and females in their constant search for love and attention can increase the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. These young people cannot simply be defined as promiscuous. They are lonely, and in search of love and care.

Brian Fitzgerald-Dynon, Streetworker
December 1984

Street kids tend to be hostile towards others, and they have big problems when it comes to trusting. They feel that the world is unfriendly and they tend to be pretty aggressive. This is because the street kid is a survivor and will fight to the end. But she is very receptive to emotions, once she gets to know the person. If she is given love, trust and friendship, she will respond and give back.

Ann, Graduate of the Streets
1984

Confusion between love and sex occurs on the street. Romantic love is rarely found as relationships are often based on other aspects such as sex, money or accommodation. Romantic love could be seen as where the attraction for the partner is based on their personalities whereas on the street, love appears to be based on material gain. Sex appears to be an avenue for the young women to gain something else from the males in the group. Sex for the women is seen as a way of gaining attention, warmth and the physical showing of affection. Sex can provide these feelings but tends to be momentary and mainly fulfilling for the male. It can also be the means by which a young woman can find security and a bed for the night which is a much better alternative than a cold night on the streets.

Shelley Davies, Streetworker
October 1984

Streetworkers

They want to be able to talk to someone young who understands. Talking to another young person is easier, because they can relate and identify with them. Also, a person who has been through the same won't try and give them all the answers. It is important that the young people are forced to deal with their own problems, they are becoming independent and will have control.

Ann, Graduate of the Streets
1984

The specific strategy we recommend is that of a streetworker who would fill the gap between workers in formal organisations such as social workers, probation officers, police, etc. . . . and the young people on the streets. The purpose is to give young offenders an awareness of alternative experiences of life and relationships based on mutual trust. We are concerned to reduce stigma and create co-operative rather than competitive micro-systems of service delivery.

Will Lundy, P.I.C.Y.S. Co-ordinator
November 1984

Streetworkers are not street-cleaners. Our intention is not and should not be to act as truant officers or police officers. Our job is to understand the person - where the person is coming from, not just geographically, and to help him/her reach independence. The interests of the individual are the prime motivation for streetwork involvement.

**Brian Fitzgerald-Dynon,
Streetworker
December 1984**

They're surviving and they survive instinctively. They don't survive on good education, on good communication or good articulation. They survive because they're cons, they're liars and they're frauds. That's what they learn, and that's the only way to survive on the streets.

They're street kids.

**Brother Alex,
Society of Jesus
July 1983**

An analysis of a much shorter period of contact on the street for October to December indicated a greater concentration of the total contacts in the age group 16 to 20 years - in excess of 60%. Also, we were able to commence identifying different patterns for each streetworker with one in particular seeming to relate more to the younger ages and another to the much older group in the mid to late twenties. This could prove valuable in identifying the particular skills of workers.

*Analysis of Recordings
P.I.C.Y.S. Team
November 1983 -
November 1984*

The streetworker is able to build up a trust relationship with the young people which enables him/her to curb unacceptable behaviour on the street. It also places the streetworker in the best position to get to know the young person and become an advocate when necessary. The constant dilemma for the streetworker is to maintain an appropriate balance between these two dimensions.

**Norm Williams, Consultant
November 1984**

Even with the team working often in pairs and in the same locations, we found that 53% of those contacted had that contact with only one of the streetworkers. There was a significant core who had numerous contacts with the team and across all the members. The average number of contacts made by the worker with different individuals is remarkably consistent across the team members, 3.2 to 3.7, while the average number of contacts per person increased to 5.6 across the whole team due to their contact with more than one member. There were many who only had one contact with a streetworker but there were others who obviously were long term occupants of the streets.

*Analysis of Recordings, P.I.C.Y.S. Team
November 1983 - November 1984*

They need to be told that they're okay, they're not bad, but don't tell them that they're angels because they hate it. Tell them they're okay, point out the good in them, but don't bullshit or sweet talk them, because they're professionals at that.

Ann, Graduate of the Streets
1984

I think it is important for the streetworker to realise that in a hierarchy of needs, educational and career aspirations rank lowly with street youth. The problems of day to day survival, or food, shelter and clothing for example, are far more pressing than anything else. The environment of the streets results in a tunnelling of the visions of street youth such that the concept of a future, let alone a positive or an optimistic one, is dissolved. Some of these young people may not be able to conceptualise at this level, possibly for development reasons. With the experience of failure, rejection and low self-esteem so prevalent among those young people I've got to know, their motivation to change their circumstances is minimal. Young people feel powerless to produce change in themselves. They may lack the skills to do so and their jaded view of society provides them with little incentive to do so.

**Brian Fitzgerald-Dynon, Streetworker
December 1984**

Figures from many sources indicate that the majority of young people at any one time are not in significant contact with any structured activity organised by agencies or adults ("Youth Say" Report, 1974 and Giles Report on "Work and Leisure", 1979). The development of detached worker services (also referred to as streetwork or outreach work) is a response to the need to make contact with young people in their own milieu and to build authentic relations in which key needs are both expressed and understood.

**George Davies,
"Youth Accommodation Needs
and Directions". March 1980**

The Department (D.C.W.) has noted with interest the development of momentum amongst youth agencies wishing to use this as a method of working with some young people.

Through the relationship established between youth worker and youth it provides an important link with many youth, some of whom may be at risk. The Department has contact with the Perth Inner City Youth Service and their streetworker team and will look to strengthening the Department's role in this important field of work.

**"The Wellbeing of
The People" Attachment 4H
August 1984**

While some of these children, who may be as young as 13, run wild and live rough in the streets, mainly in the inner city and near city Northbridge, the Department (D.C.W.) cannot find them.

*Ann Matheson,
"Weekend News"
9th June 1984*

A street kid will become attached to one person at first, someone she can relate to, someone who will offer a little security and hope, most importantly a feeling that they are considered as special, they're okay. There is no institution that can offer the individual attention these kids need, they don't provide the change for a kid to build a secure relationship.

Ann, Graduate of the Streets
1984

First and foremost the streetworker is available as a resource to young people on their own ground. It is only through the quality of the relationship that a streetworker has the potential to assist the young person to discover a fulfilling future for himself/herself in the community.

*Brian Fitzgerald-Dynon, Streetworker
December 1984*

Youth activities need to be varied and responsive to the local needs. Conventional youth clubs are not much use if the young people they address are street kids. Submissions indicated that the style as well as the substance of youth work is of primary importance. "Streetwork" schemes, night spots and friendly houses are all necessary and sometimes we were made aware that the Department's (D.C.W.'s) involvement in such programs may also be enhanced by seconding staff to non-government agencies.

"The Wellbeing of The People"
August 1984

WANADA (W.A. Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies) wishes to draw attention to a lack of services for adolescents. Specifically, there is a need for early intervention (e.g. streetwork with homeless and runaway youth), and treatments designed and targeted for this age group.

WANADA's response to
"Alcohol and other Drugs Inquiry"
October 1984

I feel that a lot of kids on the streets with alcohol or drug problems get to a stage where they want help, but going for professional help is a big step. They need someone who they can relate to, who will accept them, someone who is willing to give up their time to talk.

Ann, Graduate of the Streets
1984

In particular, there was thought to be a need for youth workers to work in day and evening youth centres, in special accommodation services for youth, and on the streets. The latter implies that "informal" services in "natural" settings were seen to be the type requested.

"The Wellbeing of The People"
August 1984

Formal Services and Street Youth

On the streets of Perth relations between police and young people are generally poor, primarily because of a lack of mutual understanding. Both groups are caught up in a game which involves watching, taunting, threats of arrest, lock-up, court appearances, fines, return to the streets . . . and then it all starts again.

Mike Evans, Streetworker
November 1984

While many of those we have contact with on the streets are not strictly "homeless" in that they have no defined accommodation which they consider to be their base, they avoid returning to this base as it is a point of pressure/stress in their lives and it is not a place where their emotional needs are met. Those that do return tend to at odd hours for specific purposes, e.g. food, change of clothes, etc.

Sheryl Carmody, Youthcare
December 1984

Street women appear to rely on the males of the street to present at agencies for their needs. Rarely did street women seek a particular service as they were often ignorant of what was available, and secondly, they often do not see themselves as being eligible. A third factor for young women is the courage to take the initial approach. This means that they frequently feel inadequate in asking for help, which may be attributable to the physical appearance of the building and the fear of what will happen.

Shelley Davies, Streetworker
October 1984

Young, out of work girls in Perth must be found some refuge other than the streets.

Sharron Ryan, YACCOMM (Youth Accommodation Coalition)
June 1984

I do not wish to lay blame on teachers at all but I would like to point out that some of these girls might well have been prevented from getting to the streets if teachers and schools had been able to pick up the cues of disturbance that these girls were surely signalling.

Brian Fitzgerald-Dynon, Streetworker
December 1984

The bureaucratic language along with an overbearing bureaucratic environment and attitude on behalf of the officers does little to help overcome their lack of confidence in their abilities.

Brian Fitzgerald-Dynon,
Streetworker. December 1984

To many young people the only alternative that they see as viable is to stay on the streets and sleep on the streets. These young people are unaware of exactly what alternatives are open to be used by them because of their lack of knowledge of what they are/are not entitled to. They may not know where to go for help, including help with food, money, etc. When young people reach the stage where they are on the streets, generally they won't go looking for resources. The only way that they will find out what is available to them is when the resources are brought to them. They need "non-threatening" people, such as youth workers to work with them on their own territory.

Rosie Cable, Streetworker
November 1984

Regarding the availability of drug facilities in Perth, it appears that there is a huge gap in the service delivery to young people under the age of 20. While there exists a number of facilities with counsellors and rehabilitation programs, these are generally geared to alcohol and heroin addiction. Due to the focus on these two drugs, the clientele of the facilities tends to be the mid 20's and upwards.

Shelley Davies, Streetworker
October 1984

It's Just a Beginning

Kids who are coming off the street need a lot of support, but they need "time out". A time where they can think. This is important because it gives the kids a chance to discover themselves, learn where their strengths are, and to build self-confidence. But they need to be given guidance, so they know what to look for.

Ann, Graduate of the Streets
1984

Let the kids know they don't have to live on the street. They don't have to use drugs or alcohol, there is help. There are professional and non-professional people who are willing to help.

Ann, Graduate of the Streets
1984

But things do get better if they can get through a rough patch, without touching drinks or drugs, they're ahead, for these kids if there is "no pain there's no gain" because that's the real test, if they pull through, they're that much stronger.

Ann, Graduate of the Streets
1984

If agencies in the future are to be made more effective in their treatment they must work backwards to where the signs were before the symptoms appeared in the form of drug use. The streetworker, because of his/her unique position on the street, can be closer to the person.

Shelley Davies, Streetworker
October 1984

The Education Department could make an important contribution to the development of such a role. With departmental co-operation the role of the streetworker could be developed to incorporate a component of research in relation to those who have been failed by the system and about whom little is known. Such a role should include a liaison and support component with welfare oriented persons in schools.

Brian Fitzgerald-Dynon, Streetworker
December 1984

They have to accept the fact that once they're off the streets life will still have plenty of problems that will have to be sorted out.

Ann, Graduate of the Streets
1984

There is a need to ensure that people working in the area of streetwork are able to find adequate support and resource contacts.

Streetwork Training brochure
1984

While being affirmative regarding the success on the streets, both the members of the management committee and the streetworkers were less than complimentary on the internal management and the wider interlinking with agencies.

P.I.C.Y.S. Streetwork Evaluation
November 1984

I think that going round did help me to understand a bit better and to see through the eyes of the people who are in constant touch with the problems.

*Keith Wilson MLA
Minister for Youth and
Community Services. June 1984*

***We affirm co-operative funding
We affirm co-operative planning***

***Resolutions of the joint D.C.W./P.I.C.Y.S. Streetwork Seminar
30th November 1984***

Street youth manage to keep going by developing very strong defence mechanisms. They seem to lock all their hurts, rejections and traumas in a mental storage system, a black box, that is not to be opened under any circumstances.

**Brian Fitzgerald-Dynon, Streetworker
December 1984**

In a time of change the onus is not so much on the young to obey but on the older to show that what they demand is relevant to the common good.

**George Davies - "Authority - Who Needs It?"
February 1981**

HEALTH

Health concerns take a low priority with youth on the street. If you're not feeling 100%, so what? Most of these young people haven't felt fine for some time. They've usually experienced some kind of emotional crisis, perhaps not long ago. They are feeling low if they've had a fight at home, or been kicked out of home anyway. They're not going to front up to a doctor for a variety of reasons. They have had trouble verbalising their illness to a doctor, or they've been treated off-handedly by doctors before; or perhaps the doctor, who doesn't have time to really listen to them, has given them a script and shuffled them out of the surgery as quickly as possible.

Street youth certainly aren't going to queue up in a casualty ward or an out-patient clinic and perhaps wait several hours, unless it really is an emergency. They seem to think medical problems will just go away.

When I was on the street in the early months I had an expectation, a preconception, that I should be on the alert for illness, disease and sickness. And certainly I found that, in the first months, first weeks, I remember being quite overwhelmed by the extent of alcohol abuse and the poor dietary habits of young people. I was surprised at the number with asthma or who had racking coughs or respiratory infections. To generalise, most street youth smoked heavily and pill popping and other drug use seemed common.

They often had untreated sores and skin irritations. Generally those on the street struck me as being dour, unhealthy, dispirited and dejected physically, emotionally and socially. One of my frustrations was that young people rarely talked about their health problems. If I made a direct comment about a particular health issue with a young person it was often dismissed as being trivial or something that would eventually go away.



CARLA

15 years old, was first met sheltering in a clearway at 1.30 a.m. early December. She had bad asthma and her ventolin spray was empty. A small frail girl, she was thought to be a boy at first. Carla lived with her mother until 2 years ago. She is a startling example of the decline that young people experience when they find the streets to be the most attractive alternative that life has to offer.

Carla learned to drink. She would drink great quantities with the clear intention of getting "pissed". She would brag about this the next day.

Carla got into dropping whatever tablets were available, most frequently these were Avil. She acquired a taste for smoking dope.

Carla developed a concept of herself as a "street kid". This was seen in her style of dress, abuse of police and loud attention seeking behaviour. "I'm a real street kid now". During this time Carla stayed at various emergency accommodation facilities.

One night Carla was picked up by the police after a party. They looked in her diary and found that two men had sex with her in exchange for a place to sleep . . . She would not swear a statement or press charges because she did not want to be the cause of "the trouble" that would follow since she knew that these two men were married.

Carla's asthmatic condition got progressively worse over the summer months while she lived on the streets and slept out. Her physical health improved when finally she was placed in a D.C.W. hostel.

I found street youth, like all teenagers, were primarily interested in how others, i.e. their peers, saw them. They were preoccupied with questions like "Do I look good?" "Am I attractive to others?" For the boys this might mean displaying their muscles, tattoos, or combing their hair. Girls on the streets don't have much money to keep up with the latest fashions while some attempt to make themselves attractive and project their sexuality to gain attention. Others actively seek to repress their physical qualities in fear of their own sexuality.

The fact that they might have stinging conjunctivitis or an infected sore on their leg is a minor matter. The fact they might have experienced some kind of psychological trauma recently is even less likely to be spoken of. It's almost as if there is a conspiracy of silence when it comes to health matters or saying how you're feeling.

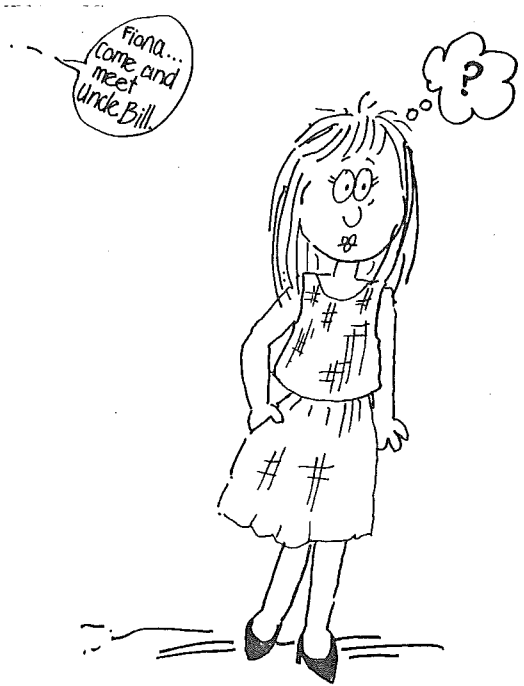
Certain young people are attracted to life on the streets because it seems the most attractive alternative to home or because they literally have nowhere else to go.

JOHN

John was returned home from the streets by his aftercare officer. With John present, the officer sat and talked about how he might be kept occupied, and about John's relationship with his mother. His mother was very concerned. When the aftercare officer left, John told us that his mother said: "Have a shower, get changed and piss off!"



How do young people cope with these kinds of experiences? Street youth manage to keep going by developing very strong defence mechanisms. They seem to lock all their hurts, rejections and traumas in a mental storage system, a black box, that is not to be opened under any circumstances. These feelings and memories have been gathered together through years of pain and anguish. If unleashed without thought they can lead to an uncontrollable flood of hurt which in turn would need an expert psychiatrist to pull together again. You get the feeling that some things are just not open for discussion. The youth worker should be aware not to delve too deeply into the unknown.



FIONA

19 years. No job since she left school 2 years before at the end of Year 11. Born in England, but never knew her father, mum has a lot of boyfriends. She has a brother 6 years old who she misses very much. Fiona took the major nurturing role. She is an intelligent, attractive girl, who plays classical piano and wanted to go on to study literature. Fiona was kicked out of home three times since she was 14. Three occasions coincided with mum bringing home a new boyfriend. Fiona says her mother was jealous of her and saw her as a threat.

Fiona remembers being constantly ridiculed by friends for always being made to wear long dresses by her mother.

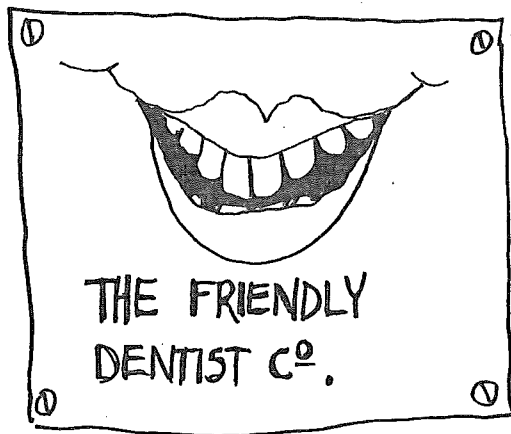
Fiona went to the Youth Health Service to check her aching legs. The veins were consistent with blood vessels that had burst. Fiona had been beaten on the buttocks and thighs with hose flex when she was young.

It seems to me that the pattern underlying health issues on the streets is one of progression from:

- (i) an initial nexus of social/family breakdown;
- (ii) a psychological reaction, usually internalisation;
- (iii) physical manifestation of symptoms and illness;
- (iv) physical/psychological breakdown.

A streetworker must operate not merely from a medical/illness orientation in his/her relationships on the streets but must account for individuals in a wholistic fashion that recognises the social situation causing psychological and physical breakdown.

There are some very simple factors that contribute to poor health and the low use of health services. A basic consideration is cost. Street people don't go to doctors because they can't afford to or think they can't afford to. Even if they have a health card, many young people do not know how to use it and are usually not aware of the full range of health services they may need to use. Young people have no real knowledge of the health system and how to use it. There is a need for health officials to provide simple, practical, reassuring information on what health services are available and how to use them.



LINDY

Lindy's teeth were causing so much pain that finally after attempts over three days she agreed to attend the Dental Hospital on condition that a streetworker accompany her. Her fear was obvious. She had not attended a dentist for several years. Her teeth were assessed by the Head of the Dental Hospital. Lindy had one filling on first attendance. She required a further 10 sessions to complete the work.

RITA

Rita's two front teeth are half decayed. No surfaces observable are free of decay or discoloration. Rita admits she is often caused discomfort by her teeth and agrees that she should see a dentist. The low charges made by the Dental Hospital are not really a barrier for her. She evades and rationalises the issue but admitted that simple fear of dentists stops her visiting the Dental Hospital.

Street youth are intimidated by their image of doctors and health institutions. They live with the ill-founded fear and suspicion that they will get locked into the welfare system with which they have usually had bad experiences. They fear being "found out" and that confidentiality does not exist. They assume that because the health system is an institutional organisation, like the welfare system, it somehow conspires against them. It is essential that health education and information dissemination must inspire the confidence of young people.

Streetworkers have accompanied young people to the Accident and Emergency Section of Royal Perth Hospital. The support of the streetworker is necessary, firstly to get the young person to the hospital and to reassure him/her, and secondly the presence of the streetworker is important to ensure the young person actually remains until he/she is treated. The young person is usually not prepared to wait for long periods and friends tend to become scarce at these times too. The streetworker is able to provide background information for medical staff and can serve as a communication link between staff and the young person. In this role the streetworker can help obviate some of the difficulties involved in long waits. Hospital staff are aware of this and are keen to adapt their procedures in response to these young people.

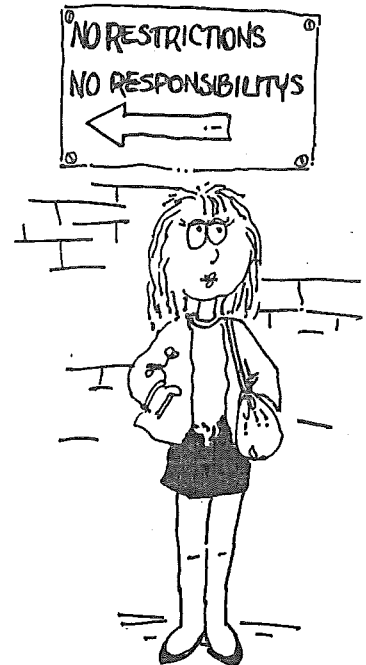


GERARD

Gerard, 15, had swallowed 20 Panadol. Twenty-four hours later he took Serepax. In between he had not slept or eaten. He was obviously depressed and talking of suicide. The streetworker took Gerard to Accident and Emergency at R.P.H., where she was able to explain the situation to staff. She sat with Gerard for two hours until he was admitted. The streetworker remains in contact with Gerard helping him to sort out personal issues.

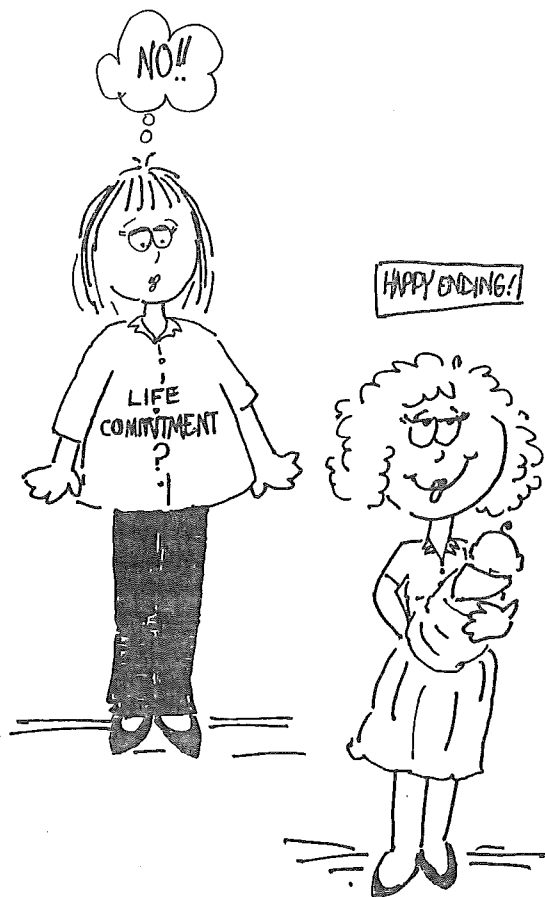
COLLEEN

Colleen, 19, had taken over from her mother the responsibility for caring for her quadriplegic sister for the previous six years. Colleen had not worked or received Social Security benefits since she left school at 14. She suddenly left home, began to drink heavily and had multiple sexual partners. She had no permanent accommodation and carried her belongings with her. Colleen was aimless and lost and became badly rundown. It became clear when body odours were very strong that Colleen had serious hygiene problems. Colleen refused to see a doctor or go to a hospital because she feared that they would pry into her private affairs. After three weeks of hard talk Colleen finally decided to attend Youth Health Service with a streetworker. She had never received sex education and had little idea of maintaining basic hygiene. She was treated for a vaginal infection but no follow-up was possible due to her disappearance from the local scene.



There is an overwhelming need to treat health problems of street youth in their own environment. It is the only ground where they feel safe. The population of street youth do not have their needs met by the health system as it now exists, where youth are required to come to it. If laboratory tests are required, for example, then follow-up is very difficult to deliver. There is a need for health services to get closer to the streets. Sometimes streetworkers have been presented with medical problems which they have not been able to pursue because services are not accessible after hours or because the young people haven't been seen again.

The nature of personal and sexual relationships discussed in the chapter on "Young Women" have more serious consequences for girls. They are the ones who get pregnant. Girls become pregnant because of the non-use or ignorance of contraception. They are reluctant to seek advice from a society from which they feel alienated. Sexual relations are assumed as part of a relationship. Relationships are usually short-term and girls may simply protect themselves with the attitude "It can't happen to me."



MARGIE

Margie, 19, believed contraception was unhealthy. Initially she had wanted to continue her pregnancy after three previous terminations. This decision caused her to be rejected by both her family and her boyfriend. Feeling deserted, she then wanted a termination but it was too far into the pregnancy. She was first seen by a doctor at 24 weeks without any person to support her. She attended medical checks irregularly and refused antenatal education. A streetworker kept contact with her in hospital during labour and birth. Margie decided to have the baby adopted. She is still in contact with a D.C.W. social worker.

AMY

Amy, 16, didn't believe in contraception. During her first pregnancy she lived alone in a flat after the father of the child left her. She was late seeking medical care and needed to have a support person with her whenever she attended hospital and antenatal education classes. Amy was anaemic during pregnancy and the baby was delivered by Caesarian section. Amy discharged herself early from hospital because she couldn't cope with the environment. Initially she was tired and rundown after the birth and found it very difficult coping with the new responsibility of being a mum. Since then however, Amy is coping very well with supportive foster parents.

Both males and females in their constant search for love and attention can increase the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. These young people cannot simply be defined as promiscuous. They are lonely, and in search of love and care. The risks associated with either termination of pregnancy or continued pregnancy is high with alienated teenage girls. In the case of abortion it is rare that young girls are given support either before or after the event. From a medical perspective young teenage girls are at risk because they are not fully developed physically. Accommodation will be difficult if not impossible to come by. They tend to be highly mobile. Inadequate nutrition, alcohol and other drug use may be common. Lack of knowledge of general health care is especially pointed during pregnancy as is a lack of knowledge regarding the labour process and childcare techniques. Young women lack parenting skills, especially when they have experienced poor parenting models themselves. Any one, or a combination of these factors has been present with young pregnant women from the streets. This illustrates the complex educational and personal supports required to support a young woman through pregnancy.

Streetworkers and health personnel need to be sensitive to the extraordinary pressures that pregnancy may impose on a young woman. They often have little or no support from those other than their peers. In practice, medical staff ought not be judgmental about the health practices or lifestyles of a young woman for fear of causing further alienation and emotional pressure. Medical staff might have to cope with a young mother smoking or drinking if it means that the woman stops using drugs for example. You just can't take away the props or securities that a young person might use if you can't offer them something else to take its place.

LINKING WITH HEALTH AGENCIES

The fundamental problem with health on the street is the distance between the extensive health services on the one hand and street youth on the other.

In bringing the two worlds closer together, the Youth Health Service as an agency base for a streetworker, has played a vital part. The staff, including a doctor, social worker and field nurse:

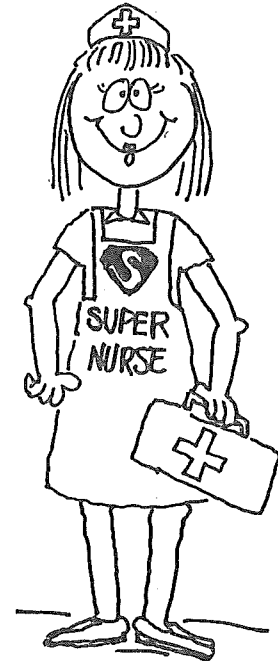
Dr Suzanne Robertson
 Nic James, Social Worker
 Hilary Swain, Field Nurse

have promoted awareness of health problems of young people on the streets at a number of different levels in the health area. They have promoted an awareness of the problems streetworkers face on the streets with

regard to health issues, and they have promoted the need for close communication between streetworkers and health agencies.

Part of the mandate of the Youth Health Service is to resource and advise other government and non-government agencies involved or in contact with youth. The Youth Health Service facilitates and promotes communication and co-operation between agencies to improve service delivery to individuals. In practice, this has meant that streetworkers have been introduced to staff in the following areas:

- (i) School Health Nurses
- (ii) Royal Perth Hospital
 - Social Work Staff
 - Accident and Emergency Staff
 - Charge Sisters
 - Psychiatric Staff
- (iii) Princess Margaret Hospital
 - Dr Robertson, Consultant Paediatrician
- (iv) Mental Health Department
 - Hillview Terrace, Dr Ian McAlpine and Staff
 - Mental Health Clinics
- (v) Sexual Assault Referral Centre
- (vi) Women's Health Care House
- (vii) Dental Hospital, Professor Kailis
- (viii) Alcohol and Drug Authority
- (ix) Red Cross Society
- (x) Family Planning Association
- (xi) Adolescent Health Association



The Youth Health Service also provides professional support to youth workers in country areas, including Port Hedland, Cunderdin, Kalgoorlie and Albany.

THE ROLE OF THE STREETWORKER

It takes the uninitiated streetworker some time to familiarise with the health system. Familiarity with it though is necessary in order to give information to youth on the street and to make service delivery more effective. The importance of this contact is illustrated in the case of Janis.



JANIS

Janis had experienced a traumatic family breakdown, recently had a second termination and had broken off with her boyfriend. A crisis was brought on when she realised she had in fact wanted to continue the pregnancy. She was just developing confidence in expressing her feelings to a streetworker when she was raped. She later attempted suicide and was taken to Royal Perth Hospital. Janis' great problem was in expressing her feelings. The only person she felt she could communicate with was the streetworker. With Janis' consent the streetworker was able to pass on information to medical staff who could as a result take appropriate action. The streetworker's role was central in developing a holistic team approach. This included:

- (i) Social Worker at Youth Health Service
- (ii) Counsellor from Sexual Assault Referral Centre
- (iii) Psychiatric and Nursing Staff, R.P.H.
- (iv) Psychiatric Out-Patient Staff, R.P.H.

There is a need for a trained health professional to be seconded to a position or funded within a streetwork team from the Health Department. A field nurse-streetworker for example, could improve health service delivery to those youth on the streets who by their rejection of existing health services are currently not being serviced. Such a person would be well placed to identify health problems and initiate treatment at a street level as well as improve access to, and use of existing health services. Street intervention would be of a preventative nature and health education to young people would be part of this. A health professional would effectively identify health issues peculiar to youth and be able to make appropriate recommendations to health authorities and agencies.

Research projects have been initiated by the Youth Health Service in these areas:

- (i) the utilisation or rejection of health services by inner city youth;
- (ii) the utilisation of ante- and post-natal health services by girls 17 years and under who delivered at King Edward Maternity Hospital;
- (iii) the utilisation of prescribed and non-prescribed drugs by inner city youth.

This valuable research could be extended with the involvement of a health person on the streets. Not least, such a person could provide in-team health education and support. A trained health person could best promote and extend the interlinking of health and related services to improve the delivery of those services to youth on the streets.

Brian Fitzgerald-Dynon
Nic James
Hilary Swain

With their thanks to
Dr Suzanne Robertson for her support

DRUGS



DAVID

David, aged 15 years, is a regular participant in the life on the streets. He has a home with his parents but chooses not to remain there.

This is mainly due to a conflict of interests whereby they would prefer him to obtain employment, dress in a manner acceptable to them and to abide by their standards of morality. David returns home infrequently, mainly to have a meal and change his clothes. These visits cause resentment because the parents feel used as a restaurant and laundromat.

David chooses the street life because it gives him an alternative to continuous arguments with his parents regarding his choice of lifestyle.

On the streets David indulges in irregular usage of pharmaceutical drugs and marijuana. As street life is often tedious, David finds that drug use relieves the boredom. There is also a certain amount of pressure to conform to the accepted code of behaviour amongst his peers. This means for David to be part of the group, he must maintain his drug use. On the one hand he left home because of one set of expectations and then on the street he must conform to another set. His usage makes it difficult for him to return home.

Drugs provide an escape from a sometimes painful reality. To recognise that your lifestyle has become a trap and that in order to break out of it you must completely disassociate from it, creates an immense conflict. A conflict also occurs when the recognition of a person's lifestyle does not match with what the person would like to have happened.

Drugs allow these two different realities to reach a type of harmony and aid the creation of the fantasy of what life could be like. Albeit temporarily, altered state of consciousness allows the person the step into a world which is not harsh as opposed to the "real" world of survival. Drugs also provide an alternative to what people perceive as being uncontrollable in their lives.

Street people are frequently at the mercy of government departments for their existence, for example, whether or not an unemployment cheque arrives on time. They are often unable to manage decisions in their lives and ultimately they are controlled by policies beyond their reach.

When people speak of a subculture of the street they usually refer to those people who just "hang around" - the visible unemployed. In a lifestyle where the person or people see the street as being their "comfort zone" or their place to meet, share experiences or organise what to do next, drugs take on a major role in their day to day activities.

As part of the street culture, people use drugs for different reasons. Apart from the altering of reality for those who are in conflict with their lifestyle, there are also those people who use drugs as a means of achieving a thrill, as a form of adventurous recreation. They seek a substance which beside the unreal experience also has the thrill of the illegality of the substance and the situation that it can be taken in. Thus smoking a joint (marijuana cigarette) in a hotel is more thrilling than smoking in a deserted place because of the risk of being caught.

Experimental users tend to try anything for the sake of the experience. Thus they will use many substances and will not stay with any particular one. Regarding risk taking behaviour, it is this group that tends to do the most harm to themselves because they mix the substances and the amounts taken to reach extreme stages of mood alteration.

As many of the street people are adolescents and young adults, it could be said that the drug usage is also affected by the need to rebel against their parents and everything that their parents stand for. As with David (case-study 1) he left home because of the parental expectations placed upon him. Drug taking for David is also a form of rebellion against his "straight" parents, for whom drug-taking is akin to suicide which they consider to be mortal sin.

The more serious users are those people who feel that they have been kicked by the system for too long and do not have the energy to fight back. The lifestyle of these people revolves around the drug scene: obtaining them, using them, and the scheming to make money to buy more. They often have little belief in a future that is not painful or that is drug free; often they rely on the drug as a basis for their existence.

Street people often come from a home life that is unsatisfactory and unacceptable to the basic standard of what home life should be. They often have low self-confidence and self-esteem through being told they are worthless and drop-outs etc. These types of labels, once assimilated into the person's self image, make it difficult for them to change. Drugs are able to alter their perception of self so that they do not feel or care about their self-image. The self-image gained through drug usage is that of being "O.K.", as opposed to what the self feels of being "not O.K.". This very fundamental response of the person towards drug usage creates an atmosphere where dependency on a substance can become of prime importance.

The use of drugs is not something which solely pertains to the street scene. As drugs can be obtained easily, many young people use them while still "living at home". "At home" problems which give rise to drug use are often not addressed within the family. Drug use, which is only one symptom of these underlying problems, is deliberately (consciously or subconsciously) avoided as many people wish to see drugs as resulting solely from street influences. Young people may leave home for many reasons, one of which may be their drug taking. It is only when they become publicly visible through court appearances etc. that the family begins to acknowledge their drug use.

For young people who have not experienced drug use before leaving home, the street scene may be the setting to do so. The variation of ages and drug experiences of street people and the availability of drugs on the streets, allied to the pressure of peer groups, make experimentation almost imperative.

YOUNG PEOPLE - ALCOHOL, MARIJUANA, PILLS AND HEROIN

From my experience as a street youth worker I have noticed that while alcohol and marijuana are available continually throughout the age groups, prescribed and non-prescribed pharmaceutical drugs seem to be preferred by the young people. Heroin appears to be used more by the older person as there is significant financial outlay for it. Young people seem to find it easier to buy pills without having to commit crimes to obtain it.

Alcohol usage among the younger girls (up to the age of 19) seems to rise dramatically when the American ships are in Perth. This is generally due to the promise of somebody spending money on them compared to other times when such a promise is far more rare. A result of the rise in usage is that younger girls are more at risk in the lowering of their inhibitions and having to repay with sexual favours.

As regards pill usage, the emphasis on the different pills used changes according to who has been to the doctor's lately and who has found a good supply. Due to the "pushing" of pharmaceuticals, street people do not see anything adverse in the usage of them. The medical technology boom which created the pills with the notion of "a pill for every occasion" makes them readily available and with a greater choice. The "Women's Drugs", of Serepax, Valium and slimming tablets, are used in large doses for the effect of either "speeding up" or "slowing down", and are not restricted to the street women. It is interesting to note that prescribed and non-prescribed drugs are interchanged according to what has been used before (experimentation), and what the desired effect is (sedation, hallucinations or speeding up) and what is more readily available. For this reason Serepax was being used by many of the street people because of its availability, the sedative effect and common usage until epherdrine was used for the speeding up effect, etc. The trend among young people is to use alcohol in conjunction with other drugs, thereby exacerbating the effects of each.

From my experience it appears that those street people under the age of 20 do not have the network of drug associates to obtain the heroin from, as frequently do people over the age of 20. Young people, if they remain on the scene long enough, do make the contacts and gain confidence (through necessity) to find money outside of legal means and become linked to the heavier scene.

The networks that exist amongst the street people are tailored according to what the group of people are using as their drugs of choice. Thus the group with fairly young (under 20 years old) members rarely links with the older heroin network.

It also follows that if a person stays on the street for some time he/she will make some contact with the heroin group purely because of the physical surroundings and because the maturing person will meet people other than those in their own group.



EVE AND GAIL

Eve is a 19 year old girl who left home last year after her 16 year old sister, Gail, and herself decided that they could not live in a conflict situation amicably.

After leaving they found a flat and despite having moved several times, they are still in close contact. They have little contact with their parents. Eve assumed close responsibility for her younger sister and they have both been part of the street culture for some time.

Their drug usage and experimentation has varied depending on what is available and what they can buy cheaply and resell at a profit or obtain free.

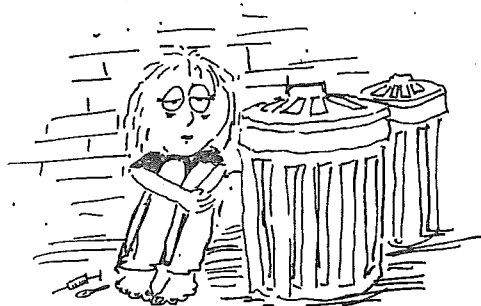
At times this has meant a night on Temgesics (when it was readily available) or a night on amphetamine powder (speed). Throughout their experimentation they have smoked marijuana.

PEER GROUP CONTROL OVER DRUG TAKING

Drugs, be they alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, prescribed or non-prescribed, legal or illegal, provide street people with alternatives and a way out of their present state of mind. Through drugs, members of a group can gain acceptance and importance within that group. They provide a common topic of conversation, a sense of who to look up or down to, a commonality of experiences that enhances the group's feeling of togetherness. The general community tends to view drug taking as being deviant or non-conformist. It sets its policies and standards on this. Thus the drug laws which are meant to create a "pure" society, create a divided society, with the drug takers on the outside. The community view encourages a feeling of togetherness amongst drug takers. The alienation by the community towards the drug taker only increases the common bond. People who have been convicted of drug possession have a common topic of conversation, i.e. conviction and because of the stigma attached to not only drug-taking but to criminal records as well, the drug user is pushed away. Drug users are able to transcend the boundaries of class and race due to the common bond of doing something illegal and something which is penalised formally by the majority of the community.

Generally, I have found that people who take a drug to excess within a group, are ostracised because of the friction that occurs between the heavy drug abuser and the rest of the group. The "telling off" can either bring the person back into line or force the person to find a more amicable group.

This is seen where an alcohol abuser leaves a relatively sober group of friends for a more "wet" group where his/her drinking is not the focus as it was in the previous group. This is because "everybody does it".



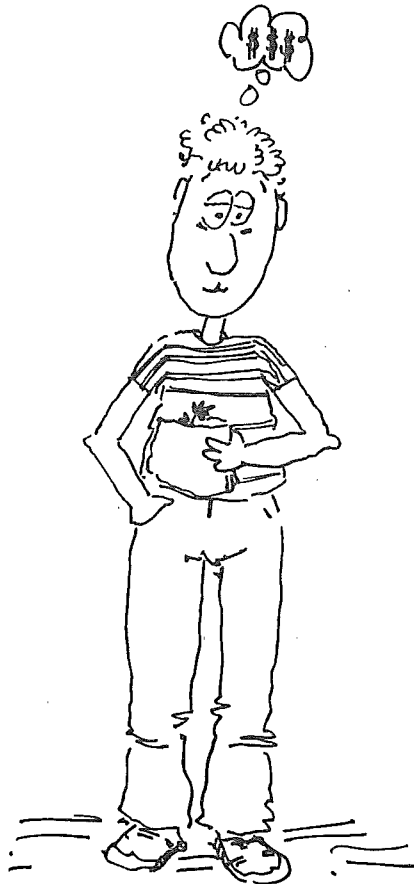
IRENE

Irene is a 13 year old girl who absconds from a D.C.W. hostel. She has also had periods of high drug use with substances such as barbituates and marijuana. She also used heroin and LSD more than once. It appears that drug use has not been the cause of her problems, but more a part of the total situation of her life which was not satisfactory to her. Although she came from a "good family" the parents tended to give her money and gifts instead of warmth, love and affection which was what she really wanted. Irene seemed to have more problems with building and maintaining relationships, and often found herself being rejected by others around her. Irene's usual way of relating to others was to try and "buy" their friendship, just as her parents had equated money with love. When she was unsuccessful she would seek a new group.

THE GLAMOUR OF HEROIN

There is a glamour and a "specialness" attached to being a drug user. This comes through a mental hierarchy of drugs whereby pills are the lowest and heroin, the highest. As people are always told that heroin is the most dangerous of all drugs, those that abuse it are often seen as risking their lives, hence a "glamour job" is done on the drug. Taking a "highly dangerous drug" also highlights the feeling of being "special" and gives a person a subculture with which to belong.

There are always variations amongst groups and what they are using. In Perth, there are those people who sell for profit to supplement their unemployment cheques (if they are eligible), there are the frequent users of whatever is available and there are those who stay on the periphery of the drug scene. The sellers of drugs base their actions on the principles of supply and demand. If there is a demand then an entrepreneur will supply.



BOB

Bob, aged 22, is a young man of Sicilian and Australian descent. His drug use is spread over a large variety of substances depending on what is available and what is wanted.

His buying of it depends on if it is resellable at a higher price later. Thus he tends to supply it in order to subsidise his own use of whatever was in stock.

Bob's mother remarried late in life and because he did not get along with his stepfather, he left home.

Bob has been in prison in connection with his drug selling and although he does not wish to return to gaol he continues selling as it is one way to make money and enjoy the process.

Bob has had stable employment once since leaving school and although there have been offers of employment he has always decided against taking them because it would interfere with his lifestyle and contact with people on the street.

Bob has been a patient of a drug rehabilitation agency but left there as he did not really want to give up drugs completely and so returned to his usual lifestyle.

DRUG REHABILITATION FOR YOUTH

Regarding the availability of drug facilities in Perth, it appears that there is a huge gap in the service delivery to young people under the age of 20. While there exists a number of facilities with counsellors and rehabilitation programs, these are generally geared to alcohol and heroin addiction. Due to the focus on these two drugs, the clientele of the facilities tends to be the mid-20's and upwards.

Agencies tended to want to avoid mixing younger and older addicts of substances. According to Holyoake, the younger people did not see that they had a problem if placed with older, more mature dependents. Thus it was difficult to attract young people to the facility. Cyrenion House felt that the younger people (under 20) could be easily manipulated by the older more experienced addicts and they did not want to expose the young people to this type of treatment.

It also seemed that agencies generally suffered from a distant lack of funds and support and were left to cope with the growing demand from the people in the drug scene. This was seen at Holyoake whereby they wished to establish a peer group dependency program for young people but did not have the funds to do so.

The closure of Morley J.P.I., Ord Street Clinic (A.D.A.) and Quo Vadis (A.D.A.) as residential areas meant that there were less beds available for people wishing to use that type of facility. Overall there were 76 beds lost due to the closures.

The question of the younger people and the needs for services specifically for them was one which was met with the standard responses of lack of expertise when dealing with the young and the lack of money.

It seemed that most of the drug rehabilitation centres were based on treatment in a medical or therapeutic model. This is consistent with an intervention approach. Within the field there exists a range of different philosophies.

Throughout the agency survey, it became apparent that many personnel were familiar with the broad area of drug use (prescribed tablets and non-prescribed pills) but were uncertain as to the most appropriate course of action. This was mainly due to the fact that the funding of agencies and the training of counsellors etc. was inadequate.

JESUS PEOPLE INC.

The Jesus People offer a crisis centre "The Bridge" in Northbridge. This was originally set up to provide emergency accommodation for youths affected by alcohol and other drugs. J.P.I. has experienced problems in the drug rehabilitation field. They operated "Carmel House" in Morley, as a drug rehabilitation centre but this closed recently. The Morley centre fulfilled the need of servicing the young drug street people who were contacted through "The Bridge". Since the closure of the Morley centre, there are no rehabilitation programs specifically catering for young people.

Teen Challenge was begun as an alternative to this closure and plans to begin operations some time in the future as it exists at present only at a board level.

"The Bridge" has become a type of detox centre which is "wet" or caters for those people with minimal motivation to be treated and who are likely to bust or break. "The Bridge" does not throw people out if they break and although the process is long they are seeing some results. Since the closure of Morley, "The Bridge" has had to return at least 25 people to the streets who could have gone out to Morley. Figures such as these point to the need for another facility which caters for the young people who cannot find a place in the other residential treatment centres around Perth.



CHARLIE

Charlie is a 17 year old youth of Italian descent. When we first met Charlie he was a chronic alcohol abuser and also dabbled in barbituates and marijuana usage. He seemed to live two different lives and often contradicted himself. His alcohol and barbituate use led him finally to contact an agency, but before admission into the residential section he decided to talk himself out of going.

He often used his drug usage as a means of acceptance with the other street people. A lot of his behaviour seemed to be attention seeking as he had family problems and lacked family contact and support. Since leaving home a month previously he tended to move between households and hotel rooms, never settling in one place for more than one month.

Charlie's drug usage caused problems with his ability to cope with making decisions and relating to people other than on a drugged existence. Although he decided to visit the agency concerning his problems he declined their assistance as it may have been too difficult for him to face life without the escape and acceptance the drugs provided.

With Charlie, alcohol seemed to be the gap filler and stabiliser when barbituates and other drugs were unavailable.

YOUTH HEALTH SERVICE

The Service sees its role as being a manager of cases. It is not set up as a drug rehabilitation service although it will not turn people away if they are in need of support. The service aims to create a network of support around the person and to manage cases which present to them.

HOLYOAKE

Holyoake runs three out-patient treatment programs for substance dependents, their co-dependents and a young people's program which is mainly for the children of dependents. Holyoake caters for dependents who are 18 years and over although they have had people under 18. There are many problems with this because the young people tend to see the older ones, think they're all right compared to those they consider to be "real" addicts, and leave.

The centre runs on a disease concept of dependency and deals with the entire family, not just the dependent. For this reason, the role of streetworker could be one of support if the person did not want their family contacted or involved in any way.

Holyoake has found that most of the people who attend the centre are between the ages of 25 and 45 years of age. This seems to be the time when people see that they have more to lose, such as a job, family, house, etc.

Having alcohol and heroin addicts in the same treatment group has resulted in a few problems because heroin addicts tend to see themselves as being different and special so the focus is put on the fact that they are substance abusers. Setting up a specific group for heroin abusers would only serve to highlight their feeling of "specialness".

CYRENIAN HOUSE

Cyrenian House caters for the 19 to 38 year old dependents of opiates and other substances and is reluctant to treat people younger because of the negative influences that the "older" one could have over the younger ones. They argue that this is because of the manipulative games that they play. The centre does not take people who are on methadone or who are still using a substance. Next door to Cyrenian House, the Narcotics Anonymous have set themselves up to offer a centre for ex-addicts and for people who want counselling without being attached to a centre such as A.D.A., Cyrenian House, etc. The House is presently stable with people living there for 3 months or longer. Because stability is required for a successful program, the House does not take people on a crisis basis.

DRUG RESEARCH AND REHABILITATION ASSOCIATION

D.R.R.A. caters for people who are in their 20's and because of their finances and staffing, are not in a position to offer treatment for people younger than this.

D.R.R.A. offers treatment services to persons with drug abuse and drug addiction problems at its two centres. Palmerston Centre in Perth provides out-patient counselling support and Palmerston Farm, in Wellard, is a medium term (6 months) residential therapeutic community.

Admission to the Farm is a process of approximately two weeks. During this time the person has to come down or "detoxify" from the drug. This means that the person must have high motivation before admission. According to the co-ordinator of the centre, they have to be choosy about who they take in because the stability of the Farm is top priority and it is not at present geared to taking people on a crisis basis.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG AUTHORITY

The Alcohol and Drug Authority operates four facilities.

Carrellis clinic is an out-patient facility which offers counselling to alcohol and other drug dependents and their families.

William Street Clinic offers a methadone maintenance or reduction program which is aimed at stabilising the person on one drug and therefore takes away the need to engage in the lifestyle of a drug user. The clinic also offers an out-patient medication program so that the person can bring themselves down from heroin at home using other drugs.

For young people to fit into this facility, the staff would be hesitant as the young people would come into contact with the more experienced addicts. The staff would prefer to see the young people being counselled away from the clinic as the clinic is seen as being the "done clinic" only.

The Ord Street Clinic is in the process of changing its program from a residential to a day program. This means that they will be able to reach more people. It is envisaged that the day centred approach will deal more with social, assertiveness and family interaction skills as well as focus on preventing relapses.

The Aston Hospital provides a detoxification facility and is medically oriented to seeing people through their withdrawal period. The Hospital acts as an initial place for people to medically withdraw from their addiction. After people have attended the Hospital they generally link in with the other counselling facilities to deal with their psychological dependency on the drug.

The A.D.A. operation Quo Vadis centre was, until recently, a residential setting. The centre was then given over to the Salvation Army "Bridge Program" for their use. The centre dealt mainly with people over 25 years of age.

It seems that the A.D.A. is moving away from residential type treatment facilities to day programs which it is thought will reach more people. As part of this movement, the A.D.A.'s facility in Mount Lawley is being designed as a day centre mainly for alcohol dependents. One problem with this is that alcohol dependents may also abuse other drugs. This means that a person may attend Mt Lawley for alcohol abuse rather than Carrellis, William Street or the Ord Street Clinics.

Regarding preventative work for young people, it appears that the A.D.A. is amenable to it, but as yet has not really begun reaching the younger, more at risk person before he/she presents for chronic alcohol and other drug abuse. Thus streetworkers should operate in conjunction with the A.D.A. in recognition of those people at risk.

DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITY WELFARE

Many of the young street people have a history of contact with the Department of Community Welfare, often with their own social workers or aftercare officers (if they have been to Nyandi, Riverbank or Longmore). The social workers or aftercare officers who are servicing the young people often refer them to Holyoake or to the Alcohol and Drug Authority because they feel that they lack the necessary expertise in dealing with the drug area. The officer then attempts to encourage the person to stay in the other agency's program. Mainly the officers aim at redirecting the person's focus away from the drug-taking behaviour and into more constructive forms of leisure activities. The officers only refer the person to another agency if they feel that there are definite drug related problems. For the officer to act as a support during the counselling process depends very much on the relationship between the officer and the young person. If the young person does not get along with the officer and sees him/her as being authoritarian then the chance of success is decreased.



LIZA

Liza is a 14 year old girl who was made a ward of the state due to her uncontrollability in the home situation. She is at present under the auspices of an institution because of her petty crimes committed as a form of recreation. Liza regularly absconds from the hostel in which she was placed and spends her time "hanging around" with other street people. During this time her drug usage of pharmaceuticals, alcohol and marijuana rises.

Although her aftercare officer has difficulty in finding her, she will contact the aftercare officer by telephoning depending on her state of mind and what is happening at the time.

Liza recently broke up with her boyfriend as he did not agree to her blacking out on Avil (a pharmaceutical) and having money that she had obtained in the pretense of borrowing it. He suspected that she had been working as a casual prostitute.

TREATMENT

There is a tendency for people to concentrate solely on the substance without looking at the total person. Addictive behaviour is only one facet of a person's lifestyle so that a lifestyle approach to treatment is more practical.

Most agencies favour a disease concept and consequently a total abstinence treatment approach. Whilst this is certainly useful for some people with chemical dependency problems it has marked disadvantages with the population referred to in this report. The disease concept tends to relieve the person's feelings of guilt but it also absolves responsibility.

Inherent in the disease concept is the idea "one drink, one drunk", and although this can apply to some people, the concept of total abstinence is one which young people find difficult to integrate in their lives. Young people, because of the social acceptance of alcohol and other drug usage, find it difficult to be isolated from places and people where usage is accepted and expected.

As part of the "disease concept", there is an assumption that the disease can be cured. A problem could be seen whereby the diseased person attends support meetings for a number of years in which only a transference of the addictive behaviour has occurred and not a cure.

The focus of this chapter has been mainly on illegal drug use. If any addictive behaviour is seen as a dependency which has exceeded an acceptable level, then the mythology distinguishing alcohol from other drug use can be taken away.

Whilst alcohol is consumed by the entire spectrum of street people only a minority will continue heavy usage. Most people have had periods of heavy use depending on the situation at the time and the person's own state of mind.

The treatment field appears to have become divided through the substances. Thus specific services have been established for alcohol and heroin addicts. The division of the field and the specialisation of each service aided the fracturing of service delivery to some extent. In seeing addiction as a behaviour and with less focus on the substance it would open up the treatment field to the young abusers and would not see them as being extraordinary because then the agencies becomes substance general, not substance specific (and inherent in this, age specific).

STREETWORK AS AN INTERVENTION STRATEGY

In August 1981, a "Survey of Facilities and Services for Drug Users in Perth" was completed by Malcolm Allbrook. This report was commissioned by the Alcohol and Drug Authority who apparently, after its completion, had little to do with it and the recommendations were mostly forgotten. In the report the use of detached youth workers or streetworkers was seen as an efficient means of contacting the people in their own area, in pubs, discos, pool halls, etc. This area of work was seen as a beneficial aspect of early intervention and prevention work.

The fourth recommendation of the report states:

The possibility of establishing a network of detached youth workers should be examined.

This recommendation was forwarded in 1981.

The use of detached youth workers, or streetworkers, should also be considered as an aspect of early intervention or prevention. It appears from the information given in the survey, that such a technique is highly efficient in terms of the number of youth that a single worker can maintain contact with. From the experience of streetwork organisations in the Eastern States, for example the Newcastle Youth Service, such a technique allows contact to be made and maintained with those who may not be reached by traditional welfare agencies. This is done by the worker frequenting the places where young people go, for example pubs, discos, pinball parlours, pool halls, etc.

In this way, workers are available to be contacted in the person's own environment.

A number of respondents in agencies particularly concerned with youth work state, without being able to offer substantive evidence, that there "... are a lot of kids with drug problems 'out there' who are ... not coming into contact with helping agencies". It is therefore considered that the feasibility of providing funding for an unspecified number of detached workers should be examined in the near future.

*Malcolm Allbrook
'Survey of Facilities and Services for Drug Users in Perth'
August 1981*

The Western Australian Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies (W.A.N.A.D.A.) recently made a "Response to the Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly appointed to enquire into Alcohol and Other Drugs in Western Australia" (October 1984).

As part of the document a general comment made by W.A.N.A.D.A. to the Select Committee stated that:

W.A.N.A.D.A. wishes to draw attention to a lack of services for adolescents. Specifically, there is a need for early intervention (e.g. streetwork with homeless and runaway youth) and treatments designed and targeted at this age group.

Part of W.A.N.A.D.A.'s duties are to prioritise issues fundamental to the alcohol, and other drug related services. Funding and the allocation of resources is one such issue that to a large extent limits the expansion of services. Thus out-patient services in the non-government sector are limited as is the "reaching out" to young people through streetwork type programs.

It appears that if the alcohol and other drug agencies are to offer a total (prevention treatment, and follow-up) service then funding should be expanded and assured of on-going resourcing.

STREETWORK ROLE

It seems logical that streetworkers can contact the young people in their experimentation and casual usage period before they graduate from the prescribed and non-prescribed drugs to heroin.

The contact during this time makes the streetworker important to the services already operating because it gives them an opportunity to see what the next generation is doing before they present at agencies in their 20's.

Information such as this could act as an indicator of the future and how services could be redirected to cater for the needs that would appear. In essence this means that the agencies would be able to be more effective in their directions and treatment.

If agencies in the future are to be more effective in their treatment they must work backwards to where the signs were before the symptoms appeared in the form of drug use. The streetworker, because of his/her unique position on the street, can be closer to the person.

Part of the contact work performed with the young people is also the question of giving information about how not to risk your life if you are going to experiment.

Much substance use and experimentation appears to be a normal curiosity that many young people have and if this is accepted as such and they have the information on safe usage then there are less likely to be problems later on with health and the law through continuation of usage.

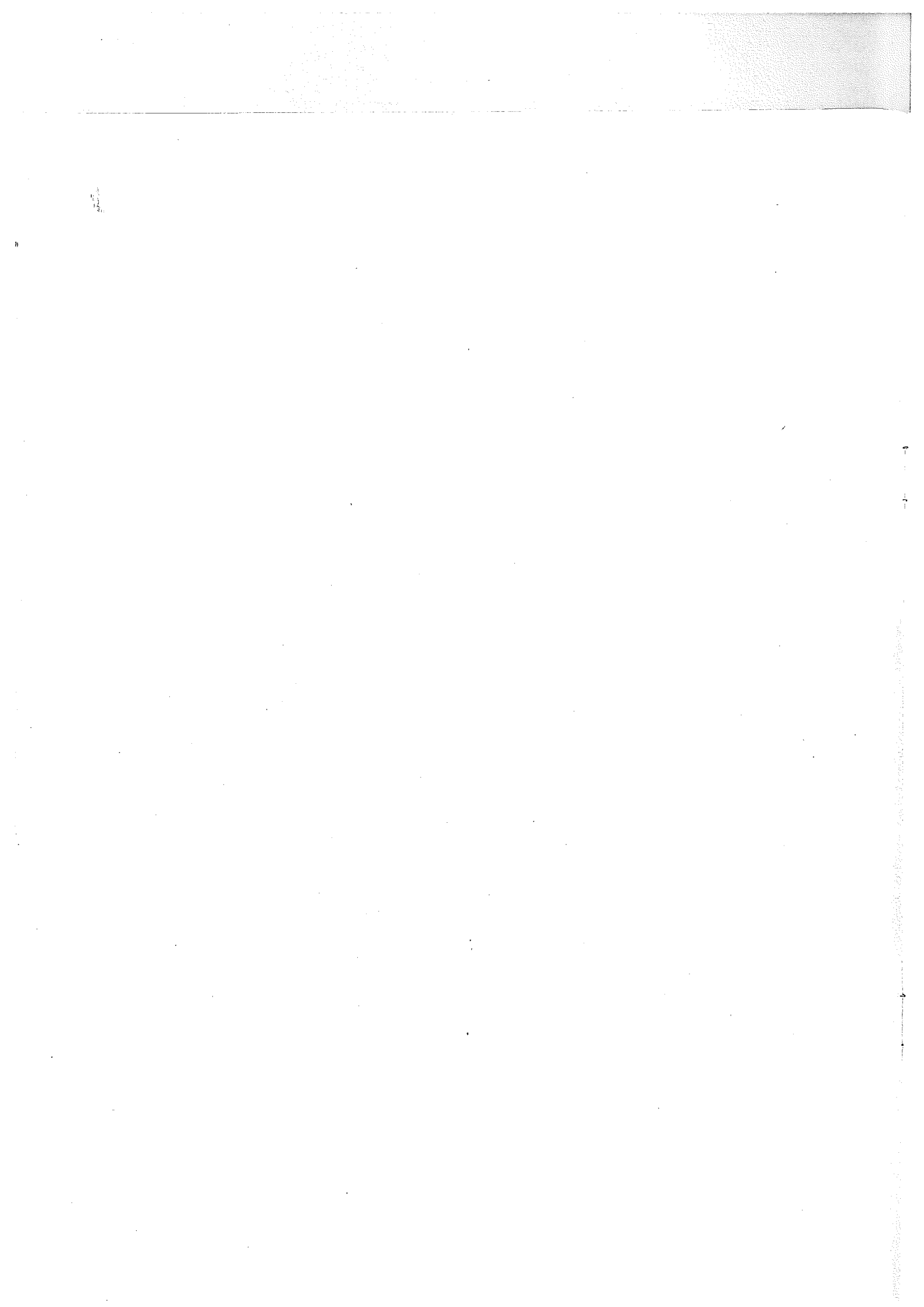
It does not seem to matter what the substance is but what sort of problems are being encountered on the mental and physical plane.

The streetworker because of his/her position is able to find out why people do not present at some agencies and whether they see the agencies as being relevant to them.

As a streetworker it is important to have resources at your fingertips when giving information and referring people to agencies. The problem that I found was that there appeared to be a vacuum around the drug area whereby young people did not present at some agencies. They are able to consult on the relevance of existing services and to participate in the development of future strategies to meet the needs.

When I began writing this report I became very angry because it seemed that youth were once again the forgotten ones, and the agencies were the ones whom I felt were to blame. On second viewing of the material I realised that the main problem was the deficiency of funding to agencies so that growth was stilted and that prevention work was impaired because of the lack of resources.

Shelley Davies
Graham Nicholls



ACCOMMODATION

In working "on the street" we come up against many accommodation problems with young people. Young people are quite often disadvantaged because they are either unsure of, or don't know what is available to them in relation to accommodation services. Many young people are only informed of what is available by members of their peer group who, themselves, have limited knowledge. While spending quite a long period of time wandering around the streets, they will eventually find places to stay of positive and negative natures.

STREETKIDS' VIEW ON ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE	
Grand Central Hotel	in late at night and out very early morning
Wentworth Hotel	\$10.00 per night
Royal Hotel building	"good for squatting"
Shaftsbury Hotel	share with 10 others
J.P.I. "The Bridge"	"only in desperation"
Y.M.C.A. Jewell House	"too expensive"

While many of those we have contact with on the streets are not strictly "homeless" in that they have no defined accommodation which they consider to be their base, they avoid returning to this base as it is a point of pressure/stress in their lives and it is not a place where their emotional needs are met. Those that do return tend to at odd hours for specific purposes, e.g. food, change of clothes, etc. A sample of 30 contacts who were identified as having accommodation needs have been analysed. Table A identifies the reasons why they considered themselves "homeless".

TABLE A

Reasons for having no accommodation	Frequency	%
Parent initiated - "kicked out"	8	26.67
Relationship breakdown with parents	8	26.67
Travelling (interstate or N.Z.)	4	13.33
Income (lack of money)	2	6.67
D.C.W. (on the run or termination)	4	13.33
Unsatisfactory accommodation	3	10.00
Other	1	3.33
TOTAL	30	100.00

It is most evident that many are quite mobile and tend to make their decisions on where to sleep for the night on the spur of the moment or when an opportunity or offer arises. Therefore in a given week it is quite possible that up to 4 or 5 alternatives may be used. The options that they perceived for themselves are detailed in Table B.

TABLE B

What options were available to young people as they see it	Frequency	%
Streets	19	63.33
Hostel/refuge	2	6.67
Friends	7	23.33
Return home	1	3.33
Other	1	3.33
TOTAL	30	100.00

While these are the perceptions of the young people, it is our experience that only in the summer are there significant numbers sleeping out. The places where they would sleep out include a few "squats", e.g. Royal Hotel, Supreme Court Gardens, alcoves under the Horseshoe Bridge, trains, and eaves in Forrest Place. During the hot summer months, many take to the beaches and sleep there.

There are a number who have flats or houses and who are willing to allow others to sleep over in their units. Others who go home for the night will often take one or two of those who are "homeless". When they have money they might pay for a hotel room and then share it with a number of others.

We became aware of a number of adults who take in younger people as boarders or free of charge. Among these adults are prostitutes, altruistic persons claiming to be "streetworkers" and some with an intention of obtaining sexual favours in return. This practice is of considerable concern to us despite the fact that the majority of young street people are wary of these approaches and have effective ways of promptly dealing with them.

Over a period of time, we as streetworkers were beginning to identify a few who engaged in taking in the young people and who were not using or abusing them but were potentially substantial positive influences within the street culture. This informal accommodation network has the potential for development as it would be more readily acceptable to the young people and can intervene more immediately and directly as it is very much a part of the street environment itself. The more formal accommodation services have a different role and do not cater for the needs that exist on the street.

TABLE C

Sex	Frequency	%
Male	20	66.67
Female	10	33.33
TOTAL	30	100.00

Although our statistics show that more young men have presented with accommodation needs this does not reflect the fact that just as many young women also had similar needs. It is easier to find young men accommodation as there are more crisis centres and refuges which cater for young men.

On the streets young women tend to solve their own accommodation problems, as most of them believe that the only alternative for them is either D.C.W. institutions or home. These are generally not acceptable to them. Young women on the streets can be classified in two categories:

- (a) "Feminine young women" - These young women are not afraid to use their physical appearance. They are not afraid to flaunt themselves and will often use their bodies as a form of payment for a night and a bed. This form of using their bodies for short-term accommodation should not stereotype them as "sluts", "whores" or "prostitutes". Quite often they will use this alternative as a means to obtain accommodation or the warmth of being loved by someone, even though it may only be as short-term as one night.
- (b) "Tougher tomboy type women" - These young women tend to look quite masculine and "tough". They dress, talk and act tough for their own form of protection. Quite often, people will see them as "guys", "butch" or "gay". When faced with a fight situation, these young women will rarely back down, and are quite often good fighters. They know that they have an "image" to live up to. Because of their known "toughness", they are usually left much to themselves. When faced with accommodation problems, they don't panic and aren't too worried about "roughing it" on the streets. They rarely seek love and/or accommodation from men. They are generally accepted as a "protective" figure to other young women, who look to them for advice and protection.

In our year on the streets, we also met quite a few very young street youth who tended to have extra difficulty with finding accommodation. As teenagers cannot receive Unemployment Benefits before the age of 16 years and cannot receive Special Benefits before the age of 15 years (on condition that they have worked at least 3 months since leaving school), they are without the necessary finance to pay for accommodation. For street youth under the age of 16 years, legal implications may affect most refuges and hostels, therefore many accommodation places will either:

- (a) Phone authoritarian figures such as police or parents to report the child as being found; or
- (b) Wipe their hands completely of them, and tell them to "make tracks"; or
- (c) Call in D.C.W. Crisis-Care to either take the child home, or to one of the D.C.W. institutions, such as Longmore or Nyandi.

While places are available within a number of non-government residential child care facilities for teenagers, those who have been on the streets for some time would find it most difficult to settle into such places and would most likely become significant problems. The admission processes are generally too long for effective placement of street youth.

There are no formal hostels/refuges specifically focussed on the younger age group, therefore these young people virtually have nowhere to go apart from keeping a low profile on the streets or arranging to stay with friends for the night. If the young person has offended at some stage, on the streets, it is even more difficult to place them in some non-government facilities.

Age	Frequency	%
13	3	10
14	3	10
15	9	30
16	6	20
17	2	6.67
18		
19		
20		
21		
22	1	3.33
23	2	6.67
24	3	10
25	1	3.33
TOTAL	30	100.00

TABLE D

YOUTH ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

When trying to estimate how many young people have had contact with established youth accommodation agencies, I found that at least half of the young people who have approached me have had dealings at one time or another with the Jesus People. For many, the experience had been too threatening, because this agency is virtually the only formal crisis centre in Perth, and the religious overtones and perspective is not acceptable to the majority of the young people on the streets. The impressions of those who have had contact is soon spread, and others new to the street are dubious about using the service at all, or only in desperation.

Due to the fact that it was within P.I.C.Y.S. and because of the nature of the service, the Household Network proved to be a service which was most often used by the streetworkers. The difficulty was that the households were generally full and not geared to handling additional emergency placements for short terms. Approximately 10 young people were placed over the past year. We are aware that two stayed as part of one household for a considerable period of time.

The Youthcare houses also cater for more long term residents. With the office open only during the day, it proved difficult for streetworkers to access when the need was first encountered and we had the young person with us. By the next day, we often had lost contact with the young person. An example of this was when I had two girls lined up for places but they did not turn up at the appointed time the next day as one had been picked up and taken to Longmore and the other to Bandiyup. I believe that the structure of the Youthcare houses is not appropriate for street people but rather for those who are more settled.

There has been no use made of the Homesharers scheme conducted by Anglican Health and Welfare as the streetwork team had had little knowledge of this service. This is also the case with other suburban services such as the Victoria Park Youth Accommodation Service, Swan Emergency Accommodation and the Fremantle Youth Service. In reviewing the past year, I am aware now that our knowledge of resources in this area could have been better.

It is worth noting that those who had recently come from the suburbs generally tended to return to their homes while those who have been on the street for some time or come from interstate, are most reluctant to accept accommodation too far away from the inner city area.

ANDREA

Andrea is now 17 years old. When we first met her in December 1983, she had only just appeared in the Hay Street Mall, and on the streets. In December, she was very naive and started to explore the streets after a minor argument with her parents. She had only been in Perth for approximately 12-18 months, and had been through a traumatic time trying to re-settle, after leaving her home in New Zealand. We had first seen her around for about 2 weeks, before we actually made contact with her. Her appearance was semi-shabby, and she never wore anything on her feet, never carried a bag. She was quite alone at first, though was introduced as "one of the gang" after 2 weeks.

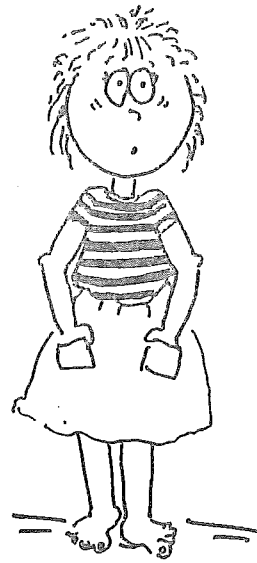
My first meeting with her was by coincidence, while I was trying to find accommodation for a young 15 year old guy. She told me at that stage that she was staying in a flat in Wembley with 2 guys - rent free. The next meeting in the street, was when she was on her way to "The Bridge" for the night. She hadn't stayed there before and wasn't particularly enthusiastic about it, as she had already been told about it by her peers.

During the following months we watched Andrea break minor laws. She has been continually in Longmore, then Nyandi, and back on the streets. After she appeared in court and subsequently was placed in Longmore for the 2 weeks covering Christmas and the New Year, she told us that her mother had told her to "rot in Longmore". When she arrives on the streets, she gives her address as "c/- The Hay Street Mall, Perth", and quite often sleeps on benches in the Mall.

One night, while one of the streetworkers and I were at "The Bridge" Andrea appeared, hoping to score a bed for the night. She was flatly refused, and when the other streetworker and I asked why, we were told that she refuses to accept Christian counselling. She had previously stayed for a short time at the J.P.I. Women's Refuge in South Perth. She had left for a few reasons, one being that she felt the rules were not too impressive. One rule that she described to us was that if the girls did not attend church on Sundays they were grounded for 3 days. One of the main reasons that Andrea originally left home was that although her family had never really gotten into religion, at the beginning of the year they had decided to turn Mormon and conformed to the religion. Andrea left because she had no freedom, wasn't allowed to eat chocolate, drink tea, coffee, cola, etc. The last thing this young lady needed was religion shoved down her throat.

Andrea's physical appearance was starting to look unkempt. She was breaking out in pimples from junk food and Coca-Cola, and one of her feet had become quite badly infected as she hadn't worn anything on them for a fairly long time. Her attitude had taken a large step down, to the point where she was now using Longmore - 3 meals and a bed, and the Hay Street Mall, where she could get enough attention from the police on the beat who would arrest her for vagrancy or other minor offences. Soon Longmore decided to transfer her to Nyandi. Once at Nyandi, Andrea was placed into an aftercare cottage, "Gwyn Lea" which is on the grounds of Longmore. She stayed there for quite a long time as she had semi-freedom which is what she wanted. When I saw her later she was permitted to move out of "Gwyn Lea", if she could prove that she could look after herself.

On a Monday in September I saw her and she had now got a job (she'd only just been given the job and was due to start the following day - Tuesday). She also told me that she had moved into a flat in Perth, with two people, though she wouldn't say who - male or female. She has grown up quite a bit, though I still feel that it is a shame she had to go through all this, because she only needed one thing from the start - "space".



Around the streets, there have been a few people, who are not attached to any service, who have offered the young people accommodation, on a short term basis, e.g. maybe for a night or two. Some of these are on a positive level and some unfortunately, are on a negative level. We have spent time working with 3 shop workers, one ex-prostitute who had taken young people home to stay with them, "no strings attached". These have worked on a very positive level towards the young people. Unfortunately we have been told about, and have had dealings with other people, who are taking young people home for their own gain. These have been mainly those who would approach the young people on the streets within their own territory. They have included photographers, men imitating police, and known child molesters. They are usually not around for a very long time, as when the young people find out what they are up to, they tend to take matters into their own hands and get rid of them. Even though they get rid of some of them, there are always more of these people reappearing. We have linked in very closely with some of the unattached "positive" people. They have started to refer to us some of the young people who approached them looking for help, especially for accommodation.

BARRY

Barry was 15 years old when we first met him. He was out for the second night on the street - and still very new and inexperienced. On the previous night, when he'd only just arrived, he had met up with a street kid of the same age group. He said that he kept having on-going domestics with his mother, who was a supporting mum. By the third night he was starting to tire out and was on the verge of admitting defeat and going home. He didn't, due to pressure from his mate. About a week later, we met up with him again. He was now a "street kid".

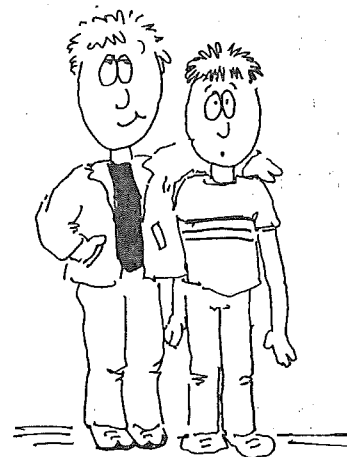
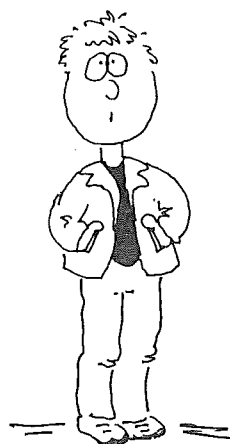
He introduced us to a 14 year old mate, who had been on the streets for 2 days. Barry was showing the younger boy the ropes. He told us at that stage that they hadn't eaten for 2 days, and was quite convincing, so we took them off and fed them. Later on, we were to find out that they had been over at Northbridge, spinning the same yarn to an "on-side" food shop worker, who had also believed them, and fed them.

After about 2 weeks of being on the streets, two of the streetworkers took Barry to Blencowe Street (the key house in the P.I.C.Y.S. Household Network) for the night. Two days later he was hanging around the streets again looking for one of the streetworkers trying to work out where he was going to stay. He bumped into me. Earlier on that evening I had made about 9 or 10 phone calls in regards to accommodation for him. With all of the phone calls, I had been told (a) ring back during office hours; (b) full house; (c) too young; (d) too old. That evening, it had become a crisis situation. He could not, and would not go to J.P.I.'s "The Bridge" as he said that they had fed him religion there before.

Eventually, he and I wandered around Perth, until he met up with a paper-boy who was a mate, who said he would put Barry up for the night, at his parents' home. On the following night, Barry was out again, and we met up with him. He had had some sleep, though he wanted to have a shower and some food. He was going to try and con his way into "The Bridge" for the night and split the first thing in the morning.

On Christmas Eve, Barry showed us where he had found to stay - a hidey hole located not far from the Town Hall. He reckoned he'd stay there for a while, bum his cigarettes and food. I saw Barry a few times over the next two weeks, though he hadn't been asking about accommodation, as he probably realised by then that we had nothing to offer him. Barry had begun to go in and out of Longmore on trivial offences. When he was out, he had become a professional con-artist, and could often get anything he wanted. About a month later Barry went into Longmore on some breaking and entering charges. He stayed in there for approximately 3 months.

He was not sure how long he was going to stay there. We haven't seen too much of this young guy in the last 3 or 4 months, though other people have told us that he is in Longmore again, and has been for quite a while. He seems to have been another victim needing space - through none being available at the time, situations snowballed into something much bigger.



Most young people whom I have met are grossly under-resourced. A general reflection from the young people is that the education system is entirely useless. When teenagers leave school, they have not been educated in how to resource themselves, survival skills, or how to use their leisure time constructively. A majority of the "street kids" are unattached, and do not attend any youth-type centres, therefore they do not have information available to them. To many young people the only alternative that they see as viable is to stay on the streets and sleep on the streets. These young people are unaware of exactly what alternatives are open to be used by them because of their lack of knowledge of what they are/are not entitled to. They may not know where to go for help, including help with food, money, etc. When young people reach the stage where they are on the streets, generally they won't go looking for resources. The only way that they will find out what is available to them is when the resources are brought to them. They need "non-threatening" people, such as youth workers to work with them on their own territory.

A STREET FRONT CRISIS/SHORT-TERM ACCOMMODATION SERVICE

We decided that the best way we could illustrate how the streetworker role can be implemented in relation to accommodation needs was in association with a complete integrated crisis/short-term accommodation service. We hope that this can be considered for funding in the near future.

RATIONALE

Young people without adequate accommodation are vulnerable physically, emotionally and morally. They also are often wary of seeking assistance from welfare/youth agencies and, in particular, avoid institutional and authoritarian settings. Accommodation options perceived by them can be sleeping rough, a friend's place, or chance accommodation through someone they meet. To reach the young people - accessible, secure, non-threatening accommodation needs to be available within a program with substantial links to community resources and skilled workers. When young people do make contact with welfare and accommodation services too often they are inappropriately placed, either because of a lack of options or lack of time for a thorough assessment. It is also not desirable for funded medium-term accommodation programs to be catering for emergency situations; it takes time and resources from these programs inappropriately, as operations are simply not directed to the needs of young people requiring emergency accommodation. In contrast, an emergency/crisis accommodation service would be built on awareness of needs, lifestyle and perceptions of street youth, runaway youth and other likely youth in crisis who would seek assistance from the service.

Finally, there are not sufficient well-resourced crisis/short-term accommodation options with trained workers in Perth for young people.

OBJECTIVES

1. To provide access to short-term accommodation for young people 12-25 years in a program constituting three facilities:
 - (a) Inner-city street front crisis/refuge centre catering for maximum of eight people;
 - (b) Suburban house as a refuge solely for young women, maximum of five;
 - (c) Suburban house as a mixed refuge, maximum of five.
2. To liaise, negotiate and mediate with young people, parents, non-government agencies and government departments to address the young people's needs.
3. To provide an effective support service to young people with well-trained workers and access to a range of community resources.
4. To plan with young people and (where relevant) parents/guardians their longer-term living arrangements and to meet needs such as social, education, health and work.
5. To participate in service and policy development to improve the lives of disadvantaged youth.

TARGET GROUP

- Young people who are homeless or whose accommodation is under threat so that they require immediate access to alternative accommodation.
- Young people in the age range 12-25 years and - when determined as warranted - persons younger and older may be accommodated.
- There is to be an emphasis on young people directly from the streets, with at least 4 beds in the crisis centre earmarked for street youth.

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE

1. Inner-city street front facility
2. Suburban mixed facility
3. Suburban female facility
4. Counselling and support service
5. Service Philosophy

1. INNER-CITY STREET FRONT FACILITY

Inner-city street front refuge/centre to be a **24 hour service**. The building should be designed so that there is an entrance with a waiting room, nearby offices, and with the living and accommodation area clearly secured from the entrance and office area.

This facility is the **contact point** for young people requiring accommodation. The **entry procedure** to be geared to the young people's situation and need. Assessment to be carried out with precision and discretion.

At least four beds in the facility to be **earmarked for street youth** who may fluctuate in their use of the beds as they build trust with the workers and make decisions about their lifestyle.

The **length of stay** for residents at this facility to be less than a fortnight with the exception of the users of the beds earmarked for street youth.

A charge of \$2 a night for young people with income.

Facility to be **staffed** at all times with at least two trained staff.

2. SUBURBAN MIXED FACILITY

Suburban mixed refuge to be **located** at premises in one of the inner-city suburbs, such as East Perth, Highgate, Subiaco, Mount Lawley or North Perth.

The refuge to be **operated** on the basis of a shared house, with residents contributing to food kitty, cooking and cleaning.

Residents **in receipt of income** to pay a weekly rent which will be banked for **their savings**.

The facility **accommodates** young people **up to two months** while they settle themselves, determine a direction for themselves and are assisted into community resources.

Facility to be staffed at all times by at least one trained staff member.

3. SUBURBAN REFUGE FOR YOUNG WOMEN ONLY

Facility similar to other suburban refuge - see above.

Female staff.

4. COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICE

To entail:

- (a) The provision of individual and family counselling by a professional;
- (b) The provision of assistance in matters related to income, work, educational courses, court appearances and searching out long term accommodation options - to be provided by two welfare workers;
- (c) Outreach service and/or detached streetworker to work on the streets.

5. SERVICE PHILOSOPHY

- (a) Personalised, non-institutional service delivery;
- (b) All practices to maximise opportunities for young people to build living and management skills and be involved in decisions affecting their lives;
- (c) Well-trained personnel to be employed in the staff positions;
- (d) Service objectives, operation and evaluation to have broad community input - the service is not to be influenced by idiosyncrasies of a particular group;
- (e) Service to have adequate resources to function.

STAFFING

- A co-ordinator
- A secretary/administration
- Three welfare workers
- Detached street worker
- Cook for street front refuge
- Sufficient staff to cover the refuge side of the service

MANAGEMENT

We strongly recommend that a collective group of inner-city youth and welfare workers/organisations take on the responsibility for managing the project.

- (a) **Management Committee** to constitute four to six members;
- (b) **Advisory Committee** to constitute two street workers, representatives from relevant government departments, representatives from other youth accommodation services, academics and other interested community people.

PROPOSED BUDGET		\$
1. WAGES		
Co-ordinator		24,000
Secretary/admin assistant		16,000
Welfare Workers (3)		56,400
Cook		18,000
Refuge Workers - street front refuge (7)		131,600
- mixed refuge (4)		75,200
- young women's refuge (4)		75,200
Streetworker		18,800
		415,200
2. WAGES ON COSTS		
		70,600
		70,600
3. ADMINISTRATION COSTS		
		8,500
		8,500
4. OPERATING COSTS		
Rent		13,500
Telephone		2,000
Power		2,000
Transport		12,500
Food		8,000
Materials		3,000
Maintenance and Repairs		3,000
Sundries		3,000
		47,000
TOTAL		541,300

Rosie Cable
Joanne James
Sheryl Carmody

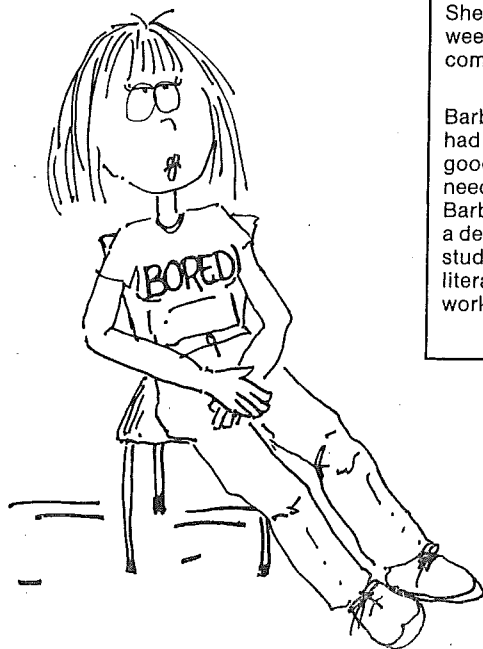
EDUCATION

A common impression held by the community is that all young people hanging around the streets are school drop-outs or social rejects. Their background is one of low socio-economic circumstances and they are of low intelligence. Their appearance reflects a grubby state which seems to support these assumptions.

As a streetworker working in and amongst these young people I have found that such generalisations and assumptions are very misleading and a cop out. I discovered that a number of those I met have done well at school and a small proportion are highly qualified with tertiary education. In addition to this, many are highly intelligent with the potential to fill a most worthwhile role in society. There are those who are the battlers and would always be battlers when it comes to education.

It appears to me that society is all too ready to lay the blame on the young person and not accept the responsibility for the failure of our systems - educational, family, community, etc. which are by far the major contributing factors in the disruption and breakdown in these young lives. So often, I discovered young people whose family life had disintegrated, or where authority figures in schools had gone overboard, or where schools were unable to respond to the particular needs of the young person or when priority is given to the demands of welfare over the educational needs.

I do not wish to present this as a "them and us" argument but too often the young person's perspective is overshadowed by the loading of blame on them. I feel I need to give greater emphasis to the view which I listened to and can now translate which comes directly from the street.



BARBARA

Barbara is an 18 year old female. She attended three primary schools.

She then attended three suburban high schools for three and a half weeks, and a fourth high school for one week. Barbara did not complete Year 9.

Barbara summed up her school experience as "boring" although she had definite ideas about what would make a good school. She cited good communication with teachers as of prime importance and the need for teachers to be "understanding about kids' backgrounds". Barbara has not been employed since she left school 4 years ago, had a desire to join the police force but does not see herself returning to study. She has a functional competence in the basic skills such as literacy and numeracy, enough to be employable and survive in a work situation.

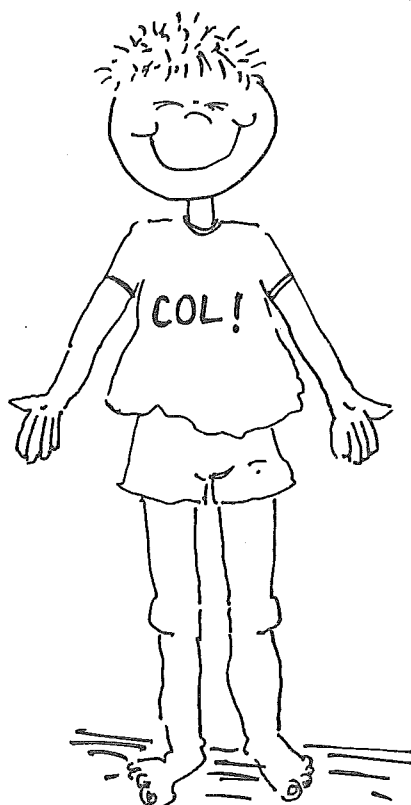
Throughout this paper I will return on several occasions to one particular young person, Colin, whom I got to know reasonably well. In fact, I go back eighteen months when as a teacher I had him in my class. This gives me a deeper perspective to the experience of meeting him on the streets in recent months.

BASIC IS BEAUT

COLIN

Colin is 15 and left school half-way through 1984. (He recently left home after on-going conflict with parents got too much for him). He has "pal'd up" with two other boys he knew from school days. These boys are street-wise, having spent most of the last 2 to 3 years on the streets. Colin is clearly taken in by the glamour and camaraderie of the street scene. He likes "hanging around" the night spots, and joining the others in drinking sessions when alcohol is available. Most apparent though, is Colin's liking for his new found freedom; he is not responsible to anyone; he comes and goes when he likes. Colin is a friendly kid, always eager to talk and reminisce on his school days. He is quite intrigued to find me, an ex-teacher on the streets and treats me more as a peer than authority figure.

I first met Colin over 18 months ago in a Year 8 class. I taught him for 4 months. Colin's literacy skills were very poor; he was not interested in school work and he achieved very little. Colin was usually a follower in disruptive behaviour, rather than a leader. He achieved at the "basic" level in all his subjects and had clearly come to accept the role allotted to him by the class of "basic student", general stirrer of teachers and therefore, O.K. kid. It appeared to me that Colin put in a lot of energy into maintaining this role, although he often seemed sullen, unhappy.



SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STREET POPULATION

The majority of the young people I met on the streets seem to have completed Year 8 but have dropped out or been expelled in Year 9. They often speak about the problems they encountered during or towards the end of Year 9, such as authority figures, their own behaviour, family conflicts which spill into and affect their school problems, teacher-pupil conflict, etc. It is obvious that the education system does not appear to cope very well with the onset of puberty and consequent changes in identity and attitudes over the first years of puberty.

Another significant group were those who identified themselves as achieving basic levels and who in their early high school years appear to have had an overwhelming experience of failure and consequently built this into their self-perception. The high school effectively stigmatised them and they began to believe it. It is my assessment that a number of these do have natural ability but this has been severely affected by other cultural and social influences.

As streetworkers we had few opportunities where their literacy could be observed such as form filling, reading instructions, directions, etc., and we did not actively seek to assess this ability in a systematic way. However, it is my assumption based on some comments overhead, that a significant number of those on the street were avoiding form filling in, etc., and we suspect that this was due to their lack of literacy skills. On several occasions a mate would be asked to go along to Social Security to help fill out the forms.

The bureaucratic language along with an overbearing bureaucratic environment and attitude on behalf of the officers does little to help overcome their lack of confidence in their abilities.

Their sentence structure and over reliance on obscenities reflects the culture of the street - superficial transience, attention seeking, insecurity and equality. It is not acceptable to be intellectual or eloquent and therefore natural abilities must be subjugated for the sake of acceptance. As a streetworker I too was subjected to this same process with even the tone of my voice showing marked adaptation. My conversation pattern also changed to become simple and direct with a definite trend towards the use of slang and ocker accent. Otherwise I would have been rejected.

Given the current attitudes and presentation of those on the streets at the moment, I expect few could readily walk into a job if it was offered to them. This needs to be put in the wider context of the job market and the high levels of youth unemployment (estimated at 25% in W.A. in 1984). The young people on the streets have long absorbed the inevitability of not finding employment even when they try their hardest. Consequently they are cynical of those who may potentially help them, e.g. C.E.S. officers. Even if numerous jobs became available this week, enough to give every young person a reasonable choice, this would not solve the problem. It will take several years for an attitudinal change to filter down to those on the street level, enough for them to believe in their self-worth and confidence to give employment a reasonable priority in their lives.

The presumption that these young people need and should be involved in retraining or educational courses is unrealistic, for many of them suffer from the damage they previously received from the education system. Again time and patience will be required if there is any hope that they may be encouraged to try again.

MAJOR ISSUES

Schools and the Home

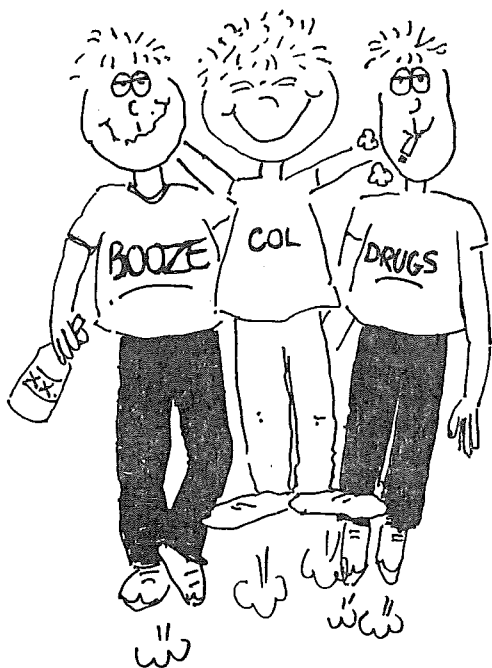
In my experience (both as teacher and streetworker) what strikes me most about schools is the narrow context in which they view students. Education gets carried on in a vacuum. Teachers and administrations are largely unaware of the family and other circumstances which may be affecting a child's performance in school. Sometimes the consequences of this are extremely serious for the young person. As a teacher though I am more than aware of the pressures of curriculum and day-to-day school routine which makes extra involvement seem a burden.

Let me illustrate this. During the year I met several girls who had left home and skipped school for a simple reason. All of the girls' mothers had separated from their husbands and sometimes the children had gone to live with either parent. The mothers had boyfriends or entered de facto relationships. The new male figure was often a cause of conflict or antagonism for these girls. All of them said they were extremely unhappy over a period of months. Some of the girls were doing very well at school and obviously have the potential to do well. Each of them said their school work was seriously affected; they lost interest in it because they were preoccupied with emotional states. Some of the girls became rebellious towards and resentful of school authority. Some had never displayed any signs of disruption at school before, while for others, this problem on top of others became too much to bear and was the cause of their leaving home and school. Two of the girls have returned to their homes while the other two are well-established in their lives on the street.

I do not wish to lay blame on teachers at all but I would like to point out that some of these girls might well have been prevented from getting to the streets if teachers and schools had been able to pick up the cues of disturbance that these girls were surely signalling.

Most significantly, each of the girls said they felt alone, that they had no one to talk to and discuss their problems with.

Schools need the resources to cope with these problems.



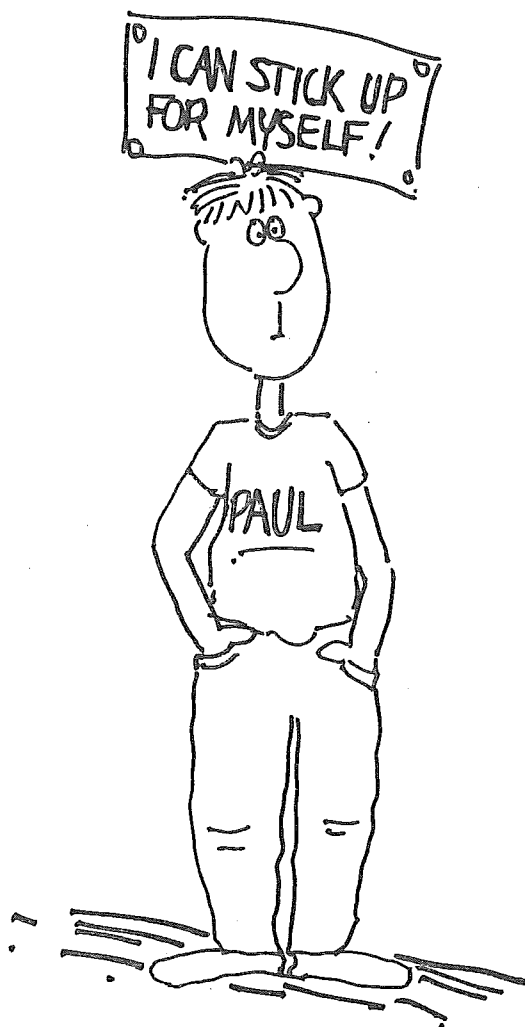
Colin is caught up in the excitement of being with others on the streets and the freedom to do what he pleases. He has, temporarily at least, escaped from the pressures of coping with family conflict and making decisions about employment and the future. I believe that little can be done for the moment, until he comes to the realisation that living on the streets is a futile existence. In the meantime he is at risk of becoming involved with alcohol, and with no income may start out committing petty crimes to survive. Colin is starting to mix with other experienced street kids and their influence may be a stronger alternative to any other lifestyle.

For the moment, Colin wants to forget about the conflict he has left at home. He has no desire to go back there and does not see any way of resolving it.

School is the common, and strongest bond in my relationship with Colin. He assumes that my reasons for leaving teaching were the same as his for leaving school, i.e. disenchantment. (He's right!) This inspires admiration and a feeling of commonality. He is willing to share his thoughts about school and his personal life in a very open and trusting manner - and in a way that would have been very difficult to achieve, although not impossible, in a student-teacher relationship. We both share a sense of the lifting of this constraint. He is very interested in the work I do and why I left teaching.

This shared experience puts me in a unique position to intervene in the risk situation in which Colin is placed. Unlike the classroom situation, I have the time and a new credibility to challenge Colin's current lifestyle and to possibly offset some of the negative influences he will experience.

I believe there is a very strong possibility that Colin's family problems can be resolved, although I don't feel confident that I have the expertise to bring this about. My role here would be to support Colin, and the family indirectly in negotiating some kind of resolution. Clearly he must establish a new independence in the family.



PAUL

Paul is a 14 year old boy whom we met in the city one night recently. Paul was with two other boys 12 and 13 years of age, who had run away from Catherine McAuley Centre.

He had left home that day because he had another fight with mum. He was living with his mother, his elder brothers and sisters having left home some years ago.

Paul attended 3 different primary schools in Sydney, one being a country school. He returned to Sydney to complete Year 7 of high school. He started Year 8 at another high school. Early in first term his family moved to Perth where he completed Year 8. This was his most satisfactory experience at school. He began Year 9 at a fourth high school during which time he moved between home and D.C.W. hostels. Paul spent several days at a fifth high school at the end of Term 2 and the beginning of Term 3. During this year he has spent a lot of time truanting from school usually coming into the city during the day. He did not like school and did not get on well with his teachers. He described school as boring and as a waste of time.

We found emergency accommodation for Paul until, with co-operation from his Welfare Officer, a return to home or a suitable alternative could be negotiated. While this work was being done, he absconded from the emergency accommodation and, in company with an older boy, became involved in car stealing and petty crimes. For his minor role in these offences the court put him on a good behaviour bond mainly because he was fostered into a caring family. The other boy was put into custodial care in a D.C.W. institution.

Paul has since left that family and is currently living on the streets. He is living "at risk". He has no plans for the future; he is living day to day. He spoke vaguely of wanting to become a mechanic but has no intention of returning to school. One of the streetworkers has since arranged for Paul to return to a D.C.W. hostel.

Paul's case illustrates not only the kind of effects that family disruption can cause, but what damage can be done by the priority and the power of welfare institutions over the education system.

One of the patterns discernible to the team over the year was the relationship between attendance at a number of different primary and/or high schools and early leavers. Of those who talked to us about their educational experiences many had attended multiple schools. Research has shown that it is not necessarily the number of schools attended that contributes to early leaving, but the degree of family stability provided while changes occur. Family breakdown was a common factor in many of the lives of these young people. The case-studies in this chapter again illustrate the multi-factor relationship in affecting school leaving age.

It was clear from talking to these young people that there was generally a lack of communication between schools. It was clear from talking to them that when they changed from one school to another very little information was passed on to help teachers understand the circumstances and background of the young person. This in turn affected how well they adjusted to and were integrated into a new setting.

Lack of communication between authorities about his background could also be seen as contributing to Paul's arrival on the streets. Paul did not like either of the last two schools he attended because he was left to adapt to and cope with a changing environment alone and unsupported. The education system needs to develop a better method to ensure that academic performance and significant accumulated information about social and personal background can, in strict confidence, be passed on to other schools. This information must be appropriately used and can make a practical difference in the quality of the new teacher-pupil relationship and contribute to a sense of continuity and security for the student in a new environment. In some cases the absence of such a system has contributed to some young people being on the street.

Welfare and Education



JANE

Jane is a 16 year old female, with a son one month old. Jane attended a primary school until half-way through Year 7.

Because of a split in the family she was moved to the country where she completed primary school and Year 9 at the local high school. During this time she was in the care and protection of D.C.W. and lived in a hostel. While at the country high school her behaviour became uncontrollable and she got into trouble with the police. However, she was well-behaved at school. She related well to her teachers, enjoyed her school work, and although achieving at basic levels, did make progress at school.

Because of her "out of school" misbehaviour she was moved to Bridgewater D.C.W. hostel prior to the start of Year 10. She then attended a suburban high school for a few days only at the start of the school year. Jane could not adapt to the change of schools, missed her friends, and became more difficult in her behaviour. A D.C.W. case conference which she attended decided she could leave school. A short time later she spent 16 weeks with a surrogate family. She then spent several months living on the streets where, with friends, made contact with an emergency accommodation agency. In the years since she has lived in a protected supportive foster family situation, but has also spent a large proportion of that time on the streets.

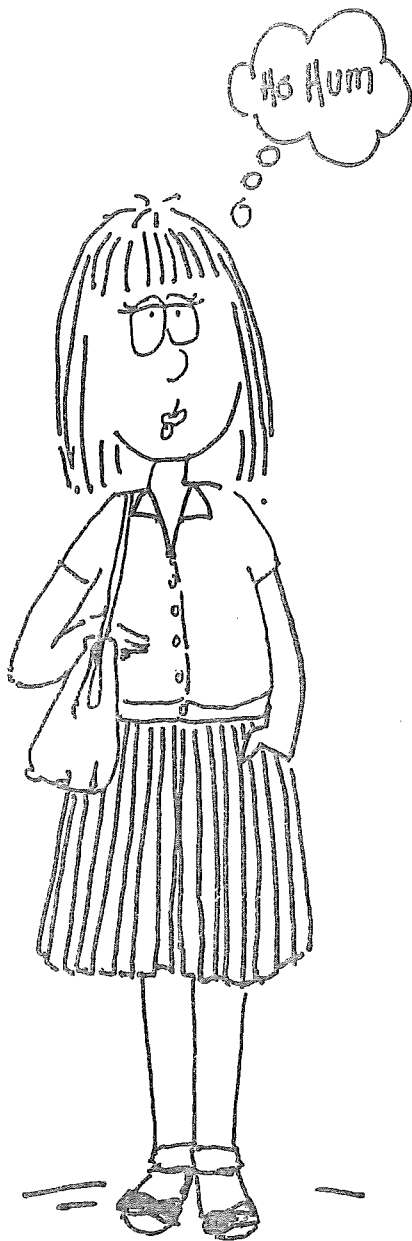
With the demands of a new-born baby Jane wishes to devote the next 3 to 4 years bringing up her child.

Jane would like to have joined the police force but she has dismissed this in light of her offending history.

She does not see any job future for herself and in the time since she left school has been unemployed.

Some reference has already been made to the role of welfare institutions in the educational process. Welfare institutions have an obligation in their capacity as legal guardian to make decisions about the placement of those in their care. Involvement with social workers over the year has shown me that important decisions are made on as fully an informed basis as possible. Jane's case is one in which the consequences of such a decision were disastrous for her. Jane was keen to leave school in the circumstances, but few other alternatives were presented to her.

After she left school there was no effort made to follow her up and ensure that she was doing something constructive with her life. By leaving school, Jane was removed from the one source of security in her life. She was not a brilliant student but she had a much better chance of directing herself to a more stable future there than she has had ever since.



JOANNE

Joanne attended two high schools in the Northern Territory. She was expelled from one - a private school which she says she did not fit into - and completed Year 9 at the other.

On moving to Perth she was placed in Year 9 classes because of her age. If her work was satisfactory after two weeks she would be promoted to Year 10. At this early stage of the year, so little work had been done in class that the female deputy principal decided that Joanne should repeat Year 9. She quickly found the work boring and repetitive. She began wagging school and going to the city during the day. She was expelled at the end of term two.

She moved to another high school to complete Year 9 again.

During 1984 in Year 10, Joanne suffered a broken collar-bone and was ill with suspected glandular fever. After these prolonged absences she found it difficult to get back into a working routine in the class-room. She was given work to complete which she'd missed while absent. She complained that she was given no extra assistance with this work. Feeling overwhelmed by the task she has virtually given up any attempt to avoid failing Year 10. With the exception of maths which she finds difficult, Joanne has been passing most of her subjects up to this time. Her expectation of failure has led to her taking days off again. She has not discussed her situation with the school's guidance officer or any teachers.

In spite of this, Joanne expressed a very positive liking for the school and the teachers. She appreciates some of the freedoms and privileges granted to students of the school. She said that if she failed Year 10, she would like to take a year's break from school before returning to repeat. She is very keen to enter the nursing profession and is aware of the prerequisites for this.

Simply because Joanne changed states and because there was no effective method of dealing with an interstate transfer Joanne was made to repeat Year 9. This should not have happened. Joanne might not have dropped out if she had been put in the appropriate class. She was caught in the middle.

The experience of those on the streets indicates that there is a gap in the education system. Clearly the needs of some of the children are not being met. There seems to be a pattern that those who are disadvantaged are most likely to remain disadvantaged.

Schools need to re-examine whether they are achieving the broader education goals, whether they are preparing young people for life. It seems to me, as in the case of Joanne, for example, that the requirements of the system may overrule full recognition of the individual, and where he/she is at.

The issue of Colin's future seems more difficult. There would not seem to be much value or prospect of success in returning to school. He has expressed an interest in becoming a mechanic. Ideally I think Colin would flourish in an apprenticeship. As an alternative to this Colin would benefit from a career-oriented training such as a technical school or perhaps a night-school course, while doing other work through the day. My relationship with him is strong enough to be able to put some of these alternatives to him and talk through his plans for the future.

Colin sees his school career as being finished. At the start of 1984 he was put into a small class of under-achieving and behaviour-problem kids. He spoke with great pride about improving his school performance for the first time from "basic" to "intermediate".

The most important factor in his better performance was his relationship with the teacher of this class who taught him for all subjects. For the first time, Colin developed a positive rapport with a teacher.

From what he said I understood that this underlying sense of security and trust with a teacher, a new experience for him, allowed him to break with the image of a "rebel" and "dummy" that he had built up in other classes. Colin discovered a new person in himself in a sense.

His demeanour changed rather drastically when I asked him about why he left school through the year. In spite of these good changes, the vice-principal was "out to get me", he said. Colin was bitter. His perception was that the vice-principal was antagonistic. Clearly the progress being made in the classroom was being negated by the vice-principal with the result that Colin was failed by the system.



Although Colin had gone ahead in leaps and bounds in the classroom, this progress got lost in the larger context of the school. It is very difficult in the wider community for individual contributions and progress to appear significant or be recognised.

In brief, I think schools should do all that is in their power to foster a system that values, recognises and encourages individual worth within a productive social context. If young people are not encouraged, if they don't see themselves as having something worthwhile in themselves to contribute, they won't - and they shouldn't be blamed for it. The world they inherit will be an impoverished one.

Those who do arrive on the streets are very quickly inducted into a new kind of education system. It is one of survival and adaptation. Youth on the streets learn to modify their behaviour to gain acceptance. They may learn to live up to a certain image which may vary from group to group. On the other hand, the community at large is not without a certain power to influence youth culture.

One afternoon I was sitting with a group of young people whose conversation, loud enough, was sprinkled with liberal doses of obscenities. One of three elderly ladies took great exception to this and told the group of young people, in no uncertain terms, how she felt.

The young people scoffed at her, but nonetheless, immediately cut out the bad language and dropped their voices. This apparently insignificant interaction showed me at least that young people are not insensitive to the rights and feelings of others. And I'm sure that the group of elderly ladies underestimated the impact they made which modified and curtailed the inappropriate behaviour of the young people.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES RELEVANT TO STREET YOUTH

In order for the educational and career prospects of young people to be improved, streetworkers need to develop functional working relationships with other professionals in institutions and agencies which are designed to cater for these needs.

In schools, principals need to understand that streetworkers can assist welfare oriented staff such as guidance officers and youth education officers to share and make more effective some of their work by exchanging information about enrolled students who are on the streets.

In addition, principals and administrations will need to recognise the existence of social problems in the school community, as a result of which some of their students may be spending time, perhaps truanting, on the streets. They must have a concern to do something about this.

At a departmental level, superintendents of Guidance Officers, Youth Education Officers, and Technical and Further Education, have expressed approval that their respective school staff develop contact with the P.I.C.Y.S. streetworkers.

There are a number of staff within schools who are concerned with the wider context of the students' well-being.

GUIDANCE OFFICERS AND YOUTH EDUCATION OFFICERS

These staff in several inner suburban schools have been contacted in order to explain the P.I.C.Y.S. Streetwork Program and to explore ways that streetworkers might assist them.

During the year streetworkers have met a number of young people enrolled at but not attending school. Because the streetworkers are in a unique position to develop a relationship with them in a pinball parlour for example, it is possible to discover reasons why they are not at school. Given a trusting, helping relationship the streetworker can help young people negotiate underlying problems and hopefully re-integrate them into family or school life (if that is what they want). The streetworker is likely to be more effective in this work with co-operation from and communication with schools.

The cornerstone of relationships in streetwork is trust and confidentiality. There is no reason why such exchange between schools and streetworkers should break confidentiality. If there was something to be gained by approaching schools or families, I would only do so with the permission and approval of the young person. On occasions when I have asked such permission in the past, and explained my reasons for doing so, I have had the agreement of the young person every time. Sometimes this has been with social workers or aftercare officers.

Streetworkers are not street-cleaners. Our intention is not and should not be to act as truant officers or police officers. Our job is to understand the person - where the person is coming from, not just geographically, and to help him/her reach independence. The interests of the individual are the prime motivation for streetwork involvement.

Youth Education Officers are primarily involved in career and outdoor education. In these areas the Youth Education Officer often deals with social or educational problems. For this reason, and depending on the interests of the particular Youth Education Officer, it has been thought essential to include them in this process.

SCHOOL NURSES

School nurses need to have support services at their fingertips. Many young people go to the school nurses for help or sympathy because they are not identified by students as part of the authority structure in schools. The school nurse is often privy to information not shared with teachers. A student may complain to the nurse of headache or stomach pains but she often discovers the nature of the underlying problem which may be trouble at home, boy-girl relationship problems or almost anything else. School nurses frequently have a wealth of background information about students but are often isolated in the school setting. The nurse does not generally have the opportunity to share their information with other staff. Because she is not employed by the Education Department she is not usually given professional credibility within the school. School nurses are an important part in the links which could be developed by streetworkers.

SHORT-TERM COURSES

Many young people on the street have the desire and/or potential to learn new skills or improve their educational level. In order to link them to these services, streetworkers need to have a thorough knowledge of what courses are available. Many of those on the street have not been at school for some time and would not be able to conform to the discipline of schools.

Places such as Canning and Bentley Colleges, T.A.F.E. programs, Technical Colleges and C.Y.S.S. courses have a more flexible orientation and allow for varying degrees of commitment through part-time study and different levels of ability.

Street youth interests are not necessarily best catered for by academic education. A variety of manual, technical and artistic courses would be preferable.

Contact with T.A.F.E. Superintendent and Regional Co-ordinator has been made and they have encouraged streetworkers to make contact with staff in T.A.F.E. colleges throughout the suburban area.

They offer a wide variety of courses that include skill training, social and life skills, and interest based courses.

The Community Employment Initiatives Unit is designed to enable unemployed people to develop their skills and interests by initiating, developing and designing community improvement projects. Funds are available to finance such ventures.

There is great potential for the streetworker to link young people to these courses and a variety of others.

ALTERNATIVE/INFORMAL TRAINING

Some young people on the streets become involved in "Squirrel Nutkin", a workers' co-operative where the young people themselves manage a fruit and nuts business. They learn how to order, market and sell the product. They learn something of financial management and develop good communication skills in their selling.

The manager of "Leatherworks" in the inner city is sympathetic to the needs of street youths. He has taught and encouraged a number of street youth to develop craft skills and to assist in advertising and selling.

STRATEGIES AND THE ROLE OF THE STREETWORKER

I think it is important for the streetworker to realise that in a hierarchy of needs, educational and career aspirations rank lowly with street youth. The problems of day to day survival, or food, shelter and clothing for example, are far more pressing than anything else. The environment of the streets results in a tunnelling of the visions of street youth such that the concept of a future, let alone a positive or an optimistic one, is dissolved. Some of these young people may not be able to conceptualise at this level, possibly for developmental reasons. With the experience of failure, rejection and low self-esteem so prevalent among those young people I've got to know, their motivation to change their circumstances is minimal. Young people feel powerless to produce change in themselves. They may lack the skills to do so and their jaded view of society provides them with little incentive to do so.

The streetworker needs to recognise these factors (working against him/her and those with whom he/she is working) but having acknowledged them, needs to try to bring about a change of attitude. He/she needs to recognise that change will not be dramatic.

In Colin's case my previous relationship with him gave me an enormous advantage in establishing the trust and confidence necessary as a basis to go on and challenge some of the assumptions and values he had formed about his future. It was an advantage to be able to relate closely to at least his educational background.

This shared background with Colin gave me confidence that some of the influences mentioned before could be overcome, that one need not feel overwhelmed by a sense of futility in this work.

Although educational values may not rank highly it does not mean that they should be ignored. I think it is an enormous advantage to have a teaching background in this work. It has the potential to be a source of common identification with both worker and young person. It helps to have a first hand knowledge of a most influential and formative component in the young person's recent history. With a knowledge of the range of services in the educational sphere and an ability to relate to and be accepted by other teaching professionals, a streetworker with teaching experience is in a privileged position to facilitate change in the course of a young person's life.

During the year the need to become established and accepted on the street, combined with the orientation towards crisis intervention, has limited the capacity of the streetworker to fully develop this educational perspective.

The Education Department could make an important contribution to the development of such a role. With departmental co-operation the role of the streetworker could be developed to incorporate a component of research in relation to those who have been failed by the system and about whom little is known. Such a role should include a liaison and support component with welfare oriented persons in schools.

First and foremost the streetworker is available as a resource to young people on their own ground. It is only through the quality of the relationship that a streetworker has the potential to assist the young person to discover a fulfilling future for himself/herself in the community.

A potential model for intervention at a team level has been developed with the key element being that one of the streetworkers adopt an education portfolio. The essential educational goal of the streetworker project is

to formulate and pioneer new approaches to motivate and "educate" the young people within the street setting. We have identified a stage between the streets and the linking to formal agencies. This involves using a community development perspective on the natural networks and processes existing within the street culture. By reinforcing the positive aspects and using those elements which are already acceptable to the young people, we maintain that we can effectively influence their lives in a way which is unique to streetworkers. Our methodology is still in embryonic form but we are confident that if we have the opportunity to develop it more, then we expect to improve the access channels for those most disillusioned with the educational system.

The subsequent educational goal is to diagnose the educational needs and design applicable course outlines and structures.

THE NATURE OF INTERVENTION - A TEAM APPROACH

Within the streetwork team we expect to identify those young people who have the potential to participate in various alternative courses. All members of the team would engage in the task of identification and preliminary discussion with the young person. This action would be recorded within the project's data collection and monitored.

At the team meetings, preliminary assessments would be discussed and a decision taken on whether the streetworker specialising in educational matters would become directly involved with the particular young person. It is not envisaged that the education specialist streetworker would be solely committed to educational work. The team remains the primary mode of intervention.

It is expected that the four specific objectives of the streetwork strategy would be:

- (a) early intervention on recent school leavers
- (b) identification of the education needs and potential courses
- (c) addressing the problems of poor numeracy and literacy
- (d) motivating the young people to consider attempting a course

It has been our experience that many of the young people on the streets do not lack intelligence but rather the basic motivation to continue to develop their knowledge and skills. It is necessary for the streetworker to challenge them on the streets through discussions and debate to relate to issues broader than the "topics of the street" - sex, crime, violence, etc. We also aim to lift their language above that of the "street lingo" which generally reflects the lowest common denominator. The streetworker can create an environment in which the young people can begin to think about the potential offered by increasing their skills and intellectual achievements. It is at this point that they reach a readiness to be linked to formal courses. The streetworker then provides the information and the direct link to the course co-ordinators.

Some of the young people exhibit serious numeracy and literacy problems and it is not possible to link them directly to any existing courses. They require intensive individual attention and would only accept this from a person they trust. The streetworker team would develop a basic program which can be implemented on the street and which would start the process. Once the young person realised the value in the learning, he/she would be linked to an individual tutor or small group course.

School leavers with no clear plans for their future tend to migrate towards the streets. The streetworker can readily identify these early and attempt to redirect and motivate them towards appropriate courses. This can be an effective preventative service.

OUTCOMES

It is our intention to significantly influence the number of those on the streets, who through our intervention and support, gain re-entry to the education system. We maintain that this is a means by which they can gain more control over their lives, improve their self-respect and possibly join or rejoin the work-force.

While they retain contact with the street, we can maintain support. When they progress to a formal course and sever links with the street, we expect that their support networks will be drawn from elsewhere. We would work closely with T.A.F.E. Counselling and ensure that follow-up occurs through the appropriate channels.

Brian Fitzgerald-Dynon
Will Lundy
Norm Williams
Genevieve Errey

YOUNG WOMEN

Within the street culture it appears that young women have minimal influence over their peers and their situations.

While the females perceive themselves as being equal, they are in fact dominated and "put down" by the way males relate to them. The dynamics within the group are such that young women often do not recognise the subtleties involved, tend to seek males for companionship and through this establish their identity as part of the group.

The young women on the street develop friendships and links by virtue of the fact that they can relate to each other on an equal basis and share the same problem. Specifically women's troubles are easier to talk about with other women and the feeling that men do not really understand or care is prevalent. It seems paradoxical that women who have so much in common find it easier to obtain their identity from the street males. Within a gathering of women they will often find it easier to talk about themselves, however when a male joins the group, the conversation will often change focus and centre on him. This does not work in reverse.

The feminist perspective can have little effect on the street dynamics because of the risks attached to being young and vulnerable. The feminist perspective implies a breaking away from male domination for which young women often have neither the psychological skill nor the inclination.

The word "feminist" connotes the bra burning and the aggressive woman. The street women shy away from using the term and see the concept as something irrelevant to them. Awareness and pride in womanhood is also seen as irrelevant because many of the women do not feel they have anything to be proud of.

In order to allow the women to think of their situations the males in the group would also need to be allowed to break out of their traditional mode of thinking. It is apparent that the females rely heavily on males for friendship and identity whereas the males are quite happy to be on their own if there are no females around.



Hay Street Mall 4 p.m. a Wednesday in October

The typical scene in the Hay Street Mall: women sitting while the men stand around reflecting a physical domination by the sitting/standing routine. The women who are seated blend into the curves of the seat as if trying to get away from the attention. Those women that are seated next to their boyfriends are usually half sprawled over them, as if to say "take me". The young men who are standing are the ones usually clowning around and being questioned by the police, while the girls as the audience look on.

SEXIST LANGUAGE

The majority of young street women who actively seek to become members of a group are often abused and appear to have been conditioned to accept the jibes and sexual innuendoes and see it as their lot when they are treated in such a way. The other women, the minority, who do not accept this treatment, are seen as being aggressive and unwomanlike, and are kept on the periphery of the group. An assertive woman does not really fit in with the group's stereotype of women.

The women are often "put down" by the males in the form of subtle language differences. The language is usually sexist in nature with sentences beginning or ending with "baby", "sweetheart", "love" or "woman". Such language is seen as normal and although can be endearments in some contexts are "put downs" and relegate the women to something other than intelligent human beings. They are made into childlike figures with their worth coming from a status other than a person. Words such as these allow the males to forget the woman's name so that she becomes a non-person.

Although women do occasionally call men names and attempt to return the insults, they are relatively unsuccessful because of their inconsistency in carrying it through.

It appears that the young women treat their own lives and ideas as being unimportant in comparison to the males! This is seen where the young women will adjust their conversation around the males while the males will rarely reciprocate. Male conversation appears to revolve around court cases, drugs, cars, mates and sexual escapades, while the women tend to talk about boys, clothes, who is going out with whom, etc. The differences in conversational content makes it difficult for the women to be active participants. Thus when a group of males joins a group of women there is a shift in topics discussed.

It has been well documented, e.g. Germaine Greer, that women tend to become submissive and silent when men are speaking as they see their ideas as being unimportant. This stems from their conditioning in childhood that women are silent and take what is given to them without question.

MOTHERS AS MODELS

The women of the street often do not have good relationships with either one or both parents. This lack in their relationships is one reason why young people seek the comfort of the street.

The conditioning of young women is such that they see themselves as being different from their mothers' role models. In seeing themselves as being different they tend to reject their mothers while at the same time copying the same values and behaviour which they wish to reject. In particular, this can be seen where the mother is clearly in a submissive role to her partner. If the daughter does not get along with the father she will often become attracted to a young man who has the same temperament and attitudes towards stereotyping women. It seems that the generation changes but the dynamics of the relationship do not.

The parent models are often seen in a derogatory light because they are seen to succumb to the domination of the males in their lives. The young women fail to recognise that they also partake in the same values and are locked into the same cycle.



DEE

Dee was a 14 year old runaway from Queensland. Her mother still lives in Queensland and her father is living in Perth with his girlfriend. Her brother also lives in Perth and they have some contact.

Dee was working at a fast foods outlet but was sacked. She is at present on Special Benefits because of her previous work experience. When Dee was working, her father had the habit of finding her on pay-day and making her feel guilty enough to give him money which she could ill afford. The mother had received the same treatment from the father and had left him because of this. Dee moved to Perth so that she could see her father. This relationship is her method of maintaining contact with her father and Dee has been drawn into a set of dynamics which replicate those her mother had.

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

For a woman to survive as part of the group she must conform to the wishes of the others. If not she remains alone or on the periphery. Those women who have taken a stand against the young men by asserting themselves often find themselves isolated both from the men and the other young women on the street. Occasionally young street women do break out of the stereotype and form separate groups with others. This depends on the strength of character of the women concerned but it is rare for them to attain complete independence. I have only met one woman who has broken away from the group successfully, although she is still classified as a friend of the group. This woman is basically a loner and moves in and out of groups easily. Her personality is such that she is seen as different and treated as such without too many problems.

The question of educating women to their own identities is often met by "why do we want to go to a woman's awareness day?" Although such an event is helpful in consciousness raising and self-awareness, it is by no means the only way of educating the women.

One of the ways we, as streetworkers, found to be most effective was direct contact with the street women in their own environment, where they felt most comfortable about speaking to us.

It seems that many of the young women on the streets had left school at an early age and when they did attend school, did not pay very much attention. Education for these women seemed to be of minimal importance so that before raising their consciousness on women's issues we have to establish a trust and openness to exploring new ideas and knowledge.

The young women, although strong in sisterhood, do not see their feelings in a broader feminist perspective. This is mainly because they have been conditioned to only think on the micro scale and to worry about their own private troubles. The role of the streetworkers is important as it provides an opportunity to relate at the street women's level and allow the women to explore themselves. To enrol in anything formal would be far too threatening for them.

There appears to be an insurmountable distance between the formal women's movement and the street women. This could be due to the women's movement being seen as only for the well-off, articulate women who have the ability to be strong and aware. Ignorance is sometimes bliss because with awareness comes the need for changing the situation into something more acceptable. The women's movement is seen to be for the well-educated, because in order to understand the concept of powerlessness, first you must understand the relevant words and concepts behind the movement. This therefore alienates the young street women because they often have left school at an early age and because of their lack of education they neither understand the semantics nor have any contact personally with the literature.

The Women's Interest Division acts as a "suggestor" to the state government on women's issues. As such the division does not provide a service but acts as an advocate for policy making regarding women's issues and services. Through the Women's Information and Referral Exchange (W.I.R.E.), the Interest Division becomes aware of the services and existing gaps in order to amend them and then influence the policies behind them.

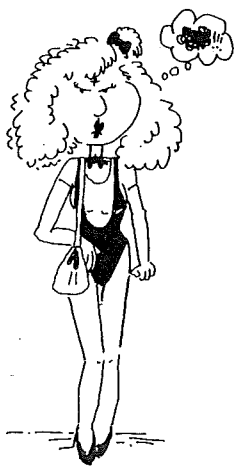
The street women often do not recognise themselves as being different from the street males and so do not use W.I.R.E.

The physical location of the service is such that it is imposing and so it has a psychological barrier around it. The service is not yet well-known and the young women do not utilise it. Apart from the practical aid such as money, food, bond money, etc. the young women find it difficult to see how such a service could be useful to them.

RELATIONSHIPS

Due to the transiency of the groups on the street, where people move in and out frequently, relationships appear to have a similar trend. There have been very few relationships that have lasted more than a few months. The reasons for being a couple, change according to the situation. Thus when a relationship stopped filling a need, another one was begun without any breathing space.

A constant characteristic of the street is fragile relationships, this extends to the areas of interpersonal relationships between couples. Relationships have little effect on the group's dynamics because everybody engages in changing partners. Promiscuity or easy sexual relations do not seem to warrant much attention within the group because it is considered acceptable behaviour by most. Because it is generally accepted that people will change partners there is little emphasis placed on forming steady relationships. A strict moral code such as "you only sleep with someone you're going with" can look like easy promiscuity in the context of short-term relationships.



GLORIA

Gloria is a 19 year old originally from Victoria. She is the middle child of eight to a miner and his wife. Her father died when she was relatively young but it appeared to be a blessing to Gloria as he used to beat her savagely. Gloria feels that she was the only child abused in this way. Because of her treatment at home she often ran away and offended. Ultimately she became caught in the cycle of offend - institutionalisation - freedom - offend - etc. Gloria broke the cycle and came to W.A. just over a year ago. Since then she experienced financial difficulties until she gained employment as a dancer for a Perth nightclub. She was sacked as she refused to prostitute herself in order to keep her employment. Gloria's relationships tended to be relatively short-term and she experiences problems in making and maintaining friendships. She found that people would use her up and then leave.

Sexual awareness and education is an issue that effects young women. Adolescence is usually seen as the time when people question their upbringing and their sexuality. With street people this is generally true and although heterosexuality is the norm, questions can arise for a person as to its relevancy to them. Being heterosexual and bonded to the men of the group on an overt level makes it difficult for women to question their sexuality without leaving the group or becoming involved with another one.

An attraction to the same sex can only be shown in being friendly whereas sexual partners in a group are expected to be of the opposite sex. It is possible to be gay in the heterosexual scene of the street although throughout my work I only came across two women who were exceptional personalities and who were strong enough to be loners. They moved between the gay and the heterosexual scenes with relative ease because of their ability to get along with people in general.

LOVE AND SEX

Confusion between love and sex occurs on the street. Romantic love is rarely found as relationships are often based on other aspects such as sex, money or accommodation.

Romantic love could be seen as where the attraction for the partner is based on their personalities whereas on the street, love appears to be based on material gain. Sex appears to be an avenue for the young women to gain something else from the males in the group. Sex for the women is seen as a way of gaining attention, warmth and the physical showing of affection. Sex can provide these feelings but tends to be momentary and mainly fulfilling for the male. It can also be the means by which a young woman can find security and a bed for the night which is a much better alternative than a cold night on the streets.

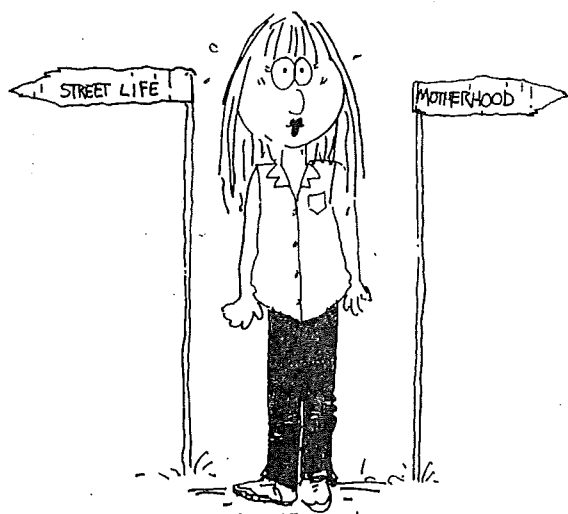
As a streetworker it was highly evident that hugs are important to some of the street people because there was no sex involved and no threat that sex would be part of the closeness. Young women and men alike would often seek out the streetworkers for that attention, standing so close that the streetworkers would have to put an arm on their shoulder. The need for closeness would occur also as a direct request of "where's my hug for today?". As streetworkers it was found that people who needed that security were often the ones who had been abused emotionally and because there was no threat of physical closeness developing, then the people found it easier to approach us.

Statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics of 1981 found that of the women 19 years and under, approximately 31,900 became pregnant. Of these approximately 14,000 had known terminations whilst 17,800 had babies. It was found that W.A. has 9% of pregnancies or 2,871. With such a large number of pregnancies it could be assumed that a large part of these were unplanned.

Cultural differences, ignorance, fear of hospitals, etc. reinforce the perception that pregnancy will not occur, with the consequence that more young women become at risk.

Pregnancy traditionally represents an image of love and the feeling of being loved by someone who will not desert you or treat you badly. This contrasts with group dynamics and instability in relationships between street people.

There is also a strong feeling that pregnancy will lead to the person being treated as an adult. However, while motherhood is seen as being synonymous with adulthood, the person is still treated as a child because of her behaviour although she has assumed the responsibility of being a parent.



ROBYN

Robyn, a 15 year old state ward, became a mother earlier this year. Her boyfriend left her during the pregnancy as he did not want additional responsibility. Although she had some idea, Robyn was not sure who the actual father was. Robyn had been a street woman for some time and during the pregnancy remained on the street, returning to her grandparents occasionally when she needed her clothes washed, etc. During her pregnancy there was some doubt expressed as to whether people would see her as a parent/adult or still as a street woman.

The responsibility for the child's welfare was given to the grandparents. This angered Robyn. She felt that the baby was hers and therefore that the responsibility should also be hers.

However, since the birth she has at times left the child with the grandparents and stayed on the street for a couple of days. This behaviour suggests that she wants the role of mother but is not mentally prepared to let go of her previous lifestyle.

Additional money on the Supporting Parent Benefit and the eligibility to State Housing Commission accommodation give benefits for which the young, single person does not qualify. For many these are added bonuses for becoming pregnant, while for some this may be the motive for becoming pregnant.

The simultaneous roles of mother/adult and young woman produce dilemmas for the young woman. The child can be put at risk when the mother decides to go out on the town and be a "normal" teenager. Young people often see the babies as being "cute" until the routine of parenting becomes a burden on their lifestyle and expectations of life.

In a sense the young woman had traded off one set of problems for another which is often more permanent and damaging for her dependant child.

It is rare that the couple will remain together after the birth. The males frequently move on in search of another woman without children.

COPING ABILITIES

Trauma within the young women's lives is usually dealt with by internalising the problem rather than showing the effects emotionally.

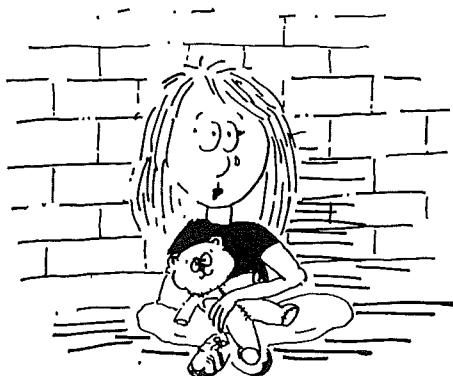
One girl, who had experienced incest, a broken home, alcohol related problems in the family and the death of her child, found it virtually impossible to show her feelings. Her inability to show her emotions affected her relationship with her boyfriend. He was frustrated in that he could not understand why she got so angry and was unable to relate to men, other than himself.

It appears that there are mainly two ways of expressing emotion and coping with difficult situations in young street women's lives. Firstly, by internalisation, and the consequent inability to express anything clearly; and secondly, through anger, with the after-effects being blocked out.

Many of the young people have had problems with their families and found it uncomfortable to become too close to anyone, because of being "let down" by those they were traditionally supposed to be close to. Thus becoming close to anyone was risking being found out so that the "tough" facade was just that, a facade. The "tough" image was the presentation of being non-caring and independent. This is often shown by being loud, aggressive and dramatic about superficial occurrences. Thus subjects which are close to the heart or have caused pain are glossed over and the image tends to reflect this.

The other main problem concerns authority figures with whom the young people had often had negative experiences, particularly when decisions for the young person were made without consultation. The resulting treatment of the experience tended to be in derogatory terms, with anger and frustration inherent in their tone of voice.

Anger and frustration were also seen as being unproductive and did not change the original source of those feelings, so the anger, etc. was again internalised. The streetworkers were concerned that young people were perceived as being unable to alter their situations in the near future and instead would be facing their problems later on in life when they were more entrenched and exacerbated.



ANNE

Anne is a 16 year old who experienced incest from the age of 8 until she was 14. This situation was remedied when her brother was taken to court, formally charged and imprisoned. Anne formed a relationship with a young man of 17 years and they had a child. The child died at the age of 3 weeks from hepatitis. Since this time she has found it difficult to relate to men and children because of the fear that they will either leave her or destroy the confidence that she has in them.

Anne has experienced great difficulty in expressing grief about the death of her baby. She has also been unable to express herself within the context of her present relationship.

SERVICES FOR YOUNG WOMEN

The main problem associated with providing services for young women is that they do not identify themselves as having different problems from those of the street males. The question of identity and how it is obtained is linked with the treatment they receive from males. Traditionally males have contact with the outside world through employment, keeping women isolated in the home environment and forcing them to obtain their status in relation to that of the male.

Street women appear to rely on the males of the street to present at agencies for their needs. Rarely did street women seek a particular service as they were often ignorant of what was available, and secondly, they often do not see themselves as being eligible. A third factor for young women is the courage to take the initial approach. This means that they frequently feel inadequate in asking for help, which may be attributable to the physical appearance of the building and the fear of what will happen.

Community Youth Support Scheme (C.Y.S.S.)

Most C.Y.S.S. schemes operate by providing programs for the unemployed. The Curtin C.Y.S.S. is slightly different because it has a wider orientation. The centre began a "Young Women's Day" to strengthen and develop self-awareness in young, unemployed women. The problem was that the group became a meeting place for young, unemployed lesbians. This showed the need for the existence of such a group, however, it became obvious that heterosexual young women did not perceive a need for themselves to be considered as independent women.

Jesus People Inc.

Jesus People Inc. (J.P.I.) operate one young women's accommodation service. As the service is perceived as having religious connotations, many young women would not attend.

The J.P.I. Housing Officer felt that it was necessary for Perth to have another centre available for those people who shied away from the perceived religious nature of the centre and its ramifications.

The absence of a crisis accommodation service for young women in Perth caused concern.

One issue that came to the Project Officer's attention was that the young women did not see what the programs and services could offer them. The Project Officer said many young women were afraid of the consequences of any services specifically for them. The new self-awareness would force them to evaluate their lifestyles, which could be a challenge at the street level to the group's male domination.

Women's Refuge Group

The Women's Refuge Group was begun in response to domestic violence and was aimed at young women with children. The refuge group has never really addressed the problem of single young women as they believed it to be outside their constitution. The refuges that have been established for the single woman have in fact been aimed at middle-aged women because the workers felt that they lacked either the expertise or the resources to adequately deal with the young, homeless woman. Consequently it appears that the Women's Refuge Group is not in a position to directly assist street women at the present time.

Women's Health Care House

The Women's Health Care House (W.H.C.H.) offers a medical service for women. Because the staff are women, there is an identification with womanhood which reinforces the need to be separated from the usual health services catering for both sexes. The centre also provides an avenue for various groups to operate.

The W.H.C.H. began a crisis/short-term accommodation refuge for middle-aged, single, childless women. During my enquiries for bed space for young women I asked the staff whether beds could be specifically allocated for young women. The response was that they felt that young women could not be accommodated because middle-aged and elderly residents would not be able to live with young women due to the differences in lifestyles and habits.

Pregnancy Help

Pregnancy Help offers counselling to pregnant women of all ages. Referrals usually come from the Department of Community Welfare and other agencies. The service also provides a residential house for girls who do not have anywhere else to live while pregnant. Pregnancy Help does not refer girls for abortions but looks at alternatives to that course of action. With the decision made the service offers support for the young woman.

In the case of street women, it appears that when they become pregnant they often tend to seek help and advice from other street people or from the streetworkers to clarify their thoughts and decisions.

Y.W.C.A.

The Y.W.C.A. offers club-type activities for both sexes between the ages of 7 and 25 years. Although the service caters mainly for young women, it does not exclude men if they wish to engage in an activity.

The Y.W.C.A. provides a refuge for single, older women as it identified a need for such a service. Since the establishment of the house, other agencies have begun similar services. The Y.W.C.A. did not begin a single, young women's refuge as it did not have either the resources or the expertise. As the service is not therapy oriented it does not deal with the problems of young women but rather offers group activities.

It appears that street women do not see themselves as fitting into such an association. Club activities seemingly hold no appeal for young street women because they are involved with a peer group which is not attracted to such activities.

Youth Health Service

The Youth Health Service offers a doctor, social worker and field nurse as contacts for young people. The field nurse works with young, pregnant women regarding their medical situation and offers on-going support both before and after the birth.

During pregnancy, the nurse aims at contacting the women and establishing a supportive relationship so that if they experience any problems or fears there is someone approachable nearby.

The main problem identified by the nurse is the lack of support from family or friends for young women during and following pregnancy. The young women are trapped into motherhood and isolation which exacerbate their difficulties.

This service appears to be well used by young people, but the nurse felt that more contact could be made as those who needed the service may not know of its existence. The P.I.C.Y.S. streetworkers linked in with the health service as it provided an approachable service for people who were dubious about other services.

AGENCIES AND YOUNG WOMEN FROM THE STREETS

The most specific problem faced by young women is the lack of resources available to cover their special needs.

Sexism, and strong patriarchal attitudes with insidious undercurrents, impinge upon the traditional voluntary agencies in their provision of services. Young women are viewed as difficult because:

- they are thought to be sexually promiscuous
- they need more support services
- they are more likely to cause problems in households by flirting with young men and fighting amongst themselves.

Street women are seen as "tough". Tough young women are viewed by society at large as being unacceptable. In a society where moral values are set, young women who deviate are liable to face exclusion, and the more traditional agencies view them with a moral fear. They are truly the undeserving poor, with the pressure to prostitute themselves to raise ready cash, or at least a bed.

Other agencies, those providing health services as an example, tend to be geared inadvertently towards the literate and the socially acceptable.

Public hospital health services can cope with the physical crises, but do not automatically offer and apply follow-up services.

The status of "social outcast" remains and develops cyclically. A young woman ignored, or treated in a blatantly hostile manner can step even further outside the bounds of society. She may ignore mainstream society and violently reject her role.

A street youth worker is placed in a position where direct contact can be made totally without threat. Problems such as relationships, family, sexuality, money, jobs, etc. can be tackled directly without having to delve into the area of middle-class value judgments. The street youth worker does not operate from a particular value-stance.

Agencies with broad-based value areas, perhaps women's centres, need to provide direct services in consultation with the streetworkers and the women themselves.

Shelley Davies
Genevieve Errey

The Y.W.O.A. offers a wide range of activities for both sexes but the age of 17 and 18 years is the minimum age for young women. It does not exclude men who wish to engage in the same activities.

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YOUNG OFFENDERS

On the streets of Perth relations between police and young people are generally poor, primarily because of a lack of mutual understanding. Both groups are caught up in a game which involves watching, taunting, threats of arrest, lock-up, court appearances, fines, return to the streets . . . and then it all starts again.



A WARM AFTERNOON IN THE MALL

A group of about 10 young people were sitting on the pavement as this was the coolest spot. They were generally boisterous but with a streetworker sitting with them. There was reasonable control.

Two police officers were patrolling nearby for about an hour and were keeping an eye on the group from a distance. After an hour or more, the police van arrived and only then did the police approach the group and ask them to move on. Meanwhile the streetworker had moved further down the Mall but was able to keep observing what was happening.

A policeman chided one of the girls about her language. She reacted by swearing again more loudly. He then said he would arrest her. She called him a b She was arrested, bundled into the van and taken away.

The group dispersed into smaller groups to other parts of the Mall.

On returning to the streets the person who was arrested the day/night before, together with friends who were at the scene, generally began boasting. If the person who has been arrested has a high profile on the street, then boasting usually occurs. If he/she has a lower profile then the arrest is rarely brought up in conversation.

Many of the young people who frequent the streets have records with some serious convictions, e.g. breaking and entering, unlawful use of a motor vehicle, etc. Their records become significantly cluttered in addition with petty offences such as disorderly conduct, loitering, abusive language. The level of actual charges made for crime on the city streets is made up primarily of these petty offences. They are used by the police as tools to achieve a broader goal of "cleaning up the streets".

The latter part of 1984 saw a spate of major crimes committed in or near the city centre - bashings, rape, knife assaults. In the newspaper reports these were attributed to "hooligans and louts who frequent the city streets". A closer examination revealed that the charges laid involved adults and not those generally described as "street kids". Yet the young people who still frequent the inner city area will continue to be tainted by the view portrayed in the press.

THE POLICE, THE COURTS AND INSTITUTIONS

It appears that the inner city beat is considered by the Police Department as an appropriate place to assign young "rookies". Many of these appear to be either the same age or only a little older than the young people they are meant to keep an eye on. It is our assessment that this significantly contributes to the tension. The young police are out to prove themselves in their new found roles and the young people do not see why they need to respect those whom they consider to be little more than their peers.

The older police reflect a different and more tolerant approach which often develops into a very caring and helping relationship. We have observed these police being able to tell a young person to "stop being stupid", "get your act together!" They are heeded!

We believe that the blend of old and new police should be used more often and that streetworkers should be involved in providing input into the training of officers at the Police Academy.

Late in 1984 the police began carrying guns in full view. This practice causes considerable tension amongst young people who doubt the stability of young armed police under pressure.

The use of petty offences to remove young people from the streets should be more closely examined. These trivial offences lead to disparities in the responses of magistrates, e.g. \$1 fines or case dismissed after the night is spent in the lock-up. We question the investment of the time spent by police and the courts in a matter that warrants such a meagre fine. A similar attitude is sometimes expressed by Longmore group workers when young people are picked up drunk, taken to the lock-up, processed, and then taken to Longmore, by which time they have sobered up.



MAUREEN

Maureen, eight and a half months pregnant, was picked up in Northbridge for abusive language. She was kept in the lock-up for two and a half hours before being bailed out.

Next morning when she appeared in court she was fined \$1 with \$9 court costs.

Two weeks later she was arrested on the same charge but refused to enter the police van. The police forced her into the van. When she shouted at the police, one of them climbed into the van and punched her on the left side of her face.

This incident has escalated tension between the young people and the police officer who punched the girl.

In my observation on the street during the latter months of 1984 I noticed that four males moved back onto the streets after serving fairly long sentences in prison. They became objects of intense interest to the young people, mainly due to their different manner of speech and behaviour. This instantly resulted in their being regarded very highly.

I found each of them struggling to cope with being released into society and freedom. I became very close to one (the youngest, who is 19). He was finding it extremely hard to get back to normality. He was constantly drinking. One day, while I was speaking with him for 2 hours, he drank 10 stubbies. He explained that he had no direction any more and didn't feel he fitted in. He was very frustrated towards everything. Also he was receiving the pedestal treatment by the younger people on the streets, which made things worse as he was feeling bad about what he had gone through in the last 10 months in prison, yet the younger people were praising him for what had happened. That same afternoon he was arrested for carrying a dangerous weapon and was fined \$40 plus \$9 court costs. A week later he was arrested for possession of marijuana. He disappeared from the street scene.

PART OF GROWING UP

Those attitudes of young people on the streets which appear to annoy and antagonise adults, e.g. swearing, tomfoolery, drunkenness, etc. must be placed in the wider perspective of personal development. Many of these behaviour patterns are acceptable amongst adults at parties, hotels, etc. yet when young people imitate these models, they can end up in a lock-up or a court room.

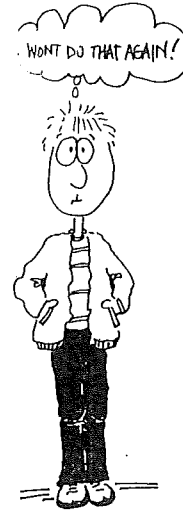
We often see many who become outrageous for short periods in their haircut or dress, and then revert back to what might be considered "normal". Similarly, after they have chalked up five or six charges on their records the rethink what is happening and decide to get themselves together.

Therefore, much of the behaviour should be considered as part of the growing up process and ignored or tolerated. Greater effort should be made to refine our perception of when the behaviour is a symptom of deeper and potentially dangerous problems. It is our observation that some of the older police who work around the inner city have this ability.

JOHN

John, aged 17, was caught shoplifting a pair of jeans from a city store. He was fined \$50 and given two weeks to pay. When he returned to the streets he joked about it and his mates generally ignored this.

Out of his dole he paid the fine and a few days later I heard him state that it wasn't such a great idea of nicking the jeans as now he was short of money.



Also, when trying to understand the motives for some of the crimes we need to be more aware of the basic need to survive. A common practice for a while was "doing over paper-boys". For some of those involved this was their only source of income to purchase those items essential for life on the street - food, smokes, etc. The street morality gives precedence to such needs in determining right and wrong. The recent Welfare Review noted that:

Boredom and lack of facilities for young people were seen as possible causes of increased vandalism and street crime.

THE RIGHTS OF YOUNG OFFENDERS

Young people should be "treated" according to their needs, rather than punished for their behaviour. (Children and Young Persons Act 1969, U.K.)

The fundamental premise of this statement is that before any approach to "treatment" can be considered (least of all implemented) there is the prerequisite of determining what are their needs and interests.

The attitude which degrades so many treatment approaches is the underlying assumption that "they" are wrong and must change and that "we" are right, and must seek to modify their behaviour. This patronising approach is not only self-defeating, it is instrumental in ensuring that we, as a society, continue to misunderstand and misrepresent the motivation of young offenders.

The starting point of all treatment should be a recognition of the rights of young offenders.

Principle 2 of the **United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child** states:

The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner in conditions of freedom and dignity. In the enactment of laws for this purpose the best interest of the child shall be of paramount consideration.

and

To be effective, reform must be rooted in principles of social justice for children, not merely in easily circumvented procedural safeguards. (Austin and Krisberg: "Wider, Stronger and Different Nets: The Dialectics of Criminal Justice Reform")

Research evidence suggests that most welfare or treatment approaches to juvenile crime are at best neutral - and at worst positively damaging. There is now a strong suspicion that treatment can cause more harm to the individual than if no action had been taken at all, largely because of the labelling effect of the treatment approach. Our failure to perceive the roots and understand the causes of juvenile crime has resulted in the implementation of sloppy and unimaginative practices in our dealings with and treatment of young offenders.

Many of the studies made on the subject of juvenile crime acknowledge the large extent to which multiple deprivation - economic, cultural and emotional - plays a part in the formation of criminality. Several of these deprivations are caused by structural rather than personal failure, yet the methods selected to remedy the problem focus on the individual, a process which has been described as "blaming the victim".

Consequently, there is a need to fill the gap in the understanding, which exists between society and its victims . . . helping to see the violence, anger and aggression in a way which all too often reveals our own complicity . . . (Ryan, W., "Blaming the Victim", London, 1976).

It is now clear that residential "care" for young offenders is little more than a transitional stage before adult incarceration, and that it often has a strong criminalising effect on offenders and non-offenders. Such "caring" approaches have served to increase the numbers of young people drawn into the juvenile justice system. The violence and indignity inherent in incarceration, and the penal attitudes which pervade our society, make a viable alternative strategy vitally important.

It is self-evident that if "we" criminalise by controlled intervention, an alternative is to place an emphasis on diversion - keeping young people away from systems of intervention and control.

In order to develop a radical alternative for young offenders, the concept of treatment will have to be rehabilitated in order to deal with the short-term, personal and psychological (emotional) aspects of offending behaviour.

THE NEED FOR AN ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY

Social harmony will grow not only by the adaptation or adjustment of the young but by appropriate and timely modification of social and institutional structures which the young are required to negotiate, and amongst which they must find a place in the sun. (George Davies, "Servicing the Adolescents of Society - How and Why?", October 1981).

We label young people as "emotionally disturbed", having "inadequate coping mechanisms", "patient", "client", "criminal", "junkie", "moral degenerate" or "derelict". We relinquish our responsibilities by giving a mandate to various "professionals" to treat, cure, punish or rehabilitate, spending millions of dollars on rescue oriented programs.

What is needed is the adoption of a positive, realistic approach. We must spend the effort to become "aware" and face with honesty our own actions. We need to take the trouble to find out where those we meet are "at" and "coming from" before we lay on them where "to go".

The learning process is a two-way thing:

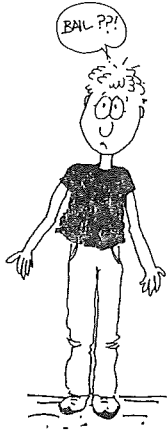
1. Our feelings and attitudes are shaped by the best possible means - the experience of working closely with young people, sharing lives and emotions, caring enough to make their problems our own. We need to understand the young person's feelings and reactions and view of things.
2. "Young persons will grow by being participants in the identification and meeting of their own needs. Peer group and subculture structures will grow away from damaging isolation through rapport with adult and other age groups in the non-threatening, experience-sharing relationship." ("Servicing the Adolescents")

When as a society we wish to adopt such a strategy and the persons we are seeking to service are hidden, mobile or insulated, we need to implement socially fruitful and economically cost-effective ways of coming to grips with the problem.

In order to meet the needs of young people we must identify what the needs are. We must utilise people to establish trust where there is suspicion, and build bridges to traverse chasms. They are the physical and metaphysical arms, ears and voices of the community.

A YOUTH ADVOCACY CENTRE

Because of the direct contact we have with young offenders we often find gaps and problems with the services provided in Perth. A noticeable gap is that of a legal service for young people. They are often intimidated by traditional legal services. A youth legal service is needed which should take a holistic approach, including streetwork and community liaison. This approach should aim at avoiding the fragmentation of the three stages of pre-court advice, court representation and follow-up. This would maintain continuity for the individual. Also an early intervention process is required to be available at the time of arrest.



PAUL

Paul, aged 16 and unemployed, was picked up for swearing in the Hay Street Mall and taken to Perth lock-up for processing. Paul did not know that he was allowed bail and was given a paper stating "something about paying \$20". He was then taken to Longmore Remand Centre for "2 days until court on Monday". In court he was fined \$10 and \$9 court costs. After going to court he was still confused about the paper he was given at Perth Central lock-up.

An Advocacy Centre similar to one existing in Brisbane would be beneficial for young offenders. Too often young people (particularly Aboriginals) are urged to plead guilty even if they are innocent to avoid a prolonged legal process and court battle. This may be expedient for the young person, family and legal system, but can leave the legacy of an unnecessary and unjust criminal record. It is alienating for a youth to be manipulated by police and serve time in an institution for something he/she hasn't done or could have protested about. An Advocacy Centre is a must to give justice to the young person. Current proposals prepared by a working group from city agencies have received strong support. We recommend that there be included a streetworker position as part of a larger streetworker team acting wherever possible to mediate between the police and young people on the streets to reduce unnecessary court appearances, etc.

ROLE OF THE STREETWORKER

The streetworker is able to build up a trust relationship with the young people which enables him/her to curb unacceptable behaviour on the street. It also places the streetworker in the best position to get to know the young person and become an advocate when necessary. The constant dilemma for the streetworker is to maintain an appropriate balance between these two dimensions.

In an attempt to clarify the practical implications of this role on the street, we developed a set of guidelines for an intervention strategy.

Buffer Strategy for Streetworkers

1. To be used where the situation is assessed as having the potential for diffusing a conflict between police and an individual or group, e.g. swearing, drunkenness or drugs, offensive weapons, etc. which are leading to a petty charge.
2. Streetworkers must maintain a preparedness to withdraw in the event that either the police or young people become agitated by the action of the streetworker.
3. A clear plan or proposal should be thought through before approaching, e.g. to offer young people a lift home, to take aside the protagonist and calm him/her down, to request the police to give you five minutes with the group . . .
4. The police should be approached directly and your identification shown. Briefly indicate your intention or plan.
5. When working in pairs, one take the lead and the other take an observer role so as to accurately assess the effect of the intervention. The "observer" should be given the authority to signal withdrawal if this becomes necessary.
6. Once an agreement is made with either the police or young people this must be adhered to and implemented, e.g. if you propose to take a person home from the Mall, don't drop them in Northbridge. Credibility must be rigidly protected.
7. Wherever possible the names and/or numbers of the police should be noted. When there are complications, a detailed report should be prepared that day or evening and given to the co-ordinator.

Positive police co-operation should be followed up both through informal exchanges on the street and visits to the police station to discuss what is happening on the streets.

October 1984

The relationship between adults and young offenders should be based on mutual trust and respect, not upon the authority and power of the adult. The streetworker, as an arm of the wider community, is a vital ingredient in any successful treatment program (fundamentally diversionary in concept). He/she helps other adults in the community understand the feelings and motivations of young offenders and also ensures that the community is prepared to commit a major effort on their behalf either via its other services or at a personal level.

The key or linchpin of this approach is that the worker replaces "compliant" relationships with "good" relationships in which the difficult decisions implied in treatment are no longer avoided by the young person because their bond through mutual trust negates the danger of alienation.

SELF-AWARENESS

The problem which "treatment" faces within a radical alternative context is to develop methods which can facilitate change in attitudes, opinions and behaviour voluntarily, while at the same time maintaining the right of the individual to have control of his or her own lifestyle and destiny.

The vast majority of young offenders are not "offenders" by choice - they offend without knowing why and without the ability to control their behaviour. They often feel lonely, frustrated and bored; they develop a sense of personal inadequacy and drift into a vicious circle of failure, rejection, inevitability and impotence. Whilst such people may receive considerable advice, censure, instruction and entreaty, they will not usually be afforded the time or the understanding necessary for them to indicate that they are certain how to set about the task of change and reconciliation.

Programs of self-awareness through repeated contact, by seeking to help individuals understand their own problems and difficulties, will enable them to come to terms with themselves. By the end of the contact period they should have a better understanding of the sort of people they are, their strengths and weaknesses, and what they need to do if they are to avoid further involvement in criminal activity. Change through facilitating self-motivation is probably the only way that treatment can be fully harmonised with radical approaches to crime.

The key here is that the worker's relationship with the young person, his/her openness and accepting behaviour, enables him/her to work with the hurt and knotted young person. He/she begins with the young person's basic physicality, accepting the initial feelings as they are expressed, then working through the young person's blocks and traumas while constantly re-evaluating what is going on. Once a trauma has been located it can be worked on and diffused.

Inevitably there are birth-pangs in the relationship . . . the pains a young person must face on the way to self-realisation, the ambivalence, the lifestyle structures of the past, the present relationships, the peer group pressure to return to old behaviour. If a young person is gradually placed in a secure relationship he/she doesn't need these old defences any more. The clothes no longer fit.

The worker can then identify strengths in the young person's character, enabling his/her self-awareness to grow stronger and his/her self-esteem to show signs of restoration.

THE EFFECT

Contact with young offenders on the streets of Perth has revealed that much of the "crime" involves, in the main, petty offences. These generally stem from the young person's experience of growing up, and the efforts of law enforcement agencies to "keep the streets clean". It appears that it is inevitable that many of those who spend considerable time on the streets will end up before a court.

Young people who appear before the courts will become damaged through this experience. When incarceration follows the damage is further exacerbated and they often have difficulty coping with society after their release. They require freedom in a system which is otherwise unfree, and need to develop a consciousness of humanity frequently denied them in their everyday lives.

Thus young people can be dealt with in a more effective and less expensive way so that instances of juvenile crime will decrease. Young offenders will be dealt with effectively in a way which satisfies local community opinion and will be treated in a way that meets their needs and helps to identify and confront their problems and concerns. It will release police officers and the legal system from having to deal with large numbers of trivial offences and enable them to concentrate on tackling serious crime.

The specific strategy we recommend is that of a streetworker who would fill the gap between workers in formal organisations such as social workers, probation officers, police, etc. . . . and the young people on the streets. The purpose is to give young offenders an awareness of alternative experiences of life and

relationships based on mutual trust. We are concerned to reduce stigma and create co-operative rather than competitive micro-systems of service delivery.

Our proposals regarding the placement of a streetworker position within a youth advocacy centre but linking to similar positions in other youth oriented services endorses this co-operative approach. We maintain that this approach must retain a low key small scale character to improve acceptability and access for young people. The creation of a large, single complex youth service for the inner city area would be inappropriate and disastrous.

We also promote a re-examination of the treatment programs used in relation to young offenders and support an emphasis on a social justice model based on the rights of the individual. Where appropriate, intervention should be diversionary with an emphasis on the need for the individual to gain control over his or her own lifestyle and destiny.

Mike Evans
Will Lundy
Norm Williams

REFLECTIONS FROM THE HOUSEHOLD NETWORK

The Household Network is a small group of houses with only a limited capacity for accommodation - both long term and emergency.

Initially the streetwork programs had a poor understanding of both the nature and size of the network. The P.I.C.Y.S. house - 22 Blencowe Street, was seen as a possible dropping off place for emergency late night crises when young people would not go to advertised crisis accommodation, e.g. in March/April a streetworker left two runaways in one of the bedrooms with a note on the kitchen table - making a private home look like a refuge.

The increasing need for better internal communication was serious. P.I.C.Y.S. management held a summit on all three areas - streetwork, "The Cave", and Household Network to exchange purposes, practices and policies for mutual interactions. Observers from all services were asked to be on each others' management committees. This seemed essential to me for maintaining awareness of each other.

Through my involvement with the streetwork management group I became aware of the alienation of the program from the other parts of P.I.C.Y.S. The voluntary sections felt patronised by the fully funded streetwork program. Suspicion of each other grew because there was no dialogue.

Only in the last three months of the streetwork project did all sections of P.I.C.Y.S. operate as a team.

Unlike the other streetwork projects elsewhere in W.A. and other states, the P.I.C.Y.S. team began after other existing services, i.e. the Household Network and "The Cave" had been set up and well established in their operations. We already had on-going contact with many of the young people streetworkers met. So the introductions often happened in reverse, e.g. a runaway or homeless young person would connect via "The Cave" or grapevine to the Household Network and then meet the streetworkers on the street. The streetwork philosophy of contacting then connecting to resources was reversed.

With better mutual trust of streetworkers and Household Network I feel we have been closer support for each other. The network has more recognition with direct connections to the workers.

The streetwork program has unfortunately been unable to use the Household Network as a referral base because the network's own grapevine contacts keep it full.

CONCLUSION

- There needs to be a complete understanding of all parts of the organisation by each section, especially knowing the limits of services provided.
- Insufficient communication comes through management groups. Direct worker contact is essential.
- Paid and voluntary workers should be given equal value by the total team and give mutual respect to each others' contributions. Good co-ordination will maximise the trust necessary to fulfil this.

Peg Hudson

REFLECTIONS FROM "THE CAVE"

When the Streetwork Program first commenced late in 1983 most of "The Cave" team were enthusiastic about the concept despite the fact that it superseded one of the roles of "The Cave". Up to that time the only streetworking done under P.I.C.Y.S. auspices had been done from "The Cave".

Once appointments had been made to the streetworker and the co-ordinator positions it took some time to firmly associate names and faces although most of the streetworkers has participated in the streetwork training program in the middle of 1983.

Having commenced their duties it was my impression that four to five months passed before the streetworkers found their feet. Such a state of affairs was to be expected and is not a reflection on them or anyone else.

Contact with "The Cave" during that period was irregular which was understandable. However, this fact was the source of a number of misunderstandings which had a significant impact on the course of events and relations between the streetworkers and "The Cave" team.

As a result of the insufficient contact, "The Cave" team had a deficiency in their understanding and awareness of the streetworkers' roles and functions.

It was difficult to convey such concepts given the unstructured setting in which they operated and the open-ended nature of their work.

Two other factors may have compounded this situation: the streetworkers were themselves unclear as to their expected roles, functions and duties because they had not been defined with sufficient clarity to begin with and there was no pre-existing pool of experience upon which they could draw (i.e. streetworking expertise and experience was almost non-existent in Perth); secondly, there appears to have been a failure at a managerial level to keep other parts of P.I.C.Y.S. (and perhaps beyond) adequately informed as to the immediate aims, objects and progress of the streetwork program.

Given that the streetwork program was such a vital, pioneering project locally, channels of communication should have been emphasised far more strongly.

Conversely, the streetworkers seem to have been largely unaware of the nature, functions and history of "The Cave". That was a failing on our part in that we did not adequately brief the streetworkers on our objectives and assumed that such briefing would be an integral part of their initial backgrounding. Perhaps it was?

Overall some sections of "The Cave" team considered that they were being regarded as being "unprofessional" and "amateurs" and in some sense they were. Whether "The Cave" team's sensitivity in this area was justified or not (and I think on the whole it wasn't) the fact remained.

During the earlier months, the streetworkers were requested to take on a task which directly involved the activities of "The Cave" and due to the nature of the task and the manner in which it was approached, it created unnecessary hostility from "The Cave" team. This was successfully resolved internally and greater clarity on the roles of each emerged.

As a result, the streetworkers (especially Rosie and Brian) developed much closer, mutually beneficial relations with the past and present team members and the streetworkers deserve to be highly commended for their efforts.

The situation at the end of 1984 was highly satisfactory with good liaison and communication in dealing with individual cases as well as in areas of common interest. In addition we have received valuable support and guidance in trying to achieve our own aims and objects.

Although this has been written from the perspective of "The Cave" my role with "The Cave" as a member of P.I.C.Y.S. Executive has meant I have had the opportunity to observe in far greater depth than most team members.

On that basis I would like to make some comments and recommendations that may be of some relevance to the streetwork project and its future:

1. Selection

- (a) Preference ought to be given during selection especially for any co-ordination position to individuals who have extensive local knowledge, even though they may lack appropriate academic qualifications.

Two advantages I feel would accrue from this:

- (i) such persons through their good local knowledge would be more likely to be able to direct the streetworkers under their control toward the most profitable and effective strategies for contact and targeting;
- (ii) the pool of local expertise will by necessity be expanded and enhanced and possibly usefully applied elsewhere at a later date.
- (b) The selection panel ought to be commended for their choice of individuals chosen for the streetworker positions. A well-balanced team was chosen which had the ability to relate to a wide range of youth subcultures.

2. Contact

There may be an advantage in giving preference during the selection process to individuals who already have a good contact network both on the street and within agencies they may be dealing with. Presumably this would greatly reduce the time lag before useful intervention and assistance can begin.

3. Target Groups

The practice that has developed of focussing on particular target groups is obviously a good one if individual streetworkers are to be effective.

Further specialisation such as Shelley's concentration on those "at risk" in regard to drug use is an extremely interesting development. The potential benefits of such a strategy cannot be underestimated and is an indicator of possible strategies in the future.

4. Holistic Approach

I am of the opinion that it is imperative that the community should be utilised and developed to a far greater degree.

No matter how capable individual streetworkers may be, the assistance that can be given to an individual, especially one with multiple problems (as is often the case), is severely restricted if it is not backed up by appropriate social support structures.

When individuals are connected up with these community based social support structures that offer the possibility of meaning, purpose and direction in their lives the probability of permanent solutions to their problems is greatly enhanced.

Although this recommendation is largely beyond the scope of the streetwork project and is more a matter for P.I.C.Y.S. generally as well as society at large, it is imperative that streetworkers be able to tap into existing support structures. Whilst this has been done very successfully by Rosie and Sally Haines (for reasons that are specific to those individuals) until more networks are developed this limitation will remain.

5. Suburban Areas

It seems apparent that the current streetwork program is only meeting a small fraction of the needs because by its nature and scope it is limited by necessity to the inner city area.

There is an obvious need for streetworkers (and other parallel projects) in other parts of the metropolitan area and perhaps in regional centres, especially where those areas are economically and socially depressed.

6. Social Issues

The purpose of streetwork, I presume, is to promote the welfare of those people determined to be in need, especially those who are severely disadvantaged or least able to cope effectively with their life situations.

Welfare, I would contend, extends beyond the immediate needs of an individual in that there are many ways in which existing structures and institutions have a deleterious effect on an individual's welfare or fail to meet his/her real needs.

Determining the social and political issues directly impacting upon the welfare of individuals and the strategies and actions necessary to rectify those situations is an exceedingly complex matter but should be addressed as a matter of conscience. Although we cannot expect streetworkers to be too directly involved in these issues they have an essential role in identifying the relevant issues and assisting in the formation of appropriate policies.

There are many areas and issues where the streetworkers could alert us to the need for attention and action. One recent example was the police campaign against "violent crime" which had many unforeseen and untoward consequences for individuals the streetworkers would have been in contact with.

Another possible issue (amongst many) that could have been highlighted was the appropriateness, relevance and sensitivity of existing health services. Attention could be drawn to the fact that many young people (especially Aborigines) find hospitals very alien institutions and refuse to attend unless in the most dire need or taken there against their will.

Although the streetwork project has had many demands and expectations to fulfil I am of the opinion that more could be done. For example, it would appear that most of the initiatives taken in drawing attention to the negative impact of the recent police campaign originated from other sections of P.I.C.Y.S., e.g. Household Network, "The Cave".

7. Management

There are aspects of management I have become aware of through my various involvements, some of which would be apparent even to ordinary team members.

In perspective they are:

- (a) Support structures for the streetworkers and handling of interpersonal relationships. It has been obvious to most of those involved with P.I.C.Y.S. and the streetwork project that the initial support structures set up were inadequate, created conflicts of interest and didn't provide the necessary support.
- (b) Liaison and communication - it has been apparent for some time that there has been a major failing in this regard at various levels, from P.I.C.Y.S. projects to the public and media.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion I must commend all the streetworkers for performing so well in such a demanding role, at times under great pressure and in the face of unexpected difficulties. To have persevered through all this is a credit to them and deserving of the highest praise.

Rupert Gerritsen

COUNTRY AND SUBURBAN NETWORKS

STATEWIDE GROWTH AND NETWORKING

As indicated in an earlier chapter, the 70's and early 80's saw a range of energies seeking to go beyond a "social control" model to look more deeply into what was happening with adolescents in our society. We have documented many of the attempts to communicate and work with "unattached youth" through drop-in centres, mobile detached youth work and related developments.

The pattern has been pioneering, patchy and often temporary. Nevertheless, the last decade has seen an increase in mutual awareness and coming together to share resources. The development of Youth Affairs Councils around Australia has increased general communications in the youth affairs field. Detached youth work with its mobile, holistic, preventative methodology places particular stresses on workers and management, with corresponding need for effective support and exchange between projects. The need for state and national networking of streetwork projects was emphasised at the Nationwide Workers With Youth Conference in Townsville 1981.

The vast distances and underresourcing of detached work in W.A. have made formal networking very difficult. During its brief history P.I.C.Y.S. and associated personnel have received a steady flow of requests for information from workers, management and interested persons in metro, rural, regional centres and mining locations. P.I.C.Y.S. has been looked to by local groups and government to resource training, and has offered substantial pre-service and in-service programs in 1983 and 1984.

Whilst "workers" express the desire to meet centrally together on a regular basis, the request from management personnel has rather been for resourcing on their home ground where greater participation of management personnel is possible. In the latter half of 1984, on behalf of P.I.C.Y.S., Russell Neilson (C.E.P. liaison worker) and George Davies (consultancy) visited Two Rocks, Wagin, Norseman, Hedland, Kalgoorlie and Cunderdin.

In November 1984 the Hedland Community Youth Service undertook a major initiative in convening the Pilbara Working With Youth Conference. This brought together personnel from across the towns of the North West, a range of government instrumentalities and the non-government field. The basis of an on-going Pilbara network was established.

I. COUNTRY

This section does not retrace historical developments of individual projects, but scans the predominant issues, needs and other common features which emerged during 1984. The main source areas were as follows:

ALBANY Albany Youth Employment Scheme Inc. Sponsors three workers: one full-time detached youth worker, one part-time youth worker and one full-time research officer.

Albany is 409 kms south of Perth and services the rural farming industry. It is the site of a natural port. Albany, until recently, was the main base for Western Australia's whaling industry. Estimated population is 15,224 with 2,419 people between the ages of 12 and 24. Albany has a thriving tourist industry.

CARNARVON Carnarvon Community Youth Centre. Sponsors three full-time workers through a C.E.P. grant. Camping programs with Aboriginal young people.

Carnarvon is 902 kms north of Perth on the Great Northern Highway. Carnarvon's main industry is plantation farming which employs the majority of the town's population. Carnarvon's population is 5,053 with 1,128 being between the ages of 12 and 24.

CUNDERDIN Cunderdin Youth Advisory Committee. Sponsors one full-time detached youth worker.

Cunderdin is 231 kms east of Perth and services the rural farming industry. Estimated population of 733, with 143 people between the ages of 12 and 24.

HEDLAND Hedland Community Youth Service. Sponsors one full-time detached youth worker and two full-time accommodation workers.

Hedland is situated 1,761 kms north of Perth on the main road through to the Northern Territory. Hedland is divided into two parts by an expanse of inland salt lakes:

1. The Port of Hedland, the older of the two settlements with some light industry;
2. South Hedland, a very modern town with the majority of the locations, population and retail business.

The estimated population is 12,948 with 3,070 people being between the ages of 12 and 24.

KALGOORLIE Goldfields Youth Management Committee. Sponsors one full-time detached youth worker through a C.E.P. grant.

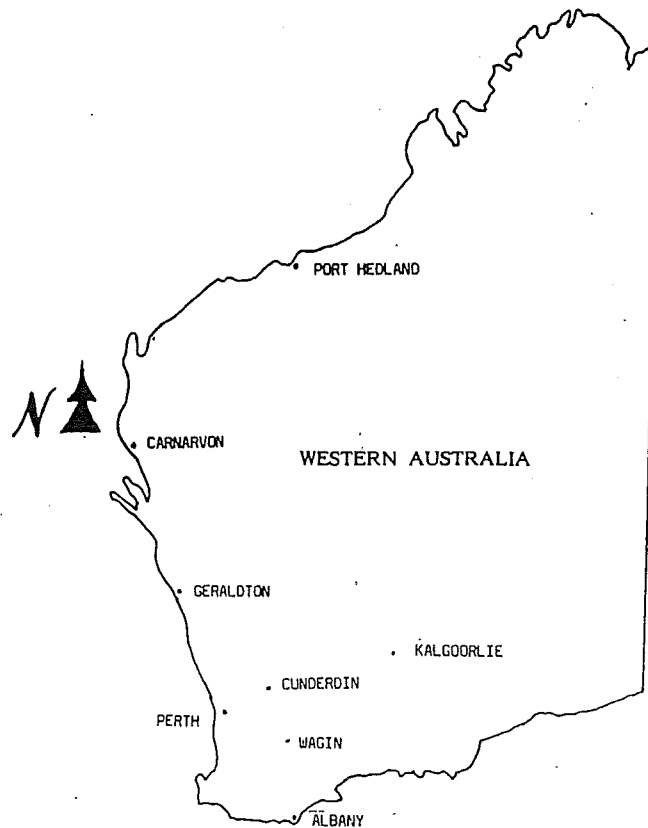
Kalgoorlie is situated 598 kms east of Perth. It is approximately 40 kms off the Great Eastern Highway. Kalgoorlie is the major town in the region, servicing the district's major industry - gold mining. The estimated population is 19,848 with 2,419 people being between the ages of 12 and 24.

NORTHAM Anglican Church Project. Sponsors one full-time youth worker through a C.E.P. grant.

Northam is 97 kms east of Perth on the Great Eastern Highway. Northam is a comfortable one and a half hour drive from Perth. Northam is predominantly farming industry. Population of 6,791 with 1,725 between the ages of 12 and 24.

WAGIN Wagin's Youth Advisory Council Inc. Wagin is currently without a worker.

Wagin is situated 229 kms from Perth in the southern region of Western Australia. It is 30 kms east of the Albany Highway. The main industry of Wagin is farming with a rail service transporting the town's essential supplies. Population of 1,488 with 333 between the ages of 12 and 24.



ORIGIN OF SERVICE

Amongst the various reasons why services came into existence the following features seem to be common to most:

1. Concern for youth congregating in shopping centres or frequenting the streets;
2. Lack of alternate, safe, low cost, alcohol-free places for young people to gather other than regimented sporting and conventional youth groups;
3. Limitations in capacity of school and family structures to resource mobile, media conditioned peer dominated youth cultures;
4. Unacceptable levels of petty offending, e.g. vandalism;
5. High unemployment spawning unproductive hours during the day.

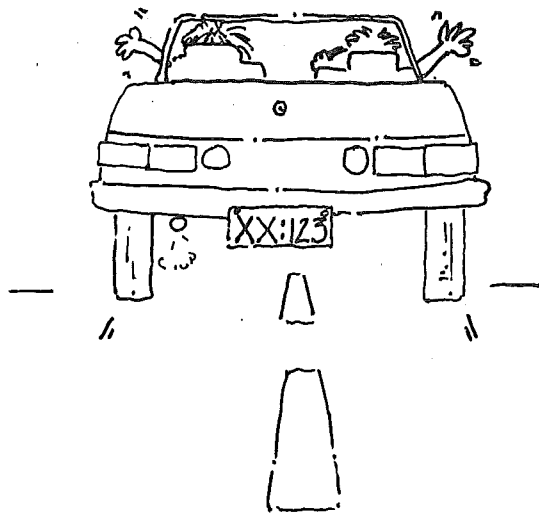
ISOLATION

For most country projects physical isolation from Perth is added to by a feeling of emotional isolation. This is generally reinforced by feelings of isolation from other country centres as well. Some towns closely surrounding project areas feel neglected and isolated from the services offered by that project. Persons in Meckering, within 30 kms of Cunderdin, have expressed reluctance to support the project along lines such as "What to we get out of it?". Solo workers and stressed management personnel express the need for "somewhere to turn to". There is envy, but some mythology, about life being better in the city. The comment, "I can get support, it's just a pity I have to make a long distance phone call for it", came from a metropolitan worker. Overcoming the "tyranny of distance" in Western Australia places financial stresses on both projects and resource persons.

MOBILITY AND TRANSCIENCE

Transience takes many forms. Young people in centres within road distance of Perth will counter their isolation by excursions to the city, often at high speed. A midnight two-hour drive to "Fast Eddy's" for a hamburger is not uncommon.

Families drive four hours from Norseman to Esperance "down the road" for a Sunday swim. Resources in Northam are depleted as many adults, especially "blow in" teaching, banking and other workers choose the city for their weekend break. The car becomes a status symbol and passport to variety. Peer acceptance is critical for access to transport. Once again the situation is not categorically different from the metropolis. One adult reminisced on his own adolescence in the following terms:



When I was a teenager I longed for a car - almost any kind of "wheels" - to give me the ability to travel around at will. When I got one I did just that - I recall a figure of 425 miles travelled on one Saturday without leaving the Perth-Mandurah area. I went to as many different "stomps" as I could, and often finished the night in one of the car parks at the beach - City Beach, Swanbourne, Floreat or Scarborough. I did not want to go to events where I would be regimented - I liked any place where I could "turn on" and "off" again when I felt like it - such as the stomps. I still had some of my own "rules" - including respect for life and property, no throwing things, and everyone allowed to do his own thing so long as it didn't stop others doing their's.

Particular skills and flexibility are required of youth workers at both "ends" to establish contact with a mobile and often nocturnal youth population of this kind.

The sense in which there could be seen to be a common "ownership" of the youth work task between country and city is reinforced by the mobility of young people between the two for reasons wider than recreation, such as employment and kinship. This is highlighted in a later case-study. Many Aboriginal young people in particular are torn between urban life for institutionalisation and forms of practical survival, and country kinship roots in time of family stress, sickness and death. The transition from schooling to work/non-work is a vulnerability point not only for economic but for relational reasons. Peer groups are shredded when the playground is no longer there, and new friendship networks are frequently difficult to assemble in "foreign" territory.

FAMILY

The basic meaning of family as an extended kinship group providing sibling and other support to parents, in addition to the uncle-aunt-niece-nephew-cousin-grandparent galaxy around teenagers, was struck a severe blow by the agrarian and industrial revolutions and associated urbanisation. A new image developed of the family as the "unit" of "mum, dad and the kids". Since the Second World War fewer children per "nuclear" family, further farm mechanisation, frequent relocation of housing (average 6.5 years in one house) and employment, recombinations in adult relationships and other factors have further decimated the "extended" kinship networks. It is almost the "norm" for a nuclear "unit" to find such wider kinship persons to be sparse and distant, often on the other side of the state, the nation or an ocean.

In this setting peers replace extended family, and the key hopes and anxieties of teenagers are shared, though sometimes not even then, mainly with other teenagers. Parents, from whom teenagers must distance themselves in order to consolidate their own identity, are temporarily powerless, at a time when they are particularly anxious. They experience a guilt stemming from "marriage overload" (Australian Institute of Family Studies) - too many roles to fulfil. They are often pressured by public dignitaries to achieve unrealistic supervision and discipline victories where this may already be a source of hostility with a teenage son or daughter.

Parents in both country and city regions clearly face large agendas of their own for which they lack adequate emotional support, and in this situation are often an inadequate resource for the agendas facing their teenagers. Many parents are a valuable resource to other persons' teenagers in a "drop-in kitchen" or other informal context, but rarely recognise the value of, or are supported in, this role.

In some instances, parents believing themselves deserted or failures have seen the streetworker as a threat and competition. Others have placed unrealistic expectations on the worker to be a "messiah" who will overcome all negative influences affecting youth. In one town where there was a suicide the criticism was voiced "this shouldn't have happened when we have a youth worker!".

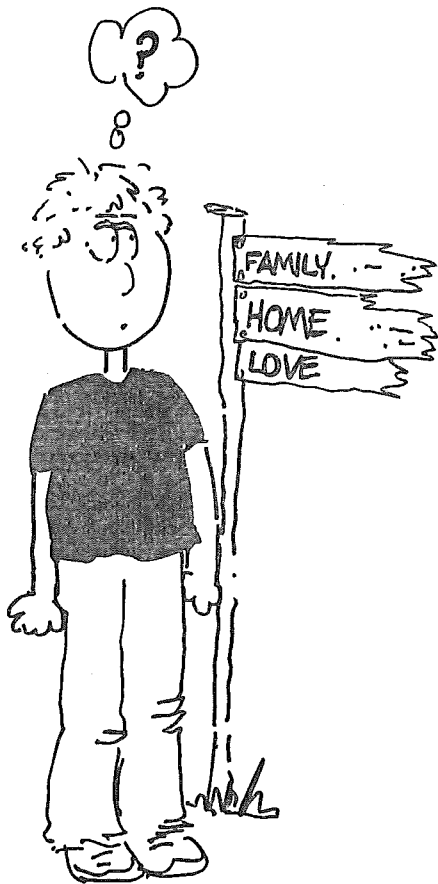
In many instances the workers have been able to offer a great deal of support to parents and at times enlist them to be a "non-threatening adult", de facto "aunt" or "uncle", to young persons outside their own kinship circle.

If the family and/or friendship networks of a young person are thin or stressed, all other areas of that person's life will be placed at risk. The evidence of this can be seen in the areas of concern expressed by all workers - employment, accommodation, drug abuse and the justice or judiciary system.

EMPLOYMENT

In most country areas unemployment amongst youth made up approximately 50% of the total registered unemployed. Unemployment is itself a stress, but also amplifies other stresses present in a young person's life, such as family tensions. In the majority of country areas vacancies require a high degree of skills, e.g. mining or rural experience. Usually there are only limited vacancies available, so that competition is high. There are few low skill vacancies in most areas. A number of country areas have reported an apparent disenchantment with the city as a solution to job-search, with resulting growth of a local community of young unemployed who choose at least to remain amongst the familiar.

The following case-study shows the interaction between city and country and the inter-relationship between employment and other areas of a person's life. Finding and maintaining employment will be defective if other areas of one's life are already unstable.



GEOFF

Geoff was involved in a bad motor accident at the age of 12 and suffered frontal lobe damage. He has a history of petty thieving, bad temper and uncontrollable behaviour, and has been under D.C.W. control since the age of 13. Geoff has been to a couple of institutions.

My first contact was in the period November '83 to April '84 in the Perth Mall. Geoff turned up in a north west country town in June where I saw him walking along the road into town and he appeared depressed. I noticed his face looked unnaturally pale. After my talking with him, Geoff showed me his arm with his shirt completely covered in blood from bicep to wrist. When he rolled the sleeve back he had made a mess of his arm with a sharp serrated bread knife which he still carried.

He had only hacked at one arm. I convinced him to go to the town hospital for treatment first, then talk about the problem afterwards. A sister treated Geoff without contacting the police for attempted suicide. The wound was quite bad when he was treated and released from hospital. He then acquired 12 Avil and tried to commit suicide again but failed this attempt also. I found out that Geoff was on the run from the police in Perth over a stolen car.

An 18 year old girl in company with two 14 year old girls picked Geoff up (presumably match making). The 18 year old girl gave the driving to one of the 14 year olds and she rolled the car. Geoff got away from the scene but he lost his bank book and I.D. papers in the accident. He panicked and headed north from Perth with the two 14 year old girls. He could have been charged with carnal knowledge as he had sexual relations with both girls. He contracted V.D. and also became infatuated with one of the girls. Later the girls left town and headed further north. This left Geoff with a bruised ego, low self-esteem and this was the main contributing factor in his suicide attempts.

Accommodation was arranged at the local youth refuge, and D.S.S. made arrangements for his unemployment benefit due to his hasty departure from Perth. D.C.W. supplied immediate monies for food and clothing. He had problems at the refuge - an overdose of Avil and another woman resident of the house became involved with him. Geoff had taken 17 Avil and then started having fits. He was again admitted to hospital. After discharge, he and another person (David) had obtained Avil from a doctor at the hospital just by requesting them. David had attempted suicide a day after Geoff was admitted re. the overdose.

On discharge from hospital, Geoff confronted the female resident of the refuge regarding their problem and the other residents then put pressure on him. This led to his starting to rebel through petty thieving and bad tempered behaviour. The Odd Job Scheme proved successful for Geoff. He started to call around and talk to me socially. After a couple of weeks he decided to return to Perth. He was given P.I.C.Y.S. streetwork phone numbers if he required them. I had a couple of letters from him over a period of time, thanking people for their help.

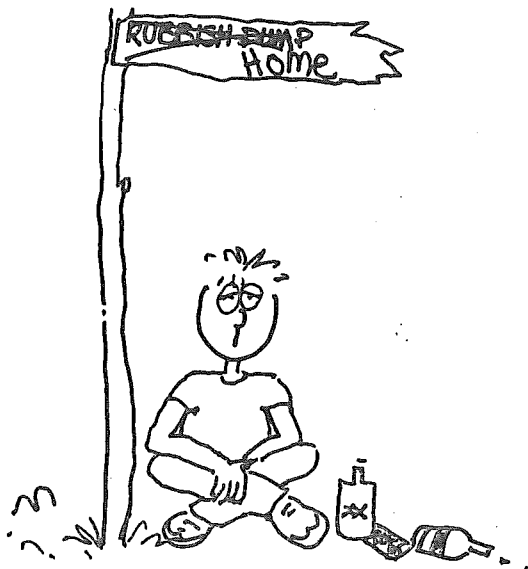
Currently Geoff is employed and is progressing well.

ACCOMMODATION

There is a major need for low cost accommodation beyond the family structure. All the major towns experience difficulties in finding safe, non-threatening places for those requiring accommodation. In smaller towns like Cunderdin, youth in need of accommodation usually find it through the mateship network. The worker at Cunderdin stated: "Accommodation was only needed when a crisis occurred within the family. When the issue was resolved the youth generally returned home." With Albany, Kalgoorlie and Hedland being centres of their respective regions, there is a high element of transient youth, who are in

need of short and long term accommodation facilities. House rental accommodation in country areas is very scarce and expensive. Average costs: Kalgoorlie \$136 to \$160 per week; Albany \$55 to \$60 per week; Hedland \$120 to \$200 per week. These figures were given by real estate agents in respective areas. At the time of writing there were no rental properties available in any of the towns. What can young people do for accommodation? What are the alternatives? How do these alternatives bring them into contact with other pressures and problems?

Accommodation stresses, as with employment problems, are often closely related to other aspects of the young person's life. Government institutions are not settings in which young people develop life skills for survival outside the institution. Non-government short-term settings face the problem of "after the refuge what?" A substantial number of young people develop a lifestyle of living from crisis to crisis.



BILL

On probation for four breaking and entering charges, Bill, who is 16 years of age, is also a ward of the state until the age of 18. He has been placed in a D.C.W. hostel and has had a history of problems when staying in this hostel.

In August '84 Bill was admitted to a country regional hospital for a drug overdose (barbituates). He had suffered serious damage to his eyes and while he was in hospital he consumed large quantities of methylated spirits while left unsupervised.

He was raised by his mother only, as father spent a large period of time in gaol. Bill's father is a known criminal throughout Australia and in late August '84, a court restraint was issued, denying him access to see his son.

Bill will not live at home with his mother or other siblings. He experiences difficulty in relating to his family. Previously he had been found living at the local rubbish dump after being evicted from a non-government hostel due to drugs found in his possession. Currently Bill has been involved in further offending.

A detached worker can offer continuity of contact in "natural" or non-institutional settings, and work to stabilise one part, e.g. relationship, accommodation, of the young person's life. Stability can gradually spread to other areas for the young person. There is a range of work to do at points of the "climate" in which the person lives, such as family relationships. The alternative is the progression of a young person to the adult prison population at a cost of approximately \$30,000 per year, in addition to hospital and legal system costs.

DRUGS

The main abuse of chemical drugs in country areas is, without question, alcohol. Alcohol plays a major role in the "social life" of town residents. It's available at hotels, sporting activities, social gatherings, virtually anywhere people gather. This raises concern amongst local and state authorities as to the degree underage drinking is socially acceptable within the community. Teenagers have ready access to alcohol, using older teenagers if necessary to obtain their supplies. Blitzes on particular venues which may have been chosen for their music and shelter, without the provision of any alternative, have been unproductive and not cost-effective. Adult modelling and the use of alcohol as a symbol in sporting successes condition adolescent peer groups to adopt alcohol as a measure of their progress to maturity.

Other drugs appearing in the country cover the full range, but with major variations in incidence. Petrol and glue-sniffing receive disproportionate publicity, but do produce serious effects. Cannabis is readily available to those who seek it, as are pharmaceutical drugs. Cannabis often has an on/off relationship to heroin, with the former being restricted when there is an influx of the latter. The image of cannabis as a particular precursor to heroin has more to do with its illegal status than any chemical connection. In some areas the black-market means survival to young people compared with profit to managers. Couriers are easily replaced, and pick-up of persons carrying illegal drugs does little to stem supply. It may increase it by expanding the market of alienated and disillusioned young persons.

For many Aboriginal young people "extended" family exists, but, because of alienation from status, land and dignity, has become a context of fighting and alcohol abuse. The "negative modelling" from extended family in these instances could be seen to constitute an equivalent deprivation to the non-Aboriginal young person with no extended family support. Many urban Aboriginal young people face a "double alienation" - they are alienated from their own country family circle - and their family is in turn alienated from land and dignity. Alcohol abuse and glue-sniffing in such settings are the cause of the problem as much as the barometer reading is the cause of the cyclone problem. Drug abuse is the barometer, the cyclone is in the person.



NANCY

At 13 years of age, first conviction.
 At 15, detained at Nyandi for 18 months for fraud and false pretences.
 At 17, detained at Bandyup for 12 months for possession and intent to sell cannabis.
 At 19, detained at Bandyup for fraud/false pretences and theft due to her solid heroin use.
 At 20 years of age, detained at Bandyup for a maximum of 4 years for importation with intent to sell/supply.

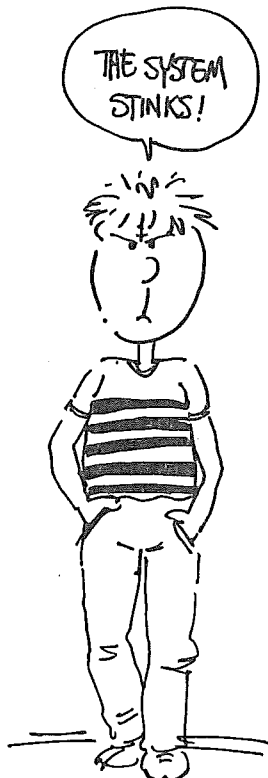
Nancy was released in August 1984, arrested in October 1984 in Kalgoorlie for possession of cannabis and heroin with intent to supply.

Nancy has a 2 year old daughter who was born in Bandyup prison. The child has been in the legal custody of Nancy's parents for the past seven months.

The discussion about drugs is highly emotive in most centres, and the problem is still seen as the chemical, rather than the need of a person to use a particular chemical. The focus is still on the barometer rather than the cyclone. Young people continue to want to get "out of it", and the more so when their chemical cry for help invites additional pressure on the victims.

JUDICIARY SYSTEM

The same problems occur in the country as in the city and metropolitan areas with the judiciary system. Youth find it hard to achieve legal advice and support in the country. There appears a lack of availability of people able to advise them. The practice is often that the young plead guilty and get a record.



ALEX

Alex, 18 years of age, had borrowed his mother's car (with her consent). He ran off the road and hit a tree and the car was extensively damaged. Alex was under the influence of alcohol. He rang his mother at 2.00 a.m., and she contacted a tow-truck driver to retrieve the car. The mother decided it was too late to ring the police and that they would ring them at a reasonable hour. At 7.30 a.m. the mother rang the police reporting the accident. She was told that Alex would have to complete an accident report, which he did. When this was completed, the police charged him with failing to report an accident.

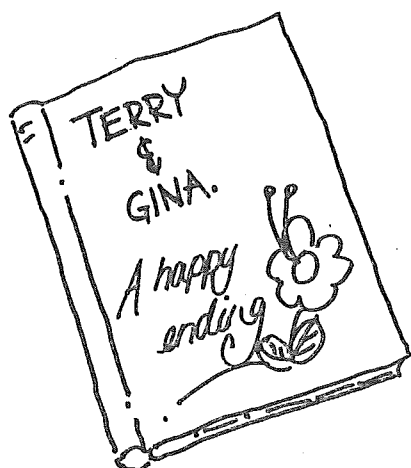
He appeared in court and was found guilty. His licence was suspended for 3 months. He was under the impression he could continue to drive until he received a letter requesting him to hand in his licence. No one told him differently. He left the court and commenced to drive home. He was stopped by the police and charged with driving under suspension. He appeared on this charge before a J.P. who said: "Society needs to be protected from people like you." Alex was given a further nine months suspension. After this, he was severely harassed by the police in the town so he left and is currently working on the coastal shipping run. 90% of all court appearances in this country town are traffic related.

With juvenile offenders from country areas, great expense is incurred to escort young persons, e.g. from Hedland to Perth based juvenile institutions. For many in the "revolving door" syndrome the costs involved compare poorly with the benefit of preventative work.

Most preventative work in education (e.g. about "drugs") and traditional groups largely reaches those not at risk. Detached youth work, in using the model of trust and personal growth, applies effort to the areas of personality which are most defective and consequently in greatest need.

SEXUALITY

In a sex-saturated society, young people in isolated centres, already body conscious, will face particular dilemmas in their exploring of sexuality. "Personal space", as for adults, can be hard to find, and problems of pregnancy and ill-health throw the person into a spotlight. Young persons who are "stereotyped" will often live out their image. One 13 year old commented: "If that's what they think of us, we may as well do it!". The Family Planning Association estimates that 40% of Australian girls become pregnant before 20. For those in country areas, acceptance and advice can be a major hurdle. Community attitudes are frequently harsh and unfeeling - the solution offered by one adult in a small centre was that all the teenage girls be sterilised.



TERRY AND GINA

Terry, an 18 year old male youth, was having a sexual relationship with his 15 year old step sister Gina who became pregnant. He was charged with carnal knowledge. The detached worker at the time attended court with Terry. The case was dismissed under Section 26 of the Welfare Act. Terry and Gina obtained permission from the courts to marry. The couple are currently still together. The worker says the family was and still is supportive.

Male dominance is the general rule in country as well as city centres, but more so in the "macho" mining towns. For young persons of homosexual orientation, non-participation in the heterosexual games becomes the more hazardous.

STRUCTURE OF COUNTRY PROJECTS

Most country projects are community based rather than single agency, drawing management persons formally or informally from the church, service club, youth, government, farming and/or industrial sectors of the community. Especially where public meetings have played a key role, this is both natural and necessary for the viability of projects and the widest possible acceptance of a project amongst both the adult and youth population.

We may see composite management as the best possible model, especially in terms of "community development" in small or isolated centres. Nevertheless, it is a fragile one. Persons who offer for co-operative management frequently have substantial responsibilities in their existing agency or activity area. In addition to general administrative skills needed, management faces big agendas in securing of finance, support for worker(s), and development of insights into youth culture. The last of these is critical for effective policy directions and capacity to advocate for project and youth needs. Distance from wider resources and a feeling of isolation, from other country projects as well as from the city, have been realities constantly expressed.

All of the country projects are "autonomous" or "non-government" in the sense that, though there may be government representatives on committee, the projects are able to set up their own principles of operation and are free of "statutory" obligations. This is particularly important with respect to ability of workers to respect confidentiality without which trust cannot be developed nor deeper issues addressed.

Management should, and often has to, bear the brunt of community criticism or scepticism. The worker needs to be freed to relate closely to young people and be heard and "read" effectively by support and management personnel.

The natural "milieu" of young people is not the scene in which most agencies who contribute personnel have their contact, nor is it the setting in which most management persons feel automatically at ease. It is certainly not the environment about which the communities at large indicate great insight, or of which the basic dynamics are "knowns". The "education" of management may be a tortuous path, but it is a necessary and valuable one if real understanding is to penetrate more widely into the community.

There have been constant needs expressed by country projects for a pool of potential workers, pre-service orientation and in-service training including wider network contact, support and stimulation. Detached youth work, with all its "casual" appearance, is a highly sophisticated and sensitive specialist youth work role, placing unique stresses on the worker's whole personhood. Given training and support to match, it is also uniquely valuable.

II. SUBURBAN

Suburbs have a strong relation to the inner-city and other suburbs, in the same way that country relates to both metropolitan and other country areas. The relationship may be creative or competitive, but it is there. With few detached youth work energies in place in the suburbs, information for this scan has been drawn mainly from those who are working to see such projects develop, and have researched at a personal or formal level the issues amongst young people. Feedback has been drawn from Girrawheen/Koondoola, Gosnells, Thornlie, Victoria Park, Melville, Lockridge, Coolbellup, West Leederville, Duncraig and other locations.

Issues canvassed had much in common with country projects. Additional features with particular significance for the suburbs are as follows:

ISOLATION

Country projects don't have a monopoly on the isolation issue. Suburban areas feel isolated physically and emotionally from other suburban and city projects and vice versa. The feeling of being "on your own" is common, being unaware of other people, not only in other areas but within the same area, e.g. a married couple working from their home with youth, feeling they were the only motivated and interested people around, were unaware of a committed group of people working in the same district.

A parent in a northern suburb who had lived her own childhood in the country felt resentful at the attention given to country projects as though they were the "isolated" ones. The rapid suburban growth of Perth has a legacy of barrenness not perceived by the "older" suburbs. Extended family, facilities and transport deficiencies are felt in a manner not dissimilar to small rural settings. Greater numbers do not mean greater relationships, and often mean greater tensions. A doctor in one area described its greatest reality to be "suburban neurosis". This was an area proclaimed by its local government councillors as having one of the best lifestyles in the world. There is an unresolved debate about the quality of life in many suburbs.

EMPLOYMENT

It is well known that being unemployed creates many pressures on people, especially the young. On unemployment benefits, it requires skilful budgetting to find low cost accommodation, clothing, have a balanced nutritious diet and still retain money for entertainment and socialising. These last two are often interpreted by adults as luxuries, but to the young person are as much "necessities" as the other items, for the sake of what, to him/her, are critical adolescent issues, i.e. self-worth and belonging/ acceptance.

Discrimination was identified, not on a sexual, but on a geographical basis, i.e. if there were two applicants for a job vacancy with identical skills, one applicant residing in Karrinyup, the other in Girrawheen, the position would go to the applicant from Karrinyup.

Employment, once again, was hard to isolate from other life issues for young people. A number of C.Y.S.S. centres where project officers had gained the trust of participants were frustrated in following up areas of personal development with young people because of the need to "keep numbers up" on job skills training. To send a person "down the road" to a D.C.W. office for "counselling" areas is not realistic, both because of the formal setting and the need to be a statutory offender to have access to most D.C.W. resources.

ACCOMODATION

Low cost accommodation is "slightly" easier to obtain in the metropolitan area than in country locations, however, there still remains immense difficulty in obtaining safe, non-threatening, low cost, nurturing

accommodation. It appears that a lot of youth are confined to high-rise development areas, i.e. Maylands where accommodation is available at reasonable prices. However, it may still need several people pooling their unemployment benefits to pay the rent.

There is a widespread mythology that young unemployed persons in sharing a house or flat can have an "easy" time living on social security. The real picture is otherwise. Unemployed young people experience complex emotions and generally a declining self-esteem. Their relationships are dogged by a "short fuse" on issues of personal dignity, and ability to resolve conflict and clarify tangled disputes is often minimal. Tensions are induced by failure to share household chores, drinking of rent contribution, mutual invasions of "personal space", wearing of each other's clothes, unwelcome guests or sex partners, petty theft, and other actions. Often it is accommodation hospitality to other young people, or a party which gets out of hand, which produces a neighbour complaint, police visit and termination of lease. The consequent hurdles of bond money, advance rent, letting fee and landlord reluctance towards young people can easily become insurmountable.

State housing for a young mother will often result in her living far way from established friends whose support she can ill afford to lose.

HEALTH

Young people have concerns relating to health issues:

- (a) information about health services;
- (b) access to health services.

These can be broken down further:-

Ignorance — young people are unaware or misinformed regarding medical services and their health needs.

Attitudes — many young people perceive the professionalism surrounding medical services as threatening and off-putting.

Confidentiality — many young people express the concern that they cannot seek sympathetic, non-judgmental medical advice.



JIM

A suburban drop-in centre had contact with Jim through various workers for a period of 3 years at their drop-in centre, camps, etc.

Jim is from a one parent family, with close contacts with his extended family.

He has a history of unprovoked violent outbursts, aimed at his peers, drop-in centre and staff. When staff at the drop-in centre approached Jim regarding stealing equipment, or about his behaviour, his response was always violent.

Jim developed a relationship with a girl (his first) and this meant everything to him. When the girl fell pregnant Jim was very excited and started to look after and care for her. However, she miscarried and the relationship ended with each heading separate ways.

Jim has progressed from early childhood drinking (9-10 years of age) to more expensive drug use in recent years.

He has a long history of police and court convictions. He doesn't see court appearances, fines or probation as serious problems. He prefers to plead guilty rather than pursuing his innocence (when this is the case) and risking more harassment from police.

After long contact, Jim is now seeing more options in solving relationship problems other than violence. The workers have seen an improvement in his socialisation pattern and maturity.

A number of young people find the process of obtaining a Health Care Card bewildering. Ideally, information on health issues should be researched and collated by young people themselves. There is support for the recommendation from "Creating Tomorrow Today" (Youth Affairs Council of Australia, 1983) that an open, non-threatening, local health service should be available. Health issues are frequently embedded in a matrix of other issues.

ENERGY

Energy release amongst the young can be an acute problem. The open space around country towns is more extensive and interesting than is the case for suburbs surrounded by other suburbs. Outside of T.V. dominated lounge rooms, security-grilled shopping centres, patrolled car-parks and unchallenging park land, inland suburbs have little to offer.

In dormitory suburbia, both the mortgages and the media are in the hands of those whose middle-age syndrome demands security, comfort and quiet. The energies that were once needed to build an empire, discover new countries, cross the mountains, repair a village, furl the sails in a storm, sail the Cape, resist the Spaniards, are superfluous to the quest for peace in peace-time. (Suburban Drop-in Worker)

The beachfront tensions of earlier years have re-emerged in beach and city car-parks. Attempts to "stamp out" activities have caused their relocation rather than cessation, with noticeable development of hard-to-penetrate subcultures.

Young people, lined up in their hundreds on a Scarborough weekend, know they are a subculture. And the adults of our society, whether we know it or not, are a subculture. And in a subculture conflict the young people see the police as the agents of the adults, rather than "public" servants. Their marijuana and other drugs become a symbol of resistance as well as an enjoyment. They make for themselves what they don't find offered. And strengthen their identities as a family to belong to. And talk about the future, or lack of it, amongst themselves. (Suburban Drop-in Worker)

TRADITIONAL SERVICES

The sharp decline at age 14 in patronage of "structured" sporting and other youth club activities, identified by the "Youth Say" report (1975), now often occurs at a younger age. A common reason given by young persons is "too much like school". Scouts, Guides, other uniformed groups, and Police and Citizens, have largely become children's organisations. Many church based youth groups are in operation, largely catering for the needs of their own congregation or parish youth. Attempts at wider "outreach" often encounter rejection of the model by unattached youth, thin leadership resources, high "protectionism" by parents within the churches and arduous debate around behaviour expectations.

A considerable number of churches and schools have been exploring a school based "chaplaincy" concept, embodying many of the facets of detached youth work. A group of clergy, Parents & Citizens and school staff from one "normal" suburban area wrote to the Churches' Commission on Education as follows:

This request is an initial step that is being taken in line with a staff and administration decision to investigate the possibility of a chaplain for the school. The school has also been in contact with some of the local churches to seek their support and they have counter-signed this letter along with the school's Parents and Citizens Organisation.

Many parents are calling out for help when confronted by reports from school about their children's misbehaviour. Some have gone through the entire range of Community Welfare agencies and have given up. Other parents, many of them single, have tried to take their own lives as a way of solving their problems and this is also sadly true of some of our students. There is a great need for a contact at school who will be trusted and who will be available on a permanent basis.

EVALUATION/JUSTIFICATION OF NEED

By nature, preventative work is more difficult to measure than "ambulance" work. The case-studies included in this book attempt to increase insight into the cost effectiveness of prevention and early intervention work. Effective prevention development is more likely on a "social planning" model than by dependence on statistic-laden submissions. As far back as 1974 a major government study (K. Giles) identified the need to contact young people "where they are". Interestingly, five years later when presented with the need to implement this principle through detached work, the Department for Youth, Sport and

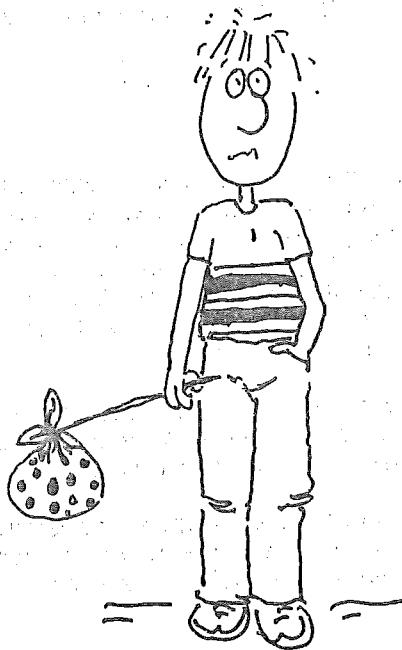
Recreation responded: "It's an interesting concept, but we don't have a category in which to receive a submission!". This department remained reluctant to fund such a strategy on the basis that it was "direct service delivery", rather than seeing it as a community development tool with multiplier effects.

The Youth Employment Scheme research in Albany (1983) used broad social analysis with a conclusion that "it is necessary for the community to recognise that there is a pressing need for a street youth worker who has the training and ability to move within youth circles and give specific guidance to those who require it".

Country management committees indicate additional forms of justification. In one town, during a gap of six months between workers, there was a noticeable increase in vandalism and petty offences. Counselling and deterrence of a young person with suicidal intent were profound but hard to publicise without damage. One worker persuaded a young person intent on stealing vehicles as a first step to simply leave them after use instead of burning them. Savings in insurance alone in this single instance would have financed that worker's salary for a year. One person deterred from a year in juvenile or adult institution saves the community up to \$30,000, a total project budget for a year.

Nevertheless, management personnel report deep scepticism amongst those in power. Local government is notoriously cautious, having been warned by a former premier to "beware of welfare". Expenditure on inadequately researched recreation centre projects in both metropolitan and country centres nevertheless remains high. A federal cabinet minister commented he was not to be impressed "simply because some people have a warm feeling about this sort of work", and asked for hard statistics.

A further method of evaluation or measurement is not so much the events with which a worker has contact, but the sector of young persons to whom the worker is accessible. Experience on a broad front suggests that an established worker may have intensive relationships with 50 or more individuals, casual relationships with up to 300, and may be known by reputation in the area by some 700 young people. Accessibility, given that many crises happen "after hours" enhances these figures.



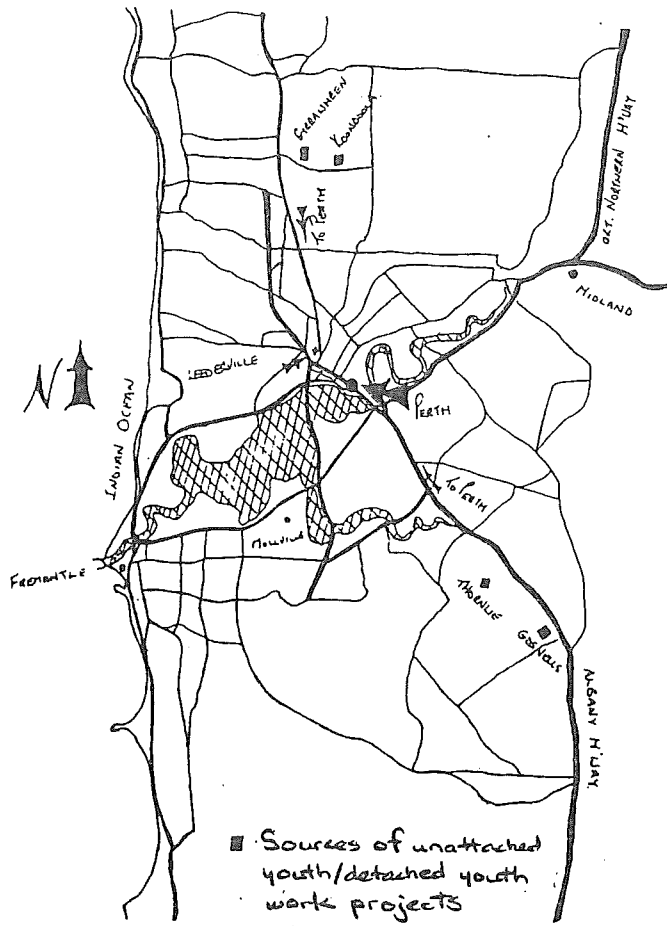
NEIL

Neil, aged 13 years, had a big argument with his dad, and was "chucked out" of the house. Turning up at 11 p.m. in a drop-in centre, his first time in the premises, he was asked by the staff: "Why did you come here?". "My mates told me to come here," he said. His mates were not themselves frequenters of the centre, but knew it as a place which would be "safe" and likely to offer a resource.

Neil was given a night's accommodation in a home of the team, encouraged to ring his dad the next day, and returned home that night.

Peer referral is an endorsement by the young of a service, and is an effective use of "natural networks". In a time of known and structural stresses on adolescence, planned resourcing of young people in terms appropriate to their culture is rational and responsible. Failure to do so is the converse of both.

It is clear that most government departments are conditioned to have a sectional or "parochial" concern for their own budget. They do not express enthusiasm for programs which will save money for some other section of government. A process of overview or composite funding for preventative work involving all sectors of government and wider community known to benefit is long overdue. Many groups around the state are hoping that the new Youth Bureau of the W.A. Government will achieve this goal.



Russell Neilson
George Davies

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

From the commencement of the project it was clearly understood and taken for granted that there was a need to document the work which was to be carried out. Over the early months the streetworkers kept exhaustive personal notes on all contacts which became very extensive due to the time taken over the longhand records they were attempting.

Approximately half-way through the project a more standardised format which relied less on longhand notes was adapted from a format presented in the pre-service training course in 1983 by Max Kau. The workers then commenced the task of transferring their previous information to these new forms.

It was shortly after the introduction of the new format that the Management Committee decided to withdraw the workers from street contact and engage them primarily in preparing this report, establishing more formal links to relevant agencies and completing the transfer of previous records to the new format. The aim was to utilise the availability of the computer at the Youth Affairs Council of W.A. to analyse the contacts.

By mid November the records of three of the streetworkers, Shelley, Brian and Rosie, had been entered onto the computer. Apart from the fact that the format had not been designed in a manner which would have allowed easy computer analysis, the information itself contained extensive conflicting data, e.g. there were numerous Johns contacted on the street but they were all recorded under "John". Also a particular John might have been recorded with ages ranging from 15 to 18 years within a period of 2 to 3 weeks.

The computer work seemed to be as long and tiresome as the recordings had been for the streetworkers and it is to the credit of Debbie Taylor and those she was able to cajole into sharing the burden that we achieved what we did. It certainly was a learning experience and we suggest that before other groups start collecting a lot of data, they should first work out very clearly how they will process it. We managed to do this more effectively before we returned to the street in October 1984.

We also became aware that each of the streetworkers had adopted different interpretations of how to record their contacts and that many of these assessments were made retrospectively long after the event. As can be seen in the following dates our statistics are drawn from different periods for each of the workers and only three out of five workers' statistics can be presented. Graham Wilson's records were never converted to the new format and Mike Evans arrived shortly before the workers were withdrawn from the streets and therefore had minimal recordings.

1.0 PERIOD OF RECORDINGS

WORKER	PERIOD
Shelley	24 Nov 83 - 23 July 84
Brian	24 Nov 83 - 10 Sept 84
Rosie	28 Nov 83 - 18 June 84

The information from the computer was printed out with details of names, contact dates, age, sex, employment status and ethnicity. With each of these considerable correction and standardisation of terminology across contacts with the same individual was required. It also became apparent that the recordings made under the problem headings would be of rather limited meaning due to the different interpretations across workers. It was then too late to rectify this.

A contact was recorded when there was a mutual recognition, conversation or request, etc. Therefore the printouts were used as the basis for setting up a manual analysis of those aspects identified above. The records of each of the streetworkers had been kept distinct but we were able to standardise the names by identifying John A, John B, etc., and could indicate names common across workers. This provided some interesting insights.

2.0 CONTACTS

WORKER	TOTAL NUMBER OF RECORDED CONTACTS
Shelley	1104
Brian	856
Rosie	1490
TOTAL	3450

3.0 PERSONS

WORKER	TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONS	NUMBER OF PERSONS SEEN BY ONLY ONE WORKER
Shelley	306	108
Brian	272	82
Rosie	402	136
TOTAL	*615	326

* note 289 persons had contact with more than one streetworker

4.0 AVERAGE CONTACTS PER PERSON

(i.e. average number of times a young person had contact with an individual worker)

WORKER	NUMBER OF CONTACTS (AVERAGED)
Shelley	3.6
Brian	3.2
Rosie	3.7
TOTAL ACROSS THE TEAM	5.6*

* average number of contacts young person had with team or part thereof

It is evident that nowhere near all the contacts were recorded and that we need to inflate the figures given. Also, if we use a rough estimate of Graham Wilson's/Mike Evans' contacts as somewhere between 1000 to 1200 over the eight months, then we estimate the total contacts made by the team to be in the order of 4500 to 5000 contacts. Over a full year this would be equivalent to approximately 7500 contacts.

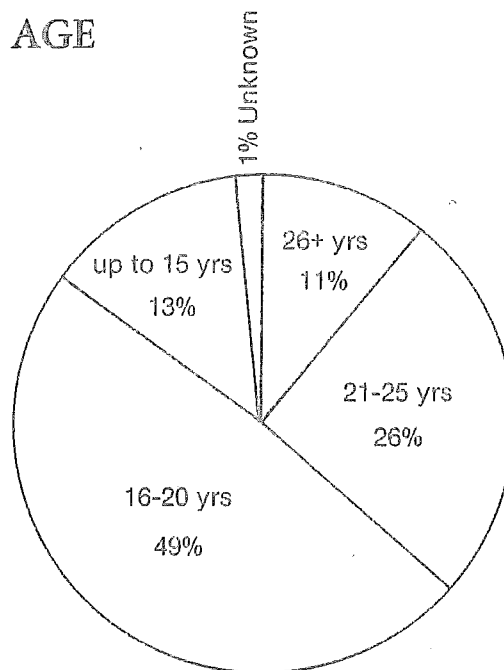
By a similar adjustment to our records, we estimate that over the eight months, the team made contact with some 750 to 800 separate individuals on the inner city streets of Perth. If anyone feels that there is not a need to recognise a street culture today then they are ignoring blatant facts now available.

Even with the team working often in pairs and in the same locations, we found that 53% of those contacted had that contact with only one of the streetworkers. There was a significant core who had numerous contacts with the team and across all the members. The average number of contacts made by the worker with different individuals is remarkably consistent across the team members, 3.2 to 3.7, while the average number of contacts per person increased to 5.6 across the whole team due to their contact with more than one team member. There were many who only had one contact with a streetworker but there were others who obviously were long term occupants of the streets.

5.0 AGE ANALYSIS

AGE	NUMBERS	PERCENTAGE
to 15	82	13.3
16	98	15.9
17	61	9.9
18	61	9.9
19	57	9.3
20	27	4.4
21-25	156	25.4
26 up	66	10.7
Unknown	7	1.2
TOTAL	615	100.0

PIECHART OF AGE



An analysis of a much shorter period of contact on the street for October to December indicated a greater concentration of the total contacts in the age group 16 to 20 years, in excess of 60%. Also, we were able to commence identifying different patterns for each streetworker with one in particular seeming to relate more to the younger ages and another, the much older group in the mid to late twenties. This could prove valuable in identifying the particular skills of workers.

6.0 SEX

SEX	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Male	392	63.7
Female	223	36.3
TOTAL	615	100.0

As might be expected, males dominate in their numbers on the street.

7.0 EMPLOYMENT STATUS

STATUS	NUMBERS	PERCENTAGE
Employed	130	21.1
Unemployed	433	70.4
Student	50	8.2
Pensioner	2	0.3
TOTAL	615	100.0

Unemployment clearly determines the circumstances of many on the streets. Those employed were generally those working as prostitutes, paper-boys, bouncers, buskers and a few in regular jobs. Our clarity on this recording item needs to be markedly improved.

8.0 ETHNICITY

ETHNICITY	NUMBERS	PERCENTAGE
Australian-European	383	62.3
Australian Aborigine	97	15.8
British	51	8.3
New Zealand	4	0.6
European	68	11.0
Other/Unknown	12	2.0
TOTAL	615	100.0

Similarly this item appeared vague and often difficult for the worker to record. Many of the young people considered themselves to be Australian but were obviously from a migrant background. It surprised us that the Aboriginal percentage was so low but this indicated that while we know there is a high percentage on the streets, our streetwork service has not yet begun to reach out to them to anywhere near the degree it should. Possibly the presence of an Aboriginal streetworker should be a priority in the future.

Prior to returning to the streets in October, we once again revised our format for recording and utilised standardised headings and possible responses. In addition to this we adopted The Australian Standardised Welfare Activities Classification (ASWAC) categories to describe the needs we encountered, the services requested and those delivered. This proved most helpful as The Bureau of Census and Statistics provides definitions of each category. We have included a copy of our format and explanation sheet for other groups to consider. We look forward to the day when we can all share a standard statistical format so that we can begin to talk the same language about the needs and services in which we are involved.

USING THE STREETWORK DATA FORM AND ASWAC CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

1. Forms to be completed at the end of each session on the street or when dealing with follow-ups in the office.
2. Each distinct contact to be recorded, i.e. if you see the same person at different times in the day record these as separate contacts.
3. **PREVIOUS CONTACT** - tick if you have recorded them previously.
- cross if new contact.
- question mark if uncertain.
4. **RESIDING** - record name of suburb when possible, if sleeping in the city area record Perth.
- also record nature of accommodation, e.g. family, D.C.W. hostel, group home, refuge, etc.
5. **SEX** - male or female.
6. **AGE** - if not sure, estimate

7. **ETHNIC ORIGIN** - if unable to estimate, record unknown.
8. **EMPLOYMENT STATUS** - employed/unemployed/supporting parent/on special benefits/student/no income.
9. **NEEDS/PROBLEMS RAISED** - aspects raised in conversations which relate to welfare needs should be recorded using the ASWAC system.
 STEP 1 - check short list provided. The streetwork oriented explanations may help.
 STEP 2 - if the need does not readily fit, check more detailed explanations and/or the complete ASWAC list.
 STEP 3 - record as many of the code numbers as necessary to cover the needs/problems raised.
 STEP 4 - if unsure, record question mark next to the selected number and check with co-ordinator.
10. **SERVICES REQUESTED** - only those aspects for which there is a clear request for assistance are recorded in this column. Therefore, generally this will be a shorter list.
11. **SERVICES DELIVERED** - only those which the streetworker responds to and provides. Some additional code numbers may appear such as for information and referral 511 and 512 or for services given which were not requested.
12. **COMMENTS** - record brief comments which would be helpful for you to recall some of the work with that individual or give more details on one of the codes used, e.g. type of drug addiction.
13. More detailed personal notes should be kept where there is intensive and sustained contact with individuals.
14. Data forms to be returned to office on a weekly basis.

SHORT LIST OF CATEGORIES MOST LIKELY TO BE USED BY STREETWORKERS

- 11 INCOME SUPPORT - matters associated with D.S.S. pension and benefits including family allowances.
- 141 TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE - emergency relief from D.C.W. or non-government agencies including any cash streetworkers give.
- 142 LOANS - where cash is given with reasonable prospects of being repaid, e.g. advance on unemployment benefit money arriving in a few days.
- 212 FOODSTUFFS PROVISION - food parcels, meals, Christmas hampers, food vouchers. Includes where streetworkers shout kids a meal.
- 221 PUBLIC RENTAL HOUSING - state housing accommodation.
- 223 RENTAL CONCESSIONS AND SUBSIDIES - bonds, going in costs, rent relief... for people renting privately.
- 224 TEMPORARY SHELTER - youth refuges, shelters, etc.
- 261 TRANSPORT - transporting kids to home, appointments, hospital, etc.
- 321 INDEPENDENT LIVING TRAINING - heavy counselling on the street which includes a definite rehabilitation plan and program.
- 322 FRIENDLY VISITING - low key interaction on the street, mainly to do with support and companionship.
- 323 SOCIAL TRANSITION - counselling to change lifestyle, i.e. from streets to home, unemployed to employment through skills course, e.g. C.Y.S.S. course.
- 324 MUTUAL SUPPORT - linking into a group which helps solve problems, provides support, etc., generally group processes need to be evident.
- 351 GENERAL COUNSELLING - medium to heavy sessions with individuals, using definite counselling skills.
- 353 MARRIAGE COUNSELLING - (read as relationships counselling), dealing with personal relationship problems.

REFLECTIONS ON COLLECTIVE MANAGEMENT

An overall impression is that we have registered a concept - especially with government, Rotarians and the wider community - in a way that previously hadn't been there. We have put it on the table....(George Davies, October 1984)

When the streetwork management committee reflected on the years' experience there was predominant feeling of achievement. What had been achieved was that the project had made greater progress than might have been expected. Max Kau identifies four phases and estimates that a project needs four to six months to achieve stage two - "rapport building with individuals and developing a sound relationship with them". It is generally agreed that the P.I.C.Y.S. project achieved that target after the first month and was able to move onto the more developed stages because of the collective approach of the team.

While being affirmative regarding the success on the streets, both the members of the management committee and the streetworkers were less than complimentary on the internal management and the wider interlinking with agencies.

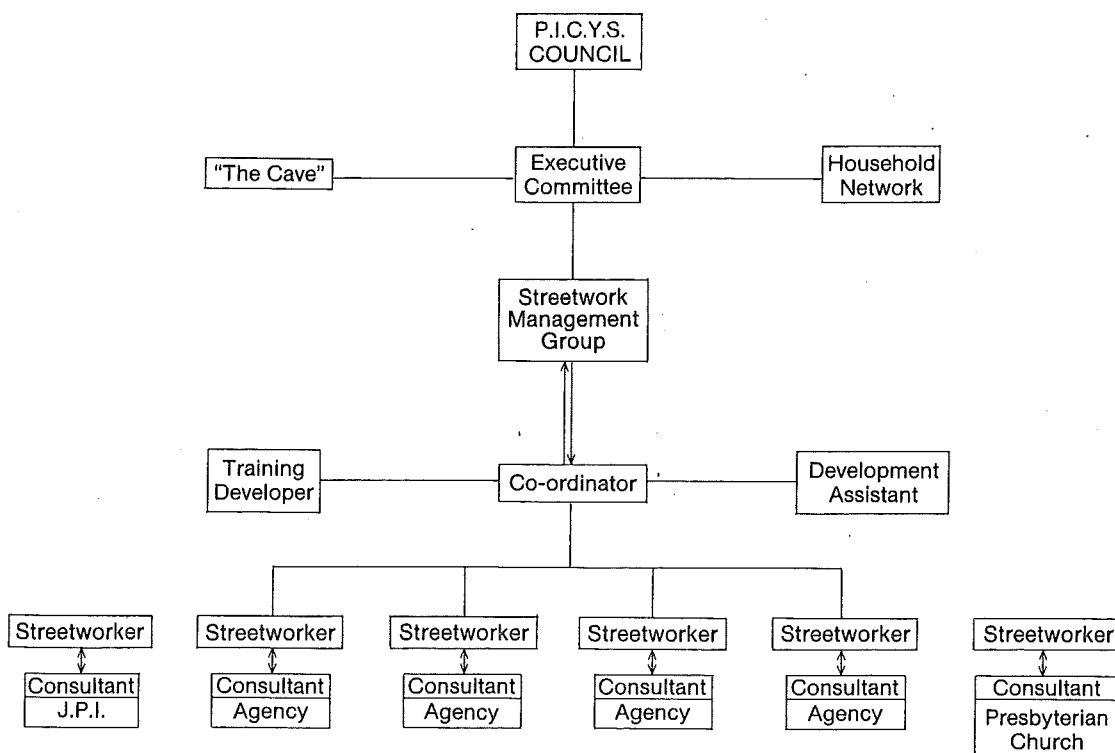
At the commencement of the project, considerable effort was invested in developing outlines of the collective management structure. This included defining the management committee and its link to the overall P.I.C.Y.S. structure, consultants, agency bases, professional cluster, etc. The complexity of the total structure obviously proved difficult to implement.

Many of those recruited to the streetwork project were new to streetwork, streetwork management and the collective model. Insufficient time was available for orientation prior to the commencement and during the early months of the project.

A paper prepared by some of the members of the streetwork management committee on the delineation of roles for the streetwork project defined the roles of management committee consultants and agency bases. It appears that this document has been described as the "personality network". The total number of persons involved in the management, information and support systems is quite small and so the key figures found themselves in a number of roles. This led to substantial role conflict and confusion of responsibilities and communication. The complexity of the structure required a much greater number of people than was available to maintain it, and this led to inevitable problems.

THE MODEL

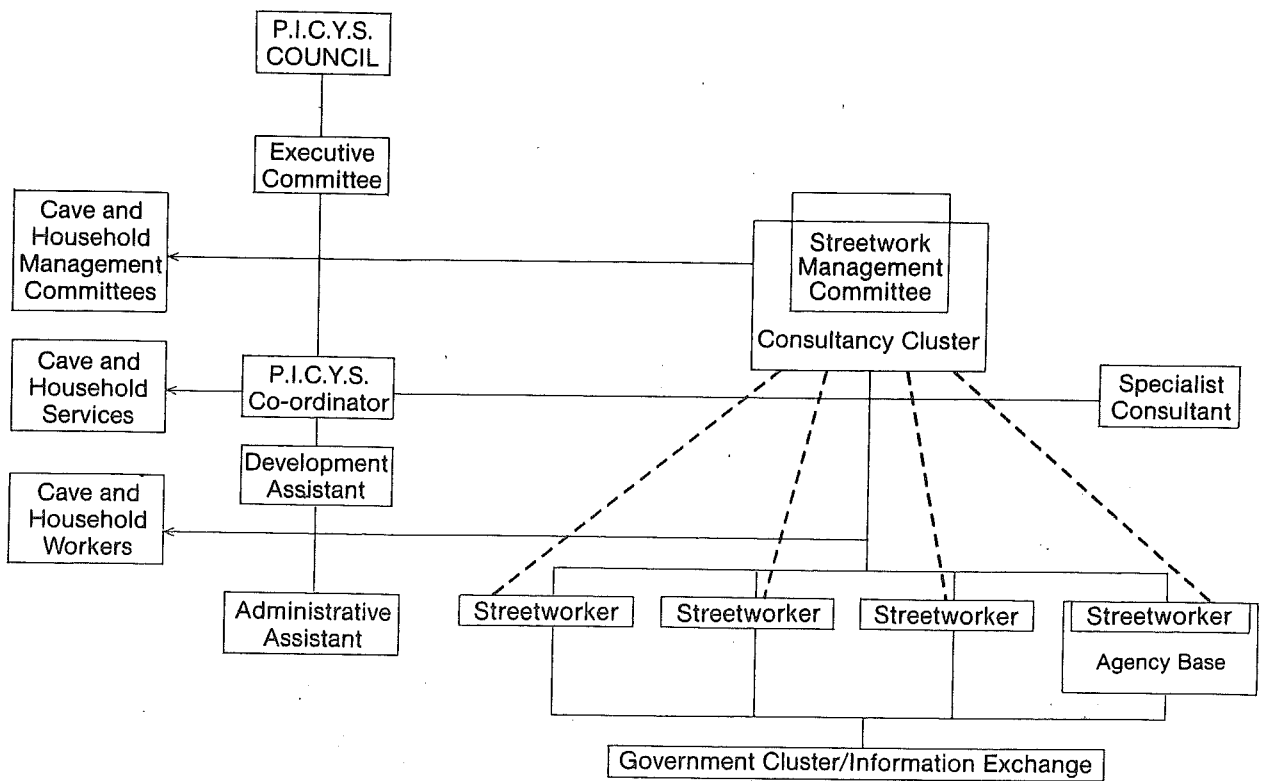
Prior to the commencement of the project, the P.I.C.Y.S. Executive approved the following outline of the structure for the streetwork project. It incorporated the management lines, other P.I.C.Y.S. services, consultants, agency bases and streetworkers employed by other agencies. The professional cluster is not represented.



On evaluation of the project in October 1984, it was found that all the consultants were contained within the management committee. Only one agency base was in operation - the Youth Health Service. The training/development function was funded separately by a Training/Development Grant from the Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation. The streetworkers employed by other agencies related to P.I.C.Y.S. streetworkers on the street but not in any formal co-ordination or in-service manner.

During the life of the project it was recognised that the professional cluster was made up mainly of representatives of government agencies and therefore was renamed a "government cluster".

The following is an attempt to present the structure as it operated from July 1984 when the streetworker co-ordinator resigned and the management became more actively involved in the direction of the project.



The structure now identified, firmly places the streetworker project within the total P.I.C.Y.S. operation and consolidates the central focal role of the overall P.I.C.Y.S. co-ordinator. The interlinking of all the P.I.C.Y.S. workers on the same plane, the co-ordination at the next level, and the management committees as a delegated function of the Executive Committee reflects more accurately the collective nature of the P.I.C.Y.S. organisation.

In the opinion of some, the interlocking of the management committee and the consultancy cluster may have allowed the management committee to postpone some of the more harsh and critical decisions that were required. By some of the same members meeting under the consultancy mandate, they could deal with these matters on an individual and personal basis. Therefore, the streetworkers were informed through their individual consultant and not directly from the management committee. A decision taken during the evaluation period was to suspend consultancies and distinguish more clearly between the three levels - management, co-ordination and personal support.

MANAGEMENT

One of the most critical comments made in the evaluation of the year was made by the streetworkers. They felt the first impact of the management committee on the direction of their work was after the co-ordinator had left the project in July 1984. Before that management was considered by the streetworkers as a non-entity. Members of the management committee tended to agree with this view in that they felt that after an initial "informing process" they transferred excessive responsibilities to a co-ordinator who was new to the complex task of co-ordinating the project. The co-ordinating skills required were particularly crucial for the smooth functioning of this project which had employed workers under C.E.P. funding. These workers needed qualitative and quantitative training in the area of streetworking.

In June when it was realized that the streetworkers were under stress and no longer functioning as a team, a review was undertaken which included clarifying roles. It is clearly apparent that in the papers prepared at this time as well as those at the commencement of the project that there was inadequate understanding of the "management role". Insufficient distinction was made between policy, administration and support, with support generally taking an overriding priority above the others. By September 1984 the P.I.C.Y.S. President was identifying the confusion between "management" and "consultancy" and indicating that although P.I.C.Y.S. was very strong on caring for the person, including staff members, it lacked expertise in management.

It is quite possible that the confusion can be traced back to a meeting in June 1983 of supervisors of the participants of the Streetworker Training Program conducted by Max Kau. One of the support systems identified was that of "Power Broking and Protection" which is explained as:

- The consultant - could act as a professional buffer with management committee;*
- positive feedback/constructive to worker;*
- fighting for recognition of work done by worker.*

This role is continued in the document on the delineation of roles at the start of the project where the consultant is given roles such as:

- To play an advocacy role in the event this may be needed;*
- To ensure positive communication with the team co-ordinator and team members;*
- To liaise with the co-ordinator in relation to work load, etc. at all times.*

Yet a contradiction when appears in the statement:

- The consultant is not responsible for the day to day work operations of the individual.*

The same document, when addressing the role of the management committee, does not specifically identify what might be considered as key management issues - staff supervision and direction, project policies, funding accountability, etc. Instead it is focussed more on communication, liaison and support.

Just whose responsibility was it to manage the project? It appears that the management committee began to assume this role in the latter months but then their lack of experience and inadequacies in a number of areas, especially financial accountability and staff management, became obvious. The streetworkers expressed appreciation of the clearer direction which emerged out of the review in June. This included targeting particular streetworkers to:

- specific young people on the streets*
- agencies to liaise with*
- information study areas leading to the chapters of the report*
- other P.I.C.Y.S. services, etc.*

Some of the streetworkers indicated that instead of the freedom they were given early in the project, this firmer direction may have been better. On the other hand, being thrown in "at the deep end" and left to find their own feet possibly forced them to find the confidence they needed. Either way it was felt that there were costs. Unfortunately, the plans drawn in June/July were put aside in August because the internal conflict within the team remained unresolved and it was decided to concentrate on preparing the report which was a more individualized task. This led to a virtual complete withdrawal from the streets. The report assumed the key priority and members of management worked in conjunction with individual streetworkers.

With the arrival of the specialist/consultant a management strategy was adopted to return workers to the street. The management committee was challenged on the confusion in roles. Staff appraisals were instituted to evaluate the workers' skills and performance, and the essential day to day co-ordinating role of the P.I.C.Y.S. co-ordinator was affirmed. Despite the difficulties it was essential for P.I.C.Y.S. to come to terms with a firm management function within its collective nature. The mode and manner of management remains collective and non-hierarchical.

From July the workers began preparing reports as a team which were presented to management. They spoke with pride of the quality of those reports and their content. Management committee members, on the other hand, expressed concern over the lack of information from the street. The streetworkers saw the management committee as possibly too embroiled in project reassessment during July and August to provide what one streetworker expressed in the following way:

They're the people, as I see it, who should be the ones working out the priorities and the policies in terms of where we should be heading via the co-ordinator. They should be saying, "O.K., you've identified these issues in the past month, great now..."

This has only happened as a result of the chapter work, not the reports presented. It really needs to be worked through.

Over a period management has expressed the same desires for discussion of direction but had felt both a lack of information and the mechanisms necessary to achieve this goal.

CO-ORDINATION

The management committee hoped they would find a person to become the streetwork co-ordinator who would be able to assume full responsibilities for the co-ordination and development of the project. Their selection was hindered by the C.E.P. restrictions to persons who had been unemployed for at least three months but they were confident that the person they selected had the background to fulfil their requirements.

They invested full authority in the streetwork co-ordinator and sought feedback and advice throughout the early months on directions the project could take. Unfortunately, the collective model was new to both the co-ordinator and many of the others involved and the complexity of the model interfered with the processes. Also, it appears that the streetwork co-ordinator had philosophical differences with the P.I.C.Y.S. collective approach as well as a lack of knowledge of local resources. The inadequate management system failed to effectively address these issues early enough and so by July the co-ordinating role had become dispersed across a number of people with the day to day activities of the staff being somewhat influenced by the management committee, individual consultants, the staff cluster and the agency bases. An expedient solution was found through the streetwork co-ordinator leaving the project.

The emergence of the Co-ordination and Development Project in May/June at the peak of the turmoil within the streetwork project did not allow the P.I.C.Y.S. co-ordinator to establish himself within P.I.C.Y.S. as the overall co-ordinator. Neither was it easy for him to step into the role as other aspects of P.I.C.Y.S., "The Cave" and The Household Network, had long been established. When the streetwork co-ordinator left, this provided the opportunity for the management committee to take an active role in directing the team. A decision was taken to work through the P.I.C.Y.S. co-ordinator by re-arranging his duties and giving priority to the streetwork project within his responsibilities. This was ratified by P.I.C.Y.S. Executive in full realisation that his ability to devote time and energy to other aspects of the overall role with regards to other P.I.C.Y.S. services would be negated, and that this was a cost that would need to be met. It is evident that while this was a clear decision within management, it had not been clearly communicated to all aspects of the collective system, especially to the streetwork staff, and therefore his role lacked the authority and legitimacy that was needed. The other influences remained and so it was no wonder that the co-ordinator exhibited reticence in the decision making processes of the project.

In the final month of the project attempts were made to assume more of the responsibility for the co-ordination and direction of the team's activities through weekly meetings. The primary responsibility of the co-ordinator in facilitating this and for transferring the necessary skills eventually to the team with appropriate support was strongly affirmed. Out of these meetings, policy proposals were beginning to emerge which were then presented to management for consideration.

CONSULTANCY

P.I.C.Y.S. gives high priority to the need for workers to have individual consultants who can provide personal and professional support. Though all believe they are talking about the same role, it is most evident that there were great variations in approach and content across consultants and degrees of acceptance across workers.

In the early months the focus was primarily on professional and personal support although the ratio between these varied for different workers. One estimated the personal content as high as 80% while another felt theirs was more 50/50. One worker who identified the consultant's input as encouraging more linking with other services assessed the outcome as of only minimal success up until the final months when the relevance of this suggestion became clear.

It is clearly recognised by both consultants and workers that consultancies are most relevant and helpful and that they achieved their central objective within the project. Individual workers extensively benefited from the knowledge and expertise of their consultants. Consultants were chosen by streetworkers subject to approval by management.

Unfortunately, what tended to negate some of the positive aspects was the multiplicity of roles many of the consultants had within P.I.C.Y.S. Most had at least dual roles while one consultant was identified in five distinct roles - consultant, agency base, management, executive and convenor of the government cluster. It was evident that at times these roles were perceived by others as conflicting, and the consultant also expressed uncertainty on how to deal with a particular conflict which arose involving three of the streetworkers. In addition to these formal roles, several of the management and/or consultants also mixed socially with the workers. This exacerbated the confusion,

In general the consultant will encourage the worker to self-advocacy, and only "intervene", e.g. with management, as a last resort and with the permission/knowledge of the worker.

It was generally agreed that while consultancies were worthwhile for the individual workers, inherent in the structure were the negative effects on the team. A recommendation to separate consultancy clearly from the other roles, especially management, is strongly endorsed.

AGENCY BASE

While the concept of an agency base was in existence at the beginning of the project we find that by the end of the project only one, the Youth Health Service, was operational. The initial objective was to encourage agencies to "own" the link between the team and their other services and through the resultant interaction increase their awareness and commitment to streetwork. It appears that the selection of agency bases was made subsequent to the selection of consultants and that this usually determined the agency bases for the workers.

Insufficient negotiation was carried out the agencies and no contracts drawn up between P.I.C.Y.S. and the agency bases. Consequently they were allowed to deteriorate or not even get established. However, internal guidelines were developed between the Health Department and Youth Health Service enabling the Youth Health Service to function as an agency base for one streetworker. The model has merit but the process of implementation needs much greater attention.

Inherent within the model of using agency bases or extended further, where the agency funds the position, close attention will also need to be given to clarifying the expectations of both parties and formalizing these in a contract. An imbalance would occur if the streetworker became engaged primarily in activities unrelated to the field of the funding source or where the agency used the streetworker as an outreach worker for their services. There is much to negotiate on these matters.

GOVERNMENT CLUSTER

This proved a valuable method for informing and maintaining links with government departments relevant to streetwork. These meetings provided an effective buffer to protect individual workers from an avalanche of inquiries for information. Possibly, an improved attendance of streetworkers and greater relating of feedback from the streets should be attempted in the future along with expanding the group to other city based non-government services.

PROPOSALS ON CHANGES TO THE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES FOR 1985

1. Within the recent review of the streetwork project it became apparent that the complex model devised at the commencement of the project had been difficult to implement. With the components including a management committee, consultants, agency bases and a professional cluster drawn from a very limited number of people who have the experience and knowledge of detached youth work, we seemed to create a degree of confusion and a blurring of roles.

Also, it is clear that the interlinks with the other projects within P.I.C.Y.S. and the broader links to the member organisations of P.I.C.Y.S. were poor and less than effective. There was an obvious lack of communication channels and informed awareness of all the services being provided.

A fully collective model has yet to be operationalized within P.I.C.Y.S.

2. The current efforts to clarify and consolidate the membership of P.I.C.Y.S. and to establish more consistently the council meetings and reporting procedures should be expedited as soon as possible. We need to know who the committed members are to define the directions for P.I.C.Y.S. in the years ahead.
3. It is proposed that membership of P.I.C.Y.S. should include a firm commitment to take a more active interest in at least one of the specific projects within P.I.C.Y.S. This will relate in particular to the policy development for the project but many also extend to include the administration or a consultancy role.

Each member organisation should be allocated or they themselves elect one of the four current P.I.C.Y.S. projects - "The Cave", The Household Network, Streetwork or Regional Development. They should nominate a representative who can participate in the project subcommittee or as a worker's consultant.

4. The project subcommittees have three major functions - policy development, administration and oversight of support. The policy development should include the participation of staff, P.I.C.Y.S. members and people with expertise in the particular field. A subcommittee should address this function on at least two or three occasions throughout the year or whenever it appears necessary.

The on-going administration of the project is the more regular task of the committee and this should primarily involve those with relevant expertise. The management committee should ensure adequate support is given to the workers.

It is recommended that project subcommittees have a flexible membership with a core of members appointed on the basis of their administrative expertise, and a broader group which ensures that P.I.C.Y.S. members have a majority for an overseeing role and dealing with policy aspects.

Therefore each project committee would consist of four member representatives, four co-opted persons with management expertise, and staff representatives. The possible expertise which could be sought might include persons with knowledge of government funding, financial administration, staff management, or the particular field covered by the project, e.g. streetwork.

5. At the P.I.C.Y.S. Executive consists of elected of the member organisation, a strong recommendation might be to ask for other representatives for the project subcommittees.

An alternative might be that four of the Executive members serve as liaison links between subcommittees and the Executive (not necessarily as the chairpersons).

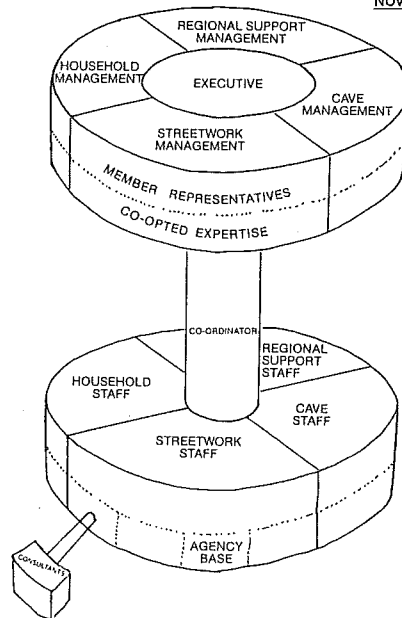
6. The role of the P.I.C.Y.S. co-ordinator is critical in the developed state that P.I.C.Y.S. has achieved. The co-ordinator should be seen as the focal point of the day to day activities with the primary responsibility for interlinking all the staff involved and their involvements, and ensuring that all activities adhere to the philosophy and policies of P.I.C.Y.S.
7. All staff, both paid and volunteers, should be seen as and operate as a total team. Regular team meetings should be held to share information, skills, achievements, and to engage in joint planning.

A proposal for basing staff members in a range of alternative work places, e.g. Lamb Board Building, "The Cave", Youth Health Service, Y.M.C.A., is acceptable and a realistic model, but these need to be clearly defined and contracted for so as not to cut across the team model. It is recommended that personnel directly involved with staff on behalf of the agency base should not be members of the project subcommittee.

8. Each worker should be linked formally to a consultant who has expertise in his/her field of interests and who has the ability to challenge and support the worker in his/her professional role and to monitor and advise on the balance between work and personal life. Consultants should be independent from the rest of P.I.C.Y.S.
9. What has been described as a professional or agency cluster is a mechanism for mutual information exchange and should not be considered as part of the P.I.C.Y.S. organizational structure.
10. The following is a diagrammatic presentation of the structure as proposed.

PROPOSED MANAGEMENT MODEL FOR PICYS

NOVEMBER 1984



MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT - A STREETWORKER'S VIEW

Management

The management of detached youth work projects is a whole subject area of its own. This paper can only highlight some of the more important elements.

It is the role of the Management committee to decide the overall direction and objectives, of the work, to set attainable goals and to monitor the progress of the work towards the achievement of those goals.

It is essential to ensure that clear communication takes place between workers and management. The responsibility rests equally between these two, but as the management committee bears the ultimate responsibility for the success of the project, it must ensure that this communication takes place. It greatly aids communication if the management committee includes, or has access to, someone who has first hand experience of detached youth work at worker level, as this will assist in the interpretation of communication to both parties. This will enable the management committee to ask more intelligently for information and to make decisions which are realistic and clearly understood by the workers.

It should be remembered that the members of a streetwork management committee will very rarely be able to monitor the workers' progress at first hand, i.e. on the streets. They will, therefore be almost entirely dependent on the information given to them by their workers.

Support

Detached youth workers work in a manner and in locations which are bound to induce feelings of stress and insecurity. Office based workers normally work in a space where they and their authority are recognized by the young people with whom they are working. Detached workers work in spaces which belong to the young people, and the only recognition and respect they receive in these situations is that which they have earned by their honesty, their personalities, and the use of their interpersonal skills. The only real tools the detached workers have are themselves. The stresses induced by this working situation are further complicated by the unsocial working hours demanded of the workers. All this adds up to a great need for effective personal support for detached youth workers. Ideally this support should come from someone who is familiar with the problems of face to face detached youth work. It is essential that this support person has direct access to the management group of the project should there be communication problems between the managers and the workers.

It is interesting to note that in team based detached youth work projects the workers inevitably find that their most effective support comes from the other team members. The highest rate of "burn-out" among detached youth workers is in those projects which can only employ a single worker. In such a project it is usually best if the worker can see his or her role as part of an interdisciplinary approach, i.e. working closely with the personnel of other agencies involved in work with the same young people. This will obviously be the most effective method of supporting detached youth workers in smaller rural communities.

Lastly, it is very important that the support for the workers should be positive. It is not sufficient for the support structures just to be available, it is also the responsibility of the workers to seek that support if and when they feel a need for it. The persons responsible for supporting the workers should be regularly meeting them, talking them through the problems which they are facing and assisting them to reflect objectively on their work.

STREETWORK TEAM MODEL PROPOSAL FOR 1985-1986

In 1983/84 through funding from the Wage Pause and Community Employment Programs, P.I.C.Y.S. was able to develop a streetwork team consisting of a co-ordinator, four streetworkers and an administrative assistant. It is our view that a team of this size was barely sufficient to operate an effective team for the inner city streets of Perth, and so we are looking to re-establish an expanded team during 1985.

Each streetworker position would have a primary portfolio - some possible portfolios could be health, education, and welfare. While developing particular expertise in this field, the worker would retain a generalist role and share the relevant information and skills with other members of the team to make them more effective in the dimensions of their work outside his/her own portfolios.

Each member of the team could have a consultant selected from the field covered by his/her portfolio who would support, advise and challenge the worker on his/her professional approach, knowledge and skill, and assist to maintain a balance between his/her employment and personal life.

Each member would have an agency base with which they would directly liaise so as to maintain links with the wider networks. In the case of one streetworker position we propose that the agency base be the Youth Health Service. Regular contact with agency staff would be maintained as well as formal reporting as required by any funding agreement.

The day to day supervision and co-ordination of the worker's activities would be the sole responsibility of P.I.C.Y.S. either through a specific streetwork co-ordinator or the overall P.I.C.Y.S. co-ordinator. The worker would be a full member of P.I.C.Y.S. staff.

Guidelines for drawing up a contract with a particular agency

We believe that it is essential that a formal agreement be developed between the Health Department and P.I.C.Y.S. which includes specific details of both parties as to the goals and expected outcomes of the agreements. These may include:

1. Develop health service delivery at a street level to those who by their rejection of current health services are not being serviced.
2. Improve the access and use by youth of the existing health services.
3. Identify those health problems particular to street youth and make appropriate recommendations to the Health Department.
4. Research and evaluate lacks in the present system and make appropriate recommendations to the Health Department.
5. Participate in the interlinking of health and related services to improve the delivery of services to young people.

The contract would also include the Health Department's commitments regarding financial and professional support for the position. We suggest that these details will require negotiation after agreement in principle is made.

Norm Williams
Shelley Davies
in consultation with members of the
management committee and streetwork
team.

THE STRUCTURE OF P.I.C.Y.S.

The Perth Inner City Youth Service (P.I.C.Y.S.) is a composite organisation made up of a range of voluntary groups all of whom are involved in work with young people and related to the inner city area. In November 1980 these agencies agreed that for key strategies a co-operative approach to the problems of unattached young people would be more effective than the unco-ordinated efforts of individual agencies.

Our style is essentially preventative; i.e. youth workers can identify and offer early intervention in those conflicts which bring many young people to the street, and which can escalate in, or be the product of, the lifestyles on the streets.

In order to address the multiple needs of these young people, P.I.C.Y.S. is currently operating four separate, but interconnecting projects:

STREETWORK

Workers meet young people in natural, informal settings such as street side walks, pizza palours, pin-ball shops and taverns and develop trust relationships in the young people's own safety zones. Through these relationships the workers are able to assist young people to reflect on their circumstances and prospects, to challenge the norms and values of street society, and find support, by a variety of means at the workers' disposal, in the transition to adulthood.

THE CAVE DROP-IN CENTRE

Situated 312 Murray Street, a voluntary team at The Cave youth centre offers a cost-free, alcohol-free, venue for young people to meet. It is an alternative to the streets, taverns or amusement arcades and attracts a high percentage of young people from low socio-economic backgrounds. It has been operating since November 1980 and maintains substantial contact with Aboriginal young people.

THE HOUSEHOLD NETWORK

This is a group of privately rented or owned homes, flexible enough to accommodate young people who find it difficult to fit elsewhere. It is an obvious extension of streetwork and drop-in centre contact, where many of the young people met are in unsatisfactory living arrangements.

REGIONAL STATE LINKAGE

This resources networking, training and support. It involves liaison with several country centres such as Port Hedland, Cunderin, Kalgoorlie and Albany who are working on streetwork models. Country and suburban contacts and projects have needs in common and needs particular to the area or persons. P.I.C.Y.S. has assisted in developing and supporting a number of projects.

MEMBERSHIP

The involvement in P.I.C.Y.S. consists of two main categories:

- member bodies
- resource and observer bodies

Member bodies nominate their own representative to the governing Council of P.I.C.Y.S. Other bodies send a non-voting liaison or observer person to the Council. The Council elects an Executive which manages staff and operations. The Executive establishes a Management Committee for each major project area. Council elects a President who, from inception, has been John Baker of Perth Rotary.

Member Bodies:

Uniting Church (W.A. Synod)
Trinity Uniting Church
St. Andrew-Ross Memorial Uniting Church
St. George's Anglican Cathedral, Perth
Baptist Union of W.A.
Perth Baptist Church
Churches of Christ of W.A. Inc

Salvation Army State Headquarters
Salvation Army Fortress
Young Men's Christian Association
Young Women's Christian Association
Fusion Australia
Jesus People Inc. Welfare Services
Australian Red Cross Society
Young Australia League
Perth Rotary Club
Catholic Centrecare - Youthcare

Resource and Observer Bodies:

Department for Youth, Sport and Recreation
Info-Link, Library Board of W.A.
Department for Community Services
W.A.C.A.E., Claremont Campus
Department of Police
Department of Health, Health Education Unit
W.A.I.T., School of Social Work
Rotary Club of St. George
Youth Affairs Council of W.A.
Department of Health - Youth Health Service
Perth Christian Centre
Christian Welfare Centre (Churches of Christ)
Anglican Health and Welfare
Family Planning Association of W.A.
Aboriginal Legal Service (Inc.)
Tenants Advice Service
Prisoners Action Group
Department of Corrections
Alcohol and Drug Authority
Probation and Parole Service
Transition Education Counselling Service
Department of Social Security
Association of Apex Clubs
Scripture Union/Frontier Youth Services

P.I.C.Y.S. has identified, through its member agencies and their collective diagnosis, a significant need for street level contact with young people in their own settings. This philosophy of street youth work is consistent with that used overseas and in other states of Australia.

In response to this need, the service obtained funding through the Wage Pause and Community Employment Program for a program of street youth work for 1984 in central Perth. The streetwork team consisted of four youth workers, a co-ordinator and an administrative assistant.

The principal aim of the project was to contact, and develop a program of youth work with, those young people who spend an abnormally large proportion of their time on the city streets. The lifestyle of these young people regularly leads them into conflict with the authorities and local residents and shop keepers. Many of them have left home due to family conflict and it is frequently the case that the only adults with whom they have contact are those whom they perceive as authority figures such as police, teachers and social workers. It is an important element of detached youth work that the youth workers have no statutory responsibility for the young people with whom they are working. This enables them to offer the teenager a one-to-one relationship with an adult figure who can quickly be recognised as non-authoritarian, non-threatening and non-exploitative. Through this relationship the worker is able to assist the young people to reflect on their circumstances and prospects, to challenge the norms and values of street society and to find support, by the variety of means at the workers' disposal, in their transition to adult life.

The program has a strong research and linking element built into it. The workers have built up, through their recordings, a comprehensive picture of the life of young people on the streets. They were able to provide links between the young people and other agencies whose professional help was needed. They were also able to feed back to these agencies information about the effectiveness of their service delivery at grass roots level.

A brief analysis of the street environment and the characteristics of the young people are presented as background along with some proposals for future developments.

The Inner City

Where young people come from and what they do in the city depends largely on their age and financial circumstances. From contacts made by P.I.C.Y.S. some of the dynamics operating for those with little cash and under 18 years of age are:

● **Street Scenes:**

Because of the nature of the city in the daytime, with a domination of business and commerce, many young people feel they have more freedom at night, i.e. the streets and mall belong to them.

The streetworkers have observed different groups will appear at various places and times of the day. A complaint from young people is - "no place to hang around in daytimes". The Mall is a busy thoroughfare and groups of "untidy" people are told to "move on" by patrolling police. Amusement parlours, pizza and hamburger shops all require money, so resting places are almost non-existent.

"The Cave" drop-in centre offers a non-pressure venue three nights a week. An all-day neutral safety zone is needed (Community Youth Support Scheme Centres are able to cater to some degree but because of funding guidelines must apply some pressure for involvement in their activities).

● **Street Populations at Night:**

Many of the suburbs are dormant at night (locked up empty shopping centres or deserted streets) and often youth come into the inner city. The attractions are a place to meet, friends, somewhere to go other than home patch, and opportunity to be amongst the general activity of other young people.

But - what to do without finance? Walk or drive "laps" around the city block, pause to talk to buskers, window-shop, visit familiar places or people, e.g. paper-boys, hamburger shops or other street groups.

Large amounts of this repetitive time packaging often leads to boredom, so excitement comes from daring events. Perhaps "nigging" other groups or engaging in verbal or fist fighting. Defying authority (seen to be policemen, expensive cars, shop windows, etc.) is another result of feeling foreign in a society they are told they belong to. Young persons are subject to the lure of social advertising which defines success as traditional work, respectable appearance and money enough for leisure spending. Although most shops are closed at night their expensive gloss still appears through glass windows, and all night "leisure" activities are neatly exclusive to the financial few.

Responding to Needs

The streetworker team and "The Cave" workers have been constantly relating to many young people who do not feel close to wider society. They have found a primary need exists for persons other than peers to listen and take time to be with these young persons. The trivial, so-called superficial interactions are actually a testing out period for the often wary young people who have difficulty trusting anyone, let alone someone not of their own "group"!

Some of the strategies which should be explored further:

- **A Trustworthy Being** - is a valuable contribution to their environment.
- **Pressure-free Zones** - such as "The Cave", where behaviour, values, attitudes, are taken as they come, with an ear for reasons rather than a mouth for blame underlying the approach.
- **Facilities for Child Care** - for young mothers who need space away for a time. Minimal or no cost child care is needed, accessible to all incomes.
- **Discos and Energy Space** - at no or little cost, and available to under-18 year olds. All taverns, hotels and night clubs are only for 18 years plus and those with money.
- **Approachable Family Planning and Sex Education** - The stereotype roles of the sexes with a dominant male and submissive female chattel are obvious in street culture. With trusted avenues such as those mentioned above this area of education could have more credibility to young people. Particular attention is needed for young homosexuals who must keep their personality concealed from group ridicule.

The wide divergence of young groups can create tension. Activities on **neutral territory**, including open-air concerts, multi-age creative "art" drop-in places would help fill a need (C.Y.S.S. centres are limited by guidelines and age limits). However, if we start using words like "Community Centre" we must be careful that community actually does have power and performance in the organisation and running of same.

One prominently visible group in the street population is young Aboriginals. Liaison between different representatives of Aboriginal groups could result in a perceptive and effective **Aboriginal streetworker** being appointed.

The obvious on-going shortage is in the accommodation area - both crisis and open-ended long-term. **Young females** are especially at risk in the present situation. Suitable premises need to be close to the city, with a friendly and informal homely feel, a 24 hour service, and no lower age limits ("runaways" at present only find refuge in private accommodation or street hide-outs. These young people are usually without financial means and under 16 years of age).

As described, the needs are both tangible physical and subtle relationship needs. One particular relationship concern is that between young people and police. By experiencing unnecessary put-down and intimidation, many young people we know have built up a sceptical distrust of all police. The police, as must all of us, be sensitive to reasons why and not be so quick to make assumptions or direct blame.

The Perth Inner City Youth Service actively seeks to identify these needs and to work towards the development of services to meet them. Where possible, existing services or organisations are encouraged to expand or restructure their services but when the need requires a service which no single agency can effectively maintain and resource, e.g. the Street Work Project or a Youth Advocacy Service, then P.I.C.Y.S. promotes a collective approach, either within or outside the P.I.C.Y.S. collective.

THE FILM

Opportunity arose during 1984, in conjunction with W.A.I.T. student film unit, to produce a training film on the strategy of detached youth work. P.I.C.Y.S. decided, rather than doing a narrowly based promotion of its own collective activities, to liaise with a number of country and suburban personnel and projects with a view to scanning the needs of unattached youth in W.A. and strategies for resourcing such young people. The film aims to open up the possibilities for working with young people using detached work principles. It also seeks to be realistic about the skills and commitment needed by workers and management if such projects are to be undertaken.

Production of a film of this nature has to be careful to protect the sensitivity and dignity of young people themselves, and therefore stops short of detail of a potentially damaging nature about any young person. It will be of most value when used in conjunction with training persons and other resources such as this book to complement and follow up the broad issues raised on the screen.

Peg Hudson
George Davies

FUTURE STRATEGIES

In the past year, streetwork has become registered as a most relevant and significant model of intervention within the youth culture in Perth. We've registered a concept, an awareness, amongst the community, governments, and others, in a way that hasn't previously been there. We've now put it on the table and it is time to take up the real challenge to commence more long term social planning.

It has been long recognised that over the past 10 years a number of individuals have made a substantial contribution to assisting youth through the establishment of detached youth work projects. Amongst these are included the efforts of Howard Sercombe, Graham Chipps and Jeremy Prince in Balga/Girrawheen; Nic James working out of the Y.M.C.A.; George Davies on the Scarborough beachfront and more recently in the early development stages of P.I.C.Y.S.; Brian Penn, Rick Morrell and Vaughan Glare in Wagin and Cunderdin; Ian Johnson of Port Hedland; Sally Haines from the Leederville Presbyterian Church and Marti Noonan from the Jesus People. All of these and others referred to earlier have done much to establish and develop the detached youth work model in W.A.

P.I.C.Y.S. lays claim to the achievement that through its collective approach to identifying needs during the years 1978-1983, and more clearly when the Wage Pause and Community Employment Program funding became available, we have been able to register a TEAM model for the first time. It appears that the history of detached workers in W.A. has been one of isolation, burn-out and gross under-resourcing. The past year saw a dramatic change in resourcing and planned support and we found it so strange!

We were surprised that the streetworkers were so readily accepted by the young people who spend much of their time on the inner city streets. Max Kau and Brother Alex in the pre-service training programs in 1983 had led us to expect that this process would take much longer. One of the streetworkers recently commented "... we did good things during the early months. We got to know most of the kids really well but this was out of step with what we were going to do with that information and trust." The streetwork team all agreed that after a year on the streets "we've only just discovered the real potential of what can be done". The acceptance and credibility that the team established throughout the social welfare service network and other government agencies has yet to experience the longitudinal value of the model.

The year was not all smooth running. A rather complex concept of the collective model was planned for the project. However, due to the limited number of people drawn into this structure, the roles became muddled and the lines of authority confused. It would be fair to state that the management of the project became individualised rather than truly collective.

We had much to learn about the appointment and management of staff, provision of leadership and direction, accurate assessment of the levels of support required and how to implement effective planning. These have been addressed in an evaluation process over the past few months and detailed proposal papers prepared for the P.I.C.Y.S. Executive.

STRATEGIES FOR 1985 AND BEYOND

Based on the experience of the last year, we believe that it is essential that wherever possible detached youth workers should operate as a TEAM. The mutual support fellow streetworkers can provide to each other on the street and in the broader linking to support services is strongly endorsed by the results we have seen and as expressed by our streetworkers.

We strongly recommend that government departments, non-government agencies, community groups who consider sponsoring such positions should seriously consider pooling their efforts to create a team rather than operating a worker in isolation. The team or pool of streetworkers model can be implemented in suburban and country regions just as readily as the inner city area.

While we believe that our existing philosophy makes P.I.C.Y.S. the appropriate base for an inner city street work team, P.I.C.Y.S. is not about narrow ownership. If it became evident that the most workable structure was a new collective form involving both government and non-government organisations, then we would participate in the development of such and become a most willing partner. The essential ingredients which we feel have the highest priorities are the effective co-ordination of the team and its autonomy.

1984 saw a concentration of our time and energy on cruising and conflict resolution with individuals. Some linking, identification of gaps and advocacy work was begun but only to a limited degree. It has only been in the last few months that we have commenced improving our awareness and skills in the development of strategies to use and influence the street culture itself. An example which is included in this report involves a strategy for the streetworkers to become a buffer between the police and street youth at a time of potential or actual conflict. Similarly, the response we provided to the Minister for Youth and Community Services regarding the concerns expressed by nightclub owners detailed some specific strategies.

The real potential of the streetworker is not simply in a crisis/one-to-one individual approach to the problems and needs that exist on the street but rather in a developmental approach which is focussed on the processes and structures which exist within and impact on the street culture itself. To establish these we need a reasonable length of time, credibility in staffing and adequate resourcing. One year only projects are simply inadequate and possibly futile.

We envisage that the full development of this model will produce a street life which has young people themselves involved in minimising conflict, putting each other in touch with the services and resources they require and advocating for their own rights, with the role of the streetworker becoming more and more that of facilitation.

The P.I.C.Y.S. team in 1984 was made up with an interesting blend of graduates from the street along with those who had professional training in social work or education. The former street graduates have found it difficult at times to come to grips with some of the organisational aspects of the work while one of the professionally trained persons has often reflected on the culture shock he experienced during the early months. The selection of staff, their preparation and support and the creation of an effective team are matters which need greater care and consideration in 1985.

So what should be our goals for 1985?

Firstly, existing detached youth workers and management in the inner city area should discuss and develop proposals for improved co-ordination and integration.

Secondly, significant funding sources and government departments should commit themselves to at least one streetworker position each.

Thirdly, the team model should be utilised.

Fourthly, a developmental approach should be adopted which operates at the six levels outlined.

Fifthly, that a seminar should be convened early 1985 to address the application of appropriate models for suburban and country regions.

Streetwork in W.A. is clearly a credible and viable mode of intervention within youth culture.

We have yet to realise its full potential. For years a few remarkable people have been strongly committed. It is time many others should join them. You are invited to participate.

Norm Williams

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Material has been drawn from a wide range of sources and where possible acknowledgement is made within the body of the report. Also experiences drawn from the lives of people we have met on the streets have been incorporated. Wherever possible we have attempted to protect their anonymity and therefore have modified some details and used other names.

The material contained in this report is available free of copyright as P.I.C.Y.S. adopts a policy of open ownership. You are encouraged to use this material in any manner which promotes the detached youth work model.

Price: \$6 to help us continue to inform and develop our work.