

## CHAPTER 6

# GOVERNMENT SPONSORED YOUTH AND OTHER RELATED PROGRAMS

## Introduction

The Committee has looked at a number of youth and other related government programs. As a general observation it believes that most homeless youth have not availed themselves of the many government sponsored work preparation schemes. In many cases this has been due to their lack of information about such schemes. It is also appreciated that homeless youth are pre-occupied with more basic needs such as food and shelter, and therefore any thought of participating in youth programs has to take second place. The major thrust of the Committee's recommendations in this report has concentrated on issues concerning adequate shelter and basic support services. It is hoped that if these recommendations are adopted, many more homeless young people will be able to participate in one or more of the schemes discussed below. This will enable them to become more productive adult members of the community and to enjoy a more independent lifestyle.

### Commonwealth funded programs

In other parts of the report the Committee has already discussed various Commonwealth programs which are directly concerned with or closely related to youth homelessness. In particular, the Committee has discussed at great length the Commonwealth/State Youth Services Scheme in Chapter 4. It has discussed the applicability of the Homeless Persons Assistance Program in Chapters 3 and 4 and it has looked at the implications of the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement in Chapters 4 and 7. The provision of Commonwealth funded unemployment benefits has been discussed in Chapter 5.

There are possibly many Commonwealth programs that could be interpreted as having some relevance to homeless youth. In this chapter, the Committee has concentrated on youth and other related programs undertaken by the Departments of Social Security, Education, and the former Department of Employment and Youth Affairs (now the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations).

## Family Support Services Scheme

In October 1980 the Commonwealth Government announced its intention to extend the Family Support Services Scheme by providing funds for a further three years. The aim of this program is to encourage and assist the development of a range of services designed to support families in the responsibilities of the rearing and development of children. A total of \$8.7 million throughout Australia was approved for this

three year pilot scheme.<sup>1</sup> The following types of services are provided under the scheme:<sup>2</sup>

- counselling and home or personal assistance, which includes financial counselling, family development counselling, legal counselling, and home aid.
- educative and community development, which includes parent education, community centres and family centres.
- accommodation, which includes emergency housing, housing advice and referral facilities.
- material relief, which includes cash, food, clothing, etc.

Table 6.1 gives the total amount allocated, the number of service projects and the finalisation date for the pilot phase in each state. Table 6.2 analyses the types of services offered.

**Table 6.1: Family Support Services Scheme (pilot scheme)**

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Total amount allocated for 3-year program</i>	<i>Annual allocation</i>	<i>Number of service projects</i>	<i>Termination date of projects<sup>(1)</sup></i>
New South Wales	2 250 000	750 000	41	December 1982
Victoria	2 100 000	700 000	51	December 1980
Queensland	900 000	300 000	21	December 1982
South Australia	1 200 000	400 000	13	December 1981
Western Australia	1 200 000	400 000	24	August 1982
Tasmania	450 000	150 000	12	December 1982
Northern Territory	450 000	150 000	5	April 1981
Australian Capital Territory	180 000	60 000	4	December 1982
	8 730 000	2 910 000	171	

<sup>(1)</sup> Due to the varying dates of the states take-up of this offer, the scheme has different termination dates in each state.

Source: Department of Social Security.

**Table 6.2: Types of Services Offered**

<i>Currently operating service projects (excluding evaluation)</i>	<i>N.S.W</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>W.A.</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>N.T.</i>	<i>A.C.T.</i>
Counselling and home personal assistance --								
Financial counselling	4	10	3	2	2	..	..	2
Legal counselling	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other personal and family counselling	16	..	8	4	11	5	2	3
Home aide/homemaker	14	19	10	6	6	2	..	1
Family development	6	..	2	1	1	1	3	..
Educative/community development --								
Parent education	10	..	2	6	2	..	..	1
Community/family centres	5	..	..	1	2	5	..	1
Accommodation and related --								
Emergency housing	8	15	4	..	3	2	1	..
Housing advice/referral	11	19	4	..	2	..	..	..
Material relief --								
Material relief (cash, food, clothing and other assistance)	1	1	4	..	1	..	..	..

Source: Department of Social Security.

## Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service

Since an amendment to Part VIII of the Social Services Act in 1977, eligibility has been widened to enable the provision of Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service services to virtually any disabled person in the broad working age group who could benefit from them. Many young people are assisted each year by this Service to achieve greater independence and in many instances to gain employment.<sup>3</sup>

During the course of the public hearings, the Committee was told on several occasions that a number of the homeless youth could be described as mildly intellectually or physically handicapped. The Committee would see it as a logical consequence that homeless youth with these disabilities should be given every opportunity to benefit from the Service.

The majority of young people assisted by the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service are aged 16 years and over. However, young people aged 14 or 15 may be accepted by the Service under certain circumstances. While programs for young people are provided at Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service General Centres and Work Adjustment Centres, the work preparation programs conducted by the Service cater almost exclusively for young school leavers.<sup>4</sup>

Commonwealth Rehabilitation Centres cater for people who have physical disabilities, often as the result of accident or injury. Comprehensive rehabilitation programs are offered to suit individual needs. Components which may be included are medical, vocational, social, educational and psychological. The objective of an individual's program is to maximize his potential, and the likely return to the labour force or the achievement of greater independent living in the community.<sup>5</sup>

Specialised programs of work adjustment are offered in three Work Adjustment Centres (Reset Manufacturing, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane). Young people from a variety of sources including Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service programs and Work Preparation Centres may attend these facilities before seeking employment.<sup>6</sup>

At the Work Preparation Centres, mildly intellectually handicapped school leavers receive assessment, counselling and training in both independent living skills and vocational preparation to foster their personal and social development and employment potential.<sup>7</sup> Two centres were initially established at South Yarra (Melbourne) and Granville (Sydney) and have been supported since 1976 with research and evaluation teams from Monash and Macquarie Universities respectively. Both centres have a capacity of 50.<sup>8</sup>

Success rates at both centres have been high. For example, follow-up studies assessing retention in employment showed that in 1978, 76.7 per cent of the initial intake (1974-75) of Granville trainees were still in employment.<sup>9</sup>

As a result of the success of these centres, further centres have been developed. It is estimated that 4500 mildly retarded young people leave school each year and as many as half this number could benefit substantially from a work preparation program. The present centres have an annual turnover of between 80 and 100 clients each and waiting lists are substantial.<sup>10</sup> If these success rates can be maintained then, in the Committee's view, many more work preparation centres for the mildly retarded should be established. At present less than five per cent of the number who could actually benefit from such schemes are catered for each year.

## Decentralised professional social work services

The Department of Social Security has undergone an extensive decentralisation program, a key aspect of which is the wider role required of social workers.<sup>11</sup> Social workers are being integrated into the regional office management structures. Managers, social workers and senior administrative officers now constitute the regional office executive team. In this context, social workers are expected to assist the regional manager to monitor the office performance. They are involved in the implementation of all programs delivered by the regional office to ensure that they are effective in meeting community needs.<sup>12</sup>

Social workers have a particular responsibility to ensure that all eligible persons and organisations receive accurate information on the Department's programs.<sup>13</sup> In addition, social workers liaise with community groups and local or state governments on matters of mutual concern. One of the main points of contact for homeless youth is the regional office of the Department of Social Security. The placement of social workers at regional offices should allow their early contact with homeless youth. For some, this may be all that is required to help them avoid the pitfalls and hardships that are so frequently encountered through homelessness.

## Employment and training programs

The Commonwealth Government has substantially increased funding of employment assistance programs for the 1981-82 financial year. Table 6.3 sets out expenditure on the main areas of training and employment services over the years 1979-80 to 1981-82.

**Table 6.3: Expenditure on Employment Assistance Programs 1979-80 to 1981-82 (\$ million)**

	<i>1979-80 Actual</i>	<i>1980-81 Actual</i>	<i>1981-82 Estimate</i>
Trade training	46.9	68.1	76.4
Skill training	12.2	14.9	20.2
Youth training	28.3	47.5	79.4
Special training	12.0	16.6	17.9
Employment services	62.2	73.8	82.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>161.6</b>	<b>220.9</b>	<b>276.7</b>

Source: Budget Statements 1981-82, Budget Paper No. 1.

### Trade Training

#### *Commonwealth Rebate for Apprentice Full-time Training (CRAFT)*

The CRAFT scheme is the Commonwealth's major apprenticeship support program. It is a scheme of financial subsidies to employers to encourage them to employ and train apprentices. There are four main subsidies:<sup>14</sup>

- (1) Technical education rebate—a tax-free rebate to all employers who release apprentices during paid working hours to undertake a prescribed basic trade course. The 1981 rates vary from \$15.00 to \$27.00 per day according to trade group, stage of technical course and year of apprenticeship.
- (2) Special rebate—a rebate to those employers who release to prescribed basic trade courses those apprentices who have undertaken approved pre-apprenticeship/pre-vocational training. The 1981 rates vary from \$21.00 to \$31.00 per day.
- (3) Off-the-job training rebate—tax-free payments to employers for the release of apprentices during paid working hours in the first year of apprenticeship to undertake approved off-the-job training other than prescribed trade course. The daily rebates for each trade group payable for each day of release is Metal \$16.00, Electrical \$19.00, Building \$22.00, Printing \$19.00, Food \$18.00, Vehicle \$15.00 and Other \$15.00.
- (4) Living-away-from-home allowance—for first and second year apprentices compelled to live away from home to obtain, or remain in, an apprenticeship. In 1981 the allowance is \$24.00 per week in first year and \$10.00 per week in second year.

All benefits under CRAFT are increased annually and all, except the living-away-from-home allowance, are tax free. Table 6.4 shows the expenditure on CRAFT over the last three years:

**Table 6.4: Expenditure on the Commonwealth Rebate for Apprentice Full-Time Training (CRAFT) (\$ million)**

1979-80	1980-81	1981-82
42.7	64.5	72.0

Source: Budget Paper No. 1, 1981-82, p. 173.

### *Special Apprenticeship Assistance Program*

The Special Apprenticeship Assistance Program was introduced under the National Employment and Training (NEAT) System in 1974 and aims to reduce individual apprentice retrenchments and wastage due to economic circumstances or work shortages faced by employers. It also provides for financial incentives to employers to take on retrenched apprentices.<sup>15</sup>

Benefits under the Special Apprenticeship Assistance Program include the following:

- to employers to retain apprentices whose employment and training they have sought to suspend or cancel
- to employers to engage retrenched apprentices
- to retrenched apprentices to allow them to undertake or complete their prescribed basic trade course and/or approved off-the-job training
- subsidies to employers which are the relevant NEAT in-plant allowances
- subsidies to apprentices which are the relevant NEAT formal allowances.

About 1300 apprentices are expected to be assisted in 1981-82 either through a wage subsidy to employers or training allowances to individual apprentices. Table 6.5 shows the expenditure on this scheme from 1979-80 to 1981-82.

**Table 6.5: Expenditure on Special Apprenticeship Assistance Program 1979-80 to 1981-82**

1979-80	1980-81	1981-82 (estimate)
\$m	\$m	\$m
1.7	1.2	0.9

Source: Budget Paper No. 1, 1981-82, p. 173.

### *Group One-Year Training Scheme*

Under this scheme apprentices indentured to private employers may receive full time training for the first year of their apprenticeship in Commonwealth and state government establishments, which would otherwise have surplus training capacity. The cost of the training and the wages during the year are paid by the Commonwealth, and at the end of this period apprentices commence work with their employers. In 1981-82, 270 apprentices are expected to be trained under this scheme at a cost of \$1.8 million.<sup>16</sup>

### *Group Apprenticeship Support Scheme*

Employer or industry associations usually run group apprenticeship schemes and the State and Federal Ministers for Labour provide financial assistance. Under this joint Commonwealth/State Scheme the association indentures apprentices who are leased to participating employers on a rotation basis. This allows employers who do not require or who cannot afford a full-time apprentice to use one as required. It also allows apprentices to receive broader training, as they are rotated between employers who may emphasise different skills in the trade, and it allows greater scope for off-the-job training. The 1981-82 estimate is based on assisting 16 projects.<sup>17</sup>

### *Special Training Arrangements*

Commonwealth/State Trade Training Schemes are being developed in response to various geographic and skill-specific shortages of tradesmen. Subsidies under NEAT and CRAFT are provided to employers who take on apprentices (both young and older people) under the program, with the view to supplementing normal apprenticeship numbers in order to help overcome a perceived future shortage in a specific trade. These arrangements are subject to negotiation with state governments and employer and union groups.<sup>18</sup>

## **Skills Training**

### *Skills in Demand Projects*

Funds to this program have been significantly increased. The amount of money allocated has risen from \$0.5 million in 1980-81 to \$8.0 million in 1981-82. This is expected to provide for about 3000 approvals in 1981-82. The individual is entitled to receive unemployment benefits plus a training allowance component of \$37 per week. Financial assistance is provided on a project by project basis. The criteria for funding are as follows:<sup>19</sup>

- there must be an agreed shortage in a particular locality
- the training arrangements must have industry-wide application
- there must be a net increase in trained labour and training capacity
- preference should be given to the selection of trainees from suitable unemployed persons

- provision must be made for either the employment of trainees prior to the commencement of training or firm guarantees of employment on the successful completion of training
- there should be arrangements for joint industry/government involvement in the development, management and evaluation of training arrangements.

### *General Training Assistance*

This form of assistance has two components. One is an on-the-job subsidy which is available to an employer when a Commonwealth Employment Office is unable to locate and refer to him an appropriately experienced or qualified unemployed person. An employer is offered a subsidy to provide training for someone to fill that position. In 1981-82, \$4.9 million was allocated to this form of assistance and it is expected that approximately 8000 trainees will be approved.<sup>20</sup>

The other component of the program is the provision of an allowance to individuals to provide income support while undertaking formal training away from employment. The allowance is only available for training in occupations where the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations forecasts indicate that there will be a demand for such skills at the completion of training. In 1981-82, \$2.0 million has been allocated to this form of assistance which provides for 1100 training approvals.<sup>21</sup> A similar allowance to the skills in demand scheme is paid to the individual.

### *Industry Training Services*

Support for Industry Training Services is provided to encourage the systematic development of training programs through all sectors of industry and commerce. Expenditure for this in 1981-82 is estimated to be about \$5.3 million.<sup>22</sup>

## **Youth Training**

### *School to Work Transition Allowances*

Since the beginning of 1981, allowances equivalent to the employment benefit plus \$6.00 per week have been available to eligible youth.<sup>23</sup> The purpose of the allowance is to overcome the previous impediment of a loss of unemployment benefits when undertaking education or training. It is payable to trainees attending approved School to Work Transition Courses and 'other' courses in TAFE institutions. The Education Program for Unemployed Youth (EPUY) has been transferred to this scheme.

To be eligible for the allowances trainees in the School to Work Transition Courses must be between 15 and 19 years of age (15 to 24 years for EPUY courses), be registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service, and have been unemployed and away from full time education for at least four of the previous 12 months.<sup>24</sup> In 1980-81, 8800 trainees were assisted. The \$11.5 million to be spent in 1981-82 provides for a further 16 000 trainees to be helped.<sup>25</sup>

To be eligible for the Transition Allowance while attending an approved 'other' TAFE course, the trainee must be between 15 and 25 years of age and have been away from full time education and unemployed for at least eight of the previous 12 months. In 1981-82 it is estimated that 1000 trainees will be assisted at a cost of \$1.5 million.<sup>26</sup>

Under this scheme there is also provision for a pre-apprenticeship allowance. This is meant to encourage students to undertake training leading to an apprenticeship. Twenty dollars per week is available to students in pre-apprenticeship courses at TAFE institutions where either the 'Transition' allowance or assistance under the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme is not available. Expenditure in 1981-82 is estimated to be \$1.3 million, providing for about 1650 new trainees.<sup>27</sup>

### *Special Youth Employment Training Program (SYETP)*

The Special Youth Employment Training Program (SYETP) provides a subsidy to employers who agree to train and give work experience to youth. There are two types of subsidy available:

- standard SYETP, which is \$55.00 per week for a maximum of seventeen weeks. It is payable to employers who take on and train eligible young people aged 15 to 24 years who have been unemployed and away from full-time education for four months in the last twelve months; and
- extended SYETP, which is \$80.00 per week for seventeen weeks followed by \$55.00 per week for a further seventeen weeks. This is payable to employers who take on and train eligible young people aged 18 to 24 years who have been unemployed and away from full-time education for eight months in the last twelve months.

Participants of the scheme may also be placed in Commonwealth Departments with a full wage cost subsidy being paid. Subsidies for places in state establishments have been recently discontinued.<sup>29</sup>

### **Special Training Program**

#### *Training for the Disabled*

A wide range of services and training is provided for the physically and mentally disabled to assist them find employment. (The Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service has already been discussed in detail.) Formal training is available to the disabled in addition to the formal training allowances and on-the-job training subsidy outlined above. They are eligible for tutorial assistance, local fares assistance, and grants for the purchase of training aids.<sup>30</sup> Employers can receive on-the-job training subsidies. These are:<sup>31</sup>

- for the first half of training, \$157.10 a week for adults and \$83.20 a week for juniors;
- for the second half of training, \$69.30 a week for adults and \$50.80 a week for juniors; or
- the award wage, whichever is less.

The length of training depends on the occupation, with a minimum of 20 weeks. Up to \$2000 is available for modification of the workplace to meet the needs of the disabled. Retraining is available for the employed disabled person whose job is at risk or who must change jobs because of the disability. In such cases employers receive on-the-job subsidies described above.

#### *Training for Aborigines*

The Government has taken specific measures to encourage the training and employment of Aborigines, including:<sup>32</sup>

- promotional activities to boost employment opportunities for Aborigines in private industry;
- skilled training and work experience for Aborigines in a wide range of occupations in Commonwealth and state government departments and authorities;
- specialised employment and training assistance provided by Commonwealth Employment Service officers for Aboriginal people, including those in remote communities.

Assistance is available to employers who agree to employ and train Aboriginal job seekers. Amounts equal to the formal training allowance and on-the-job subsidy rates are available for eligible people. The period for which an on-the-job subsidy is paid may be varied according to the needs of individual trainees. For example, where an employer takes on an Aboriginal apprentice, the payment of an on-the-job subsidy may be



made for the period of the apprenticeship. In some cases additional assistance and allowances may be made available to Aborigines.

**Table 6.6: Expenditure and Numbers Assisted under the Special Youth Employment Training Program (SYETP) 1976-77 to 1981-82**

	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82 (est.)
Trainees assisted	9 570	63 000	66 300	54 353	76 000	88 900
Expenditure (\$m)	6.6	47.1	82.6	25.5	41.3	65.1

Source: Letter to the Committee from the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs dated 19 June 1981, and Budget Paper No. 1 1981-82, p. 178.

### **Commonwealth Employment Service**

The Commonwealth Employment Service has a network of 305 local officers. During 1980-81 it processed 1 814 930 registrations and assisted in 607 563 placements. In 1981-82 it is expected that 109 000 participants will be approved for employment and training programs.<sup>33</sup>

### **Other Commonwealth programs**

#### *School to Work Transition Program*

The School to Work Transition Program is administered by the Commonwealth Department of Education. It has the following objectives:<sup>34</sup>

- to increase the range of vocational education options in schools and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutions;
- to provide an additional 50 000 educational opportunities for this group by 1984;
- to ensure effective vocational guidance and counselling services are available to all young people;
- to rationalise allowances and benefits to provide appropriate incentives;
- to obtain and develop community support;
- to promote more effective links between education and employment sectors.

It is estimated that the total amount available for transition projects will be about \$58.1 million (apart from the estimated \$13.0 million available for allowances).<sup>35</sup> Of this, up to \$25.3 million will be available for transition projects within TAFE institutions, \$30.3 million for government secondary schools and \$2.5 million for non-government schools.<sup>36</sup>

#### *Community Youth Support Scheme (CYSS)*

New guidelines were issued for the Community Youth Support Scheme on 27 January 1982. The stated objective of the Scheme is 'to encourage communities to assist local unemployed young people to develop their capacity for obtaining and retaining employment, and also to become more self-reliant during periods of unemployment'. The funds for the scheme are made as grants to local community bodies which administer and direct the individual projects.

Those eligible to participate in Community Youth Support Scheme (CYSS) project activities are unemployed people over school leaving age but under 25 years (or with special exemption) who are not in full time education.

Particular emphasis is placed on activities positively linked to employment. The Department has stated that some of these would include:<sup>37</sup>

- Employment-related activities. This includes sale of articles and work pool arrangements, but does not include direct financing of work co-operatives;
- training in job skills and in searching for jobs;
- work observation and experience, including community service work;
- advice, information and referral services (if the project can demonstrate that it is competent to provide these services and if no alternative exists);
- help with life skills such as budgeting and nutrition which increase self-reliance and contribute to the young person's ability to gain and then retain employment;
- incidental job placement, with emphasis on casual and part-time work; and
- incidental recreation activities which also contribute to achieving the manpower objectives of the Scheme.

## **Purpose of programs**

The Commonwealth Government has introduced a wide range of manpower and training programs. According to the former Department of Employment and Youth Affairs the programs are designed to:<sup>38</sup>

- better match those looking for work and the opportunities available to them;
- upgrade skills to meet needs as they emerge in the rapidly changing economic environment of the 1980s;
- increase intakes of apprentices and quality of apprenticeship training through incentives to employers;
- help the transition of young people from school to work;
- provide work experience for those who have difficulty in gaining employment;
- maintain the motivation and work orientation of young people; and
- meet the needs of special groups such as Aboriginals and the disabled.

## **Conclusion**

The vast majority of homeless youth are finding it extremely difficult to obtain full-time secure and satisfying employment. It would seem then that most homeless youth should make themselves available to participate in one of a number of the schemes outlined above. However, the real difficulty is to try to establish a medium to long term secure home base from which to participate in work preparation schemes. The insecurity, lack of motivation and distrust that arises from a young person's state of homelessness places many obstacles in the path of someone trying to plan beyond the attainment of the immediate day to day necessities of life, such as food and shelter. It is understandable, therefore, that many homeless youth not are actively seeking to participate in these work preparation schemes.

The Committee believes that once the immediate problems of homeless youth are properly catered for, many of these work preparation schemes could provide valuable experience to this particular disadvantaged group. The Committee also believes that there is a need to ensure that homeless youth are properly informed about the variety of schemes that are available, and that they should be given every assistance to participate in programs which suit their individual needs.

