

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Homeless Youth

Report from the Senate Standing Committee on Social Welfare

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Terms of reference

The causes of, the problems associated with and the effect on Australian society of homeless youth, including—

- (a) the availability of suitable emergency and long-term accommodation and the factors affecting access by youth to such accommodation;*
- (b) the availability of and the need for complementary services and other community support;*
- (c) the appropriate responsibilities of governments at all levels in the provision of services to this group; and*
- (d) the role and responsibilities of the family in supporting young people.*

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Senator Shirley Walters (Tasmania), Chairman

Senator Neville Bonner (Queensland)

Senator Ron Elstob (South Australia)

Senator Pat Giles (Western Australia)

Senator Don Grimes (Tasmania)

Senator Bern Kilgariff (Northern Territory)

Former Member of the Committee

Senator Jean Melzer (Victoria) (to 30 June 1981)

Secretary

Peter Keele

The Senate

Parliament House

Canberra

'Homeless youths' needs are hardly extravagant and certainly fall within the inalienable rights of all people; the right to food, shelter and a positive, loving family environment. Since homeless youngsters do not have these needs fulfilled in a family context, it may be necessary to explore independent living facilities, teach them life skills and give them supports for an interim period, while they move toward adulthood.'

United States Senate, December 1980

Report of the Sub-committee on the Constitution of the Committee on the Judiciary,
U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington.

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A STRATEGY FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

The Committee has developed the following strategy which it urges both government and community (particularly families) to acknowledge and recognise.

- 1.** That families have a legal and/or moral responsibility to support and shelter their children up to at least 18 years of age. This responsibility is reinforced in the Commonwealth Family Law Act 1975.
- 2.** That when family support breaks down irretrievably or is non-existent, both government and the community have a clear responsibility to provide the necessary support for the young person until such time as he or she is able to make the final transition to full independent living. Indications for intervention at any other stage by government are not at all clearcut and therefore it cannot be taken that assistance will be automatic and unconditional. Care must be taken that government does not usurp the responsibility of parents under most family situations.
- 3.** That young people have obligations. They cannot expect that the community will unconditionally support them if they wish to become independent without first being able to establish appropriate living skills and secure full-time employment.
- 4.** That family breakdown and youth unemployment are major factors which are associated with youth homelessness.
- 5.** That there is no perfect substitute for a strong supportive family network and full-time employment, and therefore any youth housing programs and income support schemes must be second best.
- 6.** That homeless youth programs should not isolate homeless youth from mainstream society.
- 7.** That homeless youth are individuals and the delivery of any program to assist them must acknowledge that personal needs of each participant may vary considerably.
- 8.** That homeless youth are an integral part of our community and their rights to public housing should be recognised. However, the needs of one group should always be seen in the context of the needs of all other groups. While hard and fast rules cannot be established regarding the setting of priorities, broad guidelines are nonetheless frequently adopted. For example, it is accepted that low income families should receive preference over homeless youth when it comes to the allocation of low cost public housing.
- 9.** That greater utilisation of social welfare resources can only be achieved by greater co-operation between the many well-established agencies and newly emerging groups. Regional programs managed by broadly based community committees which pool resources and talents will provide a far more effective social welfare delivery system than organisations working in isolation. There is a need for greater co-operation rather than competition.
- 10.** That government sponsored youth housing projects should endeavour to make full use of all existing dwellings before new capital programs are approved. There are many hostels, institutions and houses that are either lying idle or grossly under-utilised. Every effort should be made to assist schemes which can bring these types of accommodation up to an acceptable standard for homeless youth.
- 11.** That Commonwealth Government funds for homeless youth programs be made available only to community groups and organisations who have fully costed their proposals and have laid down clearly identifiable standards, goals and objectives and are willing to submit necessary data to facilitate the planning of services.
- 12.** That Commonwealth Government funds for homeless youth should be made available on the basis of a demonstrated need in a particular region or district.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 3

CRISIS ACCOMMODATION

1. That the Youth Services Scheme guidelines issued by the Commonwealth Department of Social Security should state clearly that youth workers must attempt to ascertain the circumstances of a child becoming homeless and, wherever possible, should reunite the young person with his parents.
2. That the Commonwealth/State funded Youth Services Scheme be continued, but that there be a rationalisation of existing services.
3. That as part of the continuation of the Youth Services Scheme, adequate funds be made available to provide a nationally co-ordinated 'in service' training program. Further, funding of particular programs under the Scheme should be conditional on that program ensuring that all staff do undertake some form of approved 'in service' training.
4. That a rate of pay be determined by the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission which would establish a salary scale for youth refuge workers that would be consistent with other rates of pay in the social welfare area.
5. That the present form of funding (Commonwealth/State matched grants) for the Youth Services Scheme be continued for the majority of funds expended on the Scheme.
6. That matching grants provided by the Commonwealth and state governments should be substantially increased from their present level of \$2 million per annum.
7. That the Commonwealth provides additional funds to ensure that a properly co-ordinated data collection study is undertaken and that a nationally supervised 'in service' youth refuge worker training scheme is established.

CHAPTER 4

BEYOND THE YOUTH REFUGE

8. That more flexible housing policies at both Commonwealth and state levels be implemented which will make more efficient use of existing housing stocks and enable the conversion of other government owned dwellings to suitable residential accommodation.
9. That all state governments should seriously study the establishment of a universal bond insurance scheme.
10. That if the guidelines under the Homeless Persons Assistance Act cannot be modified in such a way as to help homeless youth housing schemes, part of the \$10 million special capital grant should be transferred to another area where youth housing schemes will be given more favourable treatment.
11. That money available under the \$10 million capital grants program be made available to fund medium to long-term supportive households. No funds should be made available from this grant to provide additional youth refuges such as those established under the Youth Services Scheme.
12. That funding for homeless youth under the \$10 million special capital grant program should give priority to community groups who put up medium to long-term supportive household proposals.

13. That all youth housing proposals should seek a commitment to both the conversion of non-residential properties and the renovation of vacant dwellings in order to maximise the accommodation available and to offer a range of housing alternatives for homeless youth. In this way the contribution of Commonwealth Funding to housing projects will result in the mobilisation of housing resources many times greater in value than the contribution made.

14. That Commonwealth funds be made available for youth housing proposals requiring the purchase of a dwelling only if there are no existing dwellings which could be made available to a particular community group within a specified region.

15. That further funding from both Commonwealth and state governments could be made available under the Housing Assistance Act 1981, once it is clearly demonstrated that the medium to long term supportive households do fulfil a necessary and continuing need for homeless youth.

CHAPTER 5

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND INCOME SECURITY

16. That an allowance equivalent to the difference between the over 18 years of age unemployment benefit rate and the junior unemployment benefit rate should be made available to certain unemployed youth under 18 years of age. These would include:

- (a) those who have had to establish themselves away from the family or statutory home;
- (b) those whose family's financial circumstances are such that the additional benefit would enable the family to remain together as a unit rather than the young person being forced into possible homelessness.

Apart from special instances, the allowance would be paid directly to the hostel or supportive household which is accommodating the young person after an appropriate application has been made on his or her behalf.

17. That if senior secondary students (over 16 years of age) are homeless and have to seek accommodation in a youth hostel or supportive household, the Commonwealth Government should pay the cost of that person's board and lodgings and ensure that the Secondary Allowance is paid directly to the young person concerned. The total cost involved should not exceed the adult unemployment rate.

CHAPTER 1

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The problem of homeless youth is not new, and according to the Committee's evidence has been with us for a long time. It appears, however, to have become more visible in recent years.

There are a number of explanations as to why this may be so. One reason could be that the problem has increased. This cannot be stated with any certainty, however, as statistics on the subject have only recently been available and these are considered far from reliable. The media has obviously contributed to a more general awareness of the problem though it does tend towards sensationalism and gives the impression that the problem *is* a new one, and indeed a very large one. As well, with the problem being recognised by governments and community groups through the provision of services such as crisis accommodation, what may have been a largely hidden phenomenon has been able to surface.

The Committee has considered a number of aspects in this chapter. To begin with it has looked at the family unit —its changing nature, the pressure it is being subjected to by our modern society and the need for it to be supported. To understand the nature of homelessness one must understand the nature of society today. Changing community attitudes, rapid technological change, chronic unemployment, inflation, high rents, a scarcity of housing, television, consumerism —all typify our social fabric. The stresses arising from these and other factors seem to be becoming too much for many of our families to overcome, resulting in family dysfunction. The family unit itself is changing, becoming more and more isolated. The extended family of grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins seems to be losing out to the nuclear family, with a consequent lack of support in times of need and difficulty.

Next, the Committee has spent some time considering available survey material on the problem of homeless youth. Just who our homeless youth are, why they become homeless, and from what situation they are coming is not straightforward, but surveys on the subject do provide a rough profile. The effects of homelessness on young people are also difficult to gauge for while homelessness is a consequence of a multiplicity of factors, so must be its effects. One could say the same of the needs of homeless youth. Indeed, it was stressed to the Committee repeatedly by witnesses that homeless youth must not be regarded as a homogeneous group, and whilst a rough profile emerges from the data, it must be regarded as no more than that.

Having considered what it believes to be the two fundamental aspects of this chapter, the Committee has turned its attention to a number of issues about which it is either particularly concerned or towards which it feels attention needs to be directed. First, the effect unemployment is having on not just homeless youth but on our young people generally. Secondly, the education system. The Committee has noted the importance of the school as an identifying agent of children experiencing family problems, as well as noting some shortcomings with current teacher training courses and the school curriculum. Thirdly, the Committee has made mention of what appears to be a

serious problem but on which it has very little information —homeless youth with institutional backgrounds.

Finally, the Committee has looked at the position of two groups of people who it feels are of particular concern and in need of services other than those already being provided for homeless youth —Aboriginal and Indo-Chinese refugee youth. The Committee was gravely concerned with the high numbers of Aboriginal youth (relative to the general Aboriginal population) depicted in survey material. This is despite various factors (discussed in that section) which are obviously having the effect of reducing the numbers of Aboriginal youth using the services surveyed.

Like Aboriginals, Indo-Chinese refugee youth must be recognised as a special group with special needs. Their cultural background is vastly different from that of Anglo-Saxon youth and consequently they are not readily assimilated into the homeless youth services currently available.

The Committee feels that all these issues are worthy of considerable attention by both the community and governments.

The family

A number of factors are influencing the family today to the point where it appears that the traditional concept of family is changing. Perhaps as little as a generation ago the image conveyed by the word 'family' was one of father, mother and children, where father was the breadwinner, mother remained at home to tend house, and the children to a large extent resided at home until they married.

The family unit is undergoing various changes. The structure of the family is altering, the family is becoming more mobile, values are changing and greater social pressures are having to be borne.

A number of dramatic changes to the family occurred during the seventies. According to evidence received from the Victorian Government, 'changing attitudes of Australians towards marriage, fertility and family formation are underlined by marked trends in the key social components of household formation'.¹ There has been a substantial decline in formal marriages. In 1971 there were 118 000 marriages in Australia but despite an increase in population only 104 000 in 1979. In 1971 there were 13 002 official divorces but by 1980 this figure had risen to 39 258. There were 101 000 first marriages in 1971 but this had declined to 74 799 by 1980.

The seventies also saw a substantial trend towards an increase in divorces, and remarriages involving at least one divorced partner rose from 17 000 in 1971 to 30 000 in 1977.² (The Committee is unable to provide more recent figures.) The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports from the 1976 Census that most marriages of over 30 year olds were remarriages, and 80 per cent of divorcees under 30 remarried within six years. Statistics from the 1981 Census are not yet available. The Borrie Report of 1978 states that almost 20 per cent of all marriages are remarriages.³ Also, it has been estimated that by the late 1980s lone parent families may constitute 30 per cent of the total population, and that one in three children in Australia will at some time in their lives experience living with a single parent.⁴

The family has also undergone change due to the increasing number of mothers entering the workforce. Indeed, whereas in the past it was not common for mother to be working outside of the home, today the situation is almost reversed. Social pressure on women over the past decade has encouraged them to pursue careers of their own rather

than be content with the supporting role of wife and mother. Many women feel a need to justify remaining at home as full-time homekeepers. Others have tried to combine the traditional role with a place in the workforce, and it may well be that women under such stress lack the energy to constantly demonstrate the demanding support required by growing children. The Committee does not believe that mothers in the workforce of necessity negatively affects the family—indeed the situation may positively influence the family either by relieving financial pressures or by being more suitable to the individual mother's needs than a full-time home role. It does, however, contribute to the changing nature of the family.

Family structure has also changed due to young people being more likely to leave home today than in the past to establish themselves independently prior to marriage. Not so long ago it was 'normal' to remain at home until one married, unless education or work pursuits required moving to a different location (particularly so for country youth). When the economic climate is favourable the transition from family life to independence can generally be accomplished smoothly. Present conditions, however, such as chronic unemployment, inflation and scarcity of inexpensive housing can severely impede the transition.

It does seem that there has been a decline in the extended family network and an increased isolation of the nuclear family. One reason for this may be the increased mobility of families. The current average term of residence of a family in one house is four to six years.⁵ Data from the 1976 Census shows that about 40 per cent of the population moved house between 1971-76. Sixteen per cent of people over one year of age changed residence during 1975-76. Annual surveys of internal migration conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics since 1969 show that on average those who moved did so a number of times during the five year period.⁶ A consequence of mobility is a loss of support from the extended family, friends, neighbours and informal community networks. The young are also faced with disrupted schooling and a loss of friends.

As well, as cities grow suburbs become further and further apart, which can increase isolation by reducing contacts with family and friends. Many new suburbs do not have established community groups and may have only limited recreational facilities. A good deal of time and money that may otherwise have been spent with the family is spent instead travelling to and from work. Consequently, there is less time, money and energy available for family activities. It seems reasonable to surmise that a family living without traditional supports such as relations and friends is more vulnerable to the growing pressures on households today and hence is more likely to break down under stress.

According to evidence received by the Committee, it is a common occurrence that with the breakdown of one nuclear family and the formation from it of two separate households, the adolescents accepted in the original household do not find a place in the reconstructed families. Where in the past a relation or family friend would have provided board, this is not so often the case now.⁷

Family values are also changing, with parents and children often clashing over the old and the new. This is particularly so in regard to migrant families, where parents conflict with their 'Australianised' children over traditional values and social customs. For example, migrant parents often come from a rural background whilst their children are raised in urban Australia. The parents have high expectations of their children often wishing them to undertake tertiary education. The children, on the other hand, may prefer some other form of education or training. The struggle between parents and children as the former attempt to retain the traditional moral and social customs of their homelands while their children try to meet the demands of their Anglo-Australian peer groups can create serious family friction. The Committee was told that 'one outcome of this tension, the breaking away of youth from the tight family circle, is likely to have

more exacerbatory effects upon parental attitudes, often precluding any possibility of reconciliation'.⁸

The family today is subject to enormous social pressure. We have become very much a materialistic society, with the media (particularly through advertising) and the ready availability of finance (hire purchase, credit cards, etc.) conveying the impression to us all that even the most expensive goods are within reach. Indeed, to fulfil the image of the ideal family, the caring mother, the trendy teenager, etc., such goods are portrayed as necessities. We are becoming more and more a society divided along economic lines, of those who have and those who have not, leading to frustration and bitterness.

Many young couples today expect to have almost immediately what their parents often never attained in a lifetime. Families are postponed until the house is fully furnished, the new car and the colour television bought, and so on. We seem to be becoming a more introverted and self-concerned society, expecting and demanding more and yet perhaps willing to give less. Whereas not so long ago one would know almost everyone in one's street, today many of us do not know our immediate neighbours. How much television and advertising have contributed to this change is a separate question worthy of its own report.

Apart from increased pressures on the family generally, there seem to be greater social pressures being placed on youth. Our young people are having to grow up much faster than they did in the past. The media and advertising have again played a significant role here, aiming more and more at the younger generation. For example, even six and seven year olds are conscious of fashion today, and nine to 13 year olds form a large part of the music industry market. There is a much greater awareness of sexuality among youth, and increased pressures on them as a result of the sexual freedom which is part of today's society.

Society seems to be showing the signs of these strains and pressures. Today we have an increased incidence of drug problems, crime rates, divorce rates, cardio vascular and other stress related diseases, etc. The Committee believes that there is an urgent need for less emphasis to be placed on consumerism and more weight to be given to greater communication between people, especially extended family members, and to relaxation and leisure pursuits.

Support for the family

Many families may have been able to avoid family breakdown had some form of assistance been available to them at the time of crisis. Refuges do fulfil this role to an extent by enabling both the young person and the family a breathing space, a period to reassess the problem. Unfortunately, in the main they are unable to provide follow-up care and need to be regarded as only one part of a broader range of services. The type of assistance necessary will vary according to the individual family's needs. In some cases material assistance such as income maintenance or improved housing may be necessary. In other cases counselling (in the case of migrant families, or families with authoritarian fathers, for example) may be desirable. Measures taken prior to family breakdown which prevent that breakdown from occurring would prove far less costly in all aspects of the word than picking up the pieces after the breakdown has occurred. The Committee realises, however, that while this is the most desirable course to follow it is very difficult to devise programs that enable early intervention.

Nonetheless, all levels of government have a responsibility in this regard, particularly in the form of funding. Community groups, where possible, should be the bodies through which support services are supplied. Members of these groups can provide mutual support which assists in lessening the pressures on the family arising from

'coping' in isolation. As was stated in evidence to the Committee, 'co-operative developments such as these break down the endemic isolation and closed nature of the modern Australian 'family', helping to prevent tension and conflict within'.⁹

The Committee recognises that the responsibility of the family for its members should not be shirked and passed on to the community at large. It also recognises, however, that some families are simply unable to cope. Traditionally it has been accepted that parents will support their children both financially and emotionally throughout their school years and until such time as they become employed and independent. Most young people make the transfer to independence with solid family support and little recourse to outside assistance. With high levels of unemployment and inflation and, more particularly, the steady rise in the average duration of unemployment, more and more families are finding it increasingly difficult to assist their children financially beyond school years.

One must also recognise the situation where although parents have no financial problems, emotionally they are lacking as mothers and fathers and hence are unable to give to their child the caring support needed. It may be that the parents' own backgrounds have been lacking and as a consequence no learning or understanding of parenthood has taken place.

Conclusion

Increased pressures of modern society coupled with economic hardship are forcing families to withstand more and more pressures merely to survive. Yet the family is the basic unit of our society and its stability is therefore fundamental to the stability of society itself. Support of the nuclear family by the extended family, friendships and community groups need to be encouraged. A very high percentage of our homeless youth are coming from broken families or families undergoing crisis. This in itself points strongly to a need to strengthen the family before breakdown occurs.

Where there is no contact with the extended family, parents are lacking an avenue of support during periods of difficulty, or the opportunity of 'time out' from the responsibility of being parents. Some families, however, are totally dysfunctional and unable to supply any support to their children. It is unlikely that these families can be helped and hence responsibility must be passed on to the government.

A profile of homeless youth

'In every survey, interview or research project, it is overwhelmingly apparent that the average, well adjusted teenager does not become homeless. Even if an independent-minded young person leaves home, he is able to muster the support of friends and also of his own family, and he/she ends up in a socially acceptable living situation. . .

*The youth that become homeless have already been rejected, abused, victimised by parents, or extremely socially disadvantaged.*¹⁰

Dr Barnardo's, Australian Capital Territory

The Committee has been told repeatedly in evidence that homeless youth are not a homogeneous group, that they differ in their reasons for becoming homeless, their needs and the effects of homelessness on them. Whilst the Committee acknowledges this to be so, it feels nonetheless that a profile of homeless youth can be drawn from available data.

Statistical data on homeless youth needs to be approached with caution. In most cases the sample population is small and the period during which the survey was conducted a month or less (and hence not reflective of the year-round situation). Most surveys were responded to by the workers amongst homeless youth rather than the youths themselves, and hence subject to value judgements.

The surveys have generally been conducted by youth refuge workers or at youth refuges. The groups sampled from these sources can only be regarded as a subset of the total homeless youth population, as funded agencies are not the only places where young people seek shelter. Indeed, it appears that there are a number of homeless youth (though the size of the group is unknown) who do not approach government and welfare agencies providing services.

Most surveys involved questionnaires using a fixed choice format. This can create a number of problems, particularly in regard to interpreting the statistics. For example, in relation to 'causes of homelessness', family conflict and unemployment would in very many cases be interrelated. The surveys, however, separate these categories. One wonders how the respondent (as stated above, generally not the young person concerned) reacted. Were both categories marked, or was one given precedence over another on the basis of a value judgement?

A number of surveys on homeless youth have been made available to the Committee. No attempt has been made to collate this data as, in the main, the approaches taken in its collection vary extensively. Consequently, each survey has been considered in isolation, the Committee merely drawing from it information relating to the characteristics of homeless youth. Most percentages have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.

Report on the Youth Services Scheme

In its Report on the Youth Services Scheme prepared for the 1982 Autumn Conference of the Welfare Administrators, and the Council of Welfare Ministers, the National Committee for Evaluation of the Youth Services Scheme noted the following characteristics of the users of services under the Scheme. (This information applies to New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. Information from Tasmania, Western Australia and the Northern Territory was not available at the time this Report was prepared.):

- The majority of youths accommodated under the Scheme are 15 to 17 years of age with only about 25 per cent of demand coming from 18 to 25 year olds. (One must, however, allow for the Scheme's formal age restriction of under 18 year olds which, although not strictly adhered to, may have a bearing on the number of over 18 year olds using the services available.) Males and females are fairly evenly represented, though Queensland has a higher proportion of older males. The majority of youths under 16 are females.
- Over 80 per cent of users are white Australian. However, Aborigines are represented in the sample in higher proportions than in the general Aboriginal population. In South Australia, the proportion of Aborigines in the sample population is as high as 9 per cent as against the general South Australian Aboriginal population (10 — 19 year olds) of just over one per cent.
- Excepting Queensland, only a small proportion of users are from interstate.
- The highest proportion of users are available for work but unemployed. (Depending on which state is examined, 64 per cent to 87 per cent of users are available for work, and 68 per cent to 90 per cent of these are unemployed.) The vast majority of users have inadequate or no income (income was generally unemployment benefits and for many this amounted to only \$36 a week). Probably many or most of those

without income on arrival at the refuge are waiting the required period to receive benefits. Often these have not been applied for by youths before approaching a refuge.

- Excepting Queensland, around 50 per cent of youths approach the services directly from their former homes which, for the majority, are either the parental home or the home of relatives. Of these, about 50 per cent live with lone parents or with reconstructed or de facto families. About 25 per cent of the sample have been living independently or with friends prior to approaching the service, whilst about 25 per cent have used 'rough shelter' prior to seeking emergency accommodation.
- The predominance of unemployed in the sample population plus a large number of youths coming from parental homes 'must indicate that this is a major source of stress disrupting families, and preventing youth from making a normal transition from dependence to independence'.¹¹
- Approximately one third of youths return home after leaving the refuges, others going to independent situations or friends, hostels or other welfare accommodation. About 50 per cent of those who came directly from the parental home return to that home while of those previously living independently, slightly more than half return to a similar situation. About half the sample could be seen as experiencing a temporary difficulty which is resolved given time and a supportive environment ---that is, a breathing space. The other half who do not return to their former living situation are generally in need of further assistance.
- Users show a high incidence of family conflict or breakdown and emotional difficulties. Sexual abuse/incest is significant amongst female users. This might explain why young females appear particularly vulnerable to homelessness.

Report of the Victorian Consultative Committee on Social Development — Youth Accommodation Report, May 1979

Data collection for this survey took place over a three-week period. Eight hundred and ninety seven persons between the ages of 12 and 25 were surveyed from 92 agencies. Virtually all agencies were situated within the Melbourne metropolitan area.¹²

The data showed that family problems were contributing to 35 per cent of males' and 43 per cent of females' homelessness. Unemployment was seen to be responsible for 23 per cent of males and 10 per cent of females being homeless.¹³ (The point was made in this survey that family breakdown and unemployment could not really be separated as causes of homelessness.)¹⁴ Other factors which were contributing to homelessness were alcohol/drug problems (10 per cent male, three per cent female), high rent/eviction (six per cent male, 11 per cent female), newly arrived in Melbourne (14 per cent male, seven per cent female) and 'other' (13 per cent male, 30 per cent female). This survey did not allow for any interplay or interchangeability of influences to emerge.

Excluding a number of tertiary students who also completed questionnaires, 70 per cent of males were unemployed (19 per cent were employed) and 54 per cent of females were unemployed (17 per cent were employed).¹⁵ The remainder were either at school, under 15 but not at school, or involved in home duties.

North West Youth Accommodation Working Group, Victoria, Hope Street Shelter

These figures reflect the Hope Street Youth Shelter's annual statistics for the period 28 July 1980 to 28 July 1981. A total of 237 youths had been accommodated by the refuge, which caters for 13 to 20 year olds. This number included approximately equal numbers of males and females.

Sixty five per cent of youth were between 15 and 17 years of age and 23 per cent of youth were state wards. Seventy two per cent were unemployed, with 45 per cent on unemployment benefits while 35 per cent had no income at all. Eleven per cent were employed.¹⁶

South Australian Council of Social Service

This survey was conducted over a two week period during March 1980. It involved 362 people between the ages of 12 and 25 from 37 agencies.

Family problems were found to be the main contributory factor to homelessness, with 34 per cent of males and 55 per cent of females having this factor attributed to them. Financial problems were a contributory factor for 16 per cent of males and 8 per cent of females.¹⁷ It was stated in the survey that in general 'family problems' included a combination of factors, 'notably a lack of communication and understanding together with financial stresses, brought about by unemployment.'¹⁸ This survey saw the movement of youths to the city as a long term contributory factor to homelessness, and felt that the current situation was probably exacerbated by the employment situation in rural areas and the more mobile lifestyle of today's youth.¹⁹

Accommodation Needs of Adolescents, Tasmania (1977)

Unfortunately this survey is rather outdated. It covered 11 agencies with 156 questionnaires being completed. The age range considered included nine to 21 year olds (though concentrated on 13 to 19 year olds) and the information was sought over a period of one month.²⁰

Two-thirds of the youth concerned in the survey were between the ages of 14 and 17. It was concluded from this that those adolescents most likely to be needing accommodation are the 14 to 17 age group. More females than males under the age of 15 were reported as requiring accommodation whereas the reverse was true for youths 16 years and over.²¹

Over half of the youths surveyed came from two parent families whilst over one-quarter came from one parent families. It was found that less than half of the families studied conformed to what was described as the generally accepted norm of either one parent working and one involved with home duties, or both parents working. From this the researchers concluded that one-half of the families in this study are in situations which usually would not be considered normal.²²

A high incidence of unemployment existed amongst the youth (60 youth). There was also found to be a noticeable lack of students over the age of 16 (2 youth) though 79 youth between 9 and 16 were students. Most of the youth (109) were living with their family prior to requiring alternative accommodation, though this applied more to females (60) than males (49).²³ Out of the group of 156, 111 were seen to need a change of accommodation because of family conflict, no other factor figuring significantly in this survey.

Canberra Youth Refuge, Australian Capital Territory

This data relates to the period July 1980 to February 1981 and covers the age range 12 to 19.

Of the 66 youth encountered by the refuge during this eight month period, 56 per cent were 16 or 17 years of age, 73 per cent were at the refuge due to family breakdown and none had an income above the unemployment benefit level (all residents were either on unemployment benefits or had no income). Criminal records were not uncommon amongst the males but there were few amongst the females. Few had completed

year 10, most leaving school at the first opportunity. Common amongst the unemployed were low aspirations, expectations and self-esteem.²⁴

Living skills of the youth were minimal and diets and self-presentation were poor. No migrant or Aboriginal children were present within the refuge population. Sixty two per cent of the youth had been living with family or relatives prior to the refuge, and 38 per cent returned to their families after refuge accommodation. Twenty per cent sought further care (institution, other emergency accommodation, drug rehabilitation centre).²⁵

It was felt by the researchers that Canberra's high divorce rate, highly mobile population (with the concomitant loss of support from the extended family and friends) and chronic youth unemployment (well above the national average) contributed to the problem of homeless youth - the young having to face 'problems previously reserved for the more world-wise adult'.²⁶

Wayside Chapel —The Shepherd of the Streets Program, Sydney

Up until the time this survey was submitted to the Committee the refuge had seen equal numbers of boys and girls. The average age of boys was 14, girls 14.5. Fifty six per cent of girls came from single parent homes compared to 30 per cent of boys. Thirty six per cent of boys were state wards compared to 16 per cent of girls. Twenty eight per cent of boys were mildly retarded as compared to two per cent of girls, while 22 per cent of girls required psychiatric treatment compared to 18 per cent of boys.

Surprisingly, 26 per cent of boys were involved in prostitution, almost twice the number of girls (14 per cent). Forty six per cent of girls had drug and alcohol related problems as did 22 per cent of boys. Thirty four per cent of boys and 22 per cent of girls had been involved in petty crime. Eighty per cent of youth seen had moderate to severe difficulties with communication skills.²⁷

Community Seminar on Homeless Youths, Western Australia

A small group of social work students at the Western Australian Institute of Technology undertook this survey. The 13 to 25 age group was studied with data being collected from the Jesus People (New Life Centre).

It was found that on average the person seeking accommodation was male, Australian, single and 18.6 years old. Eighty six per cent were unemployed at the time of admission. Less than 50 per cent had reached third year level at secondary school, 33 per cent had reached second year level and eight per cent had only attended primary school.

Thirty three per cent admitted to previous penal offences and 13 per cent were on probation or parole. Twenty five per cent had undergone psychiatric treatment and 17 per cent stated they had either an alcohol or drug problem.²⁸

Perth's Homeless Youth Research Project —January to August, 1980

This survey was a joint project of the Homeless Youth Project Committee and the Western Australian Institute of Technology Social Work Department. The research was conducted by Sheryl Carmody, a social worker. Unfortunately Carmody places a large emphasis on hostel accommodation and hence the report is largely concerned with young people residing in hostels. Carmody admits that from information gathered many homeless youth, particularly females,²⁹ do not approach hostels.³⁰

Unlike most surveys the data was gained mainly through personal interview with homeless youth as well as workers in the field and concerned persons in the community.³¹ Carmody considers two groups; those residing in hostels, and those 'sleeping out'.

Hostel population

The hostel population consisted of 70 persons, predominantly male. The ratio of male to female was 55 (79 per cent):15 (21 per cent). However, there are more homeless persons' hostels and shelters available for males than females in Perth. A greater percentage of people were 19 and over (70 per cent) rather than 15 to 18 (30 per cent), with 60 per cent of females and 22 per cent of males being less than 19.³² The figures relating to 15 to 18 year olds do not correspond with data from the Eastern states, the implication being that Perth's 15 to 18 year olds predominantly do not seek refuge at the hostels.

There is a high transient population using the hostels, with 67 per cent of youth having lived in Perth for less than one year.

Of the hostel population, 60 per cent of fathers and 71 per cent of mothers were Australian born. Within the general Perth population, 52 per cent of fathers and 53 per cent of mothers are Australian born.³³

Significantly, 70 per cent of the youth at hostels had during their lifetime at least one change in the adults caring for them, and 41 per cent had two or more changes.³⁴ Carmody states:

'Overwhelmingly the data collected on the family life of the youth hostel population presents a picture of instability, with resultant inadequate nurturing of the children concerned.'³⁵

Institutional care had been received by 30 (43 per cent) of the youth.³⁶

With regard to schooling and trade qualifications, 87 per cent left school prior to 17 (in comparison with the general population rate of 78 per cent) and 83 per cent had no qualifications (compared to 65 per cent of the general population).³⁷

A characteristic common among the sample of homeless youth was a history of offences against the law. Fifty-one (73 per cent) of the youth had appeared in either a children's or adult court. The offences were common criminal offences—breaking and entering, drunkenness, assault, etc., rather than crimes directly related to a state of homelessness such as vagrancy and stealing for basic needs.³⁸

Unemployment was grossly over-represented among the hostel population in comparison with the general population. Sixty-five (93 per cent) of the hostel youth were not fully employed, 11 (16 per cent) of this number having casual employment.³⁹ The data suggests that unemployment is a major factor determining the majority of youth at the hostels seeking residence there, the exceptions being youth who reside there due to an adverse home situation.⁴⁰ Carmody points out that the unemployment position of some youth in the hostels seemed to be symptomatic of their overall state rather than a cause of their present predicament.⁴¹

A number of factors led to the youth leaving home, as well as an interplay of factors. Significant amongst these were 'finding work' (33 per cent) and 'home situation' (20 per cent). In some cases there was a pronounced interplay between these two factors.⁴²

Non-hostel population

In contrast to the hostel population the non-hostel homeless youth (those 'sleeping out') were predominantly of Perth origin. These young people were broadly of three types; transient youth, youth with accommodation problems due to low income, and youth who were homeless because of family circumstances.⁴³

There were a number of reasons why these youth preferred not to reside at hostels. They included what some saw as a loss of dignity and independence by accepting 'charity', dislike of the hostel atmosphere (for example, the religious orientation), a wish not to be accommodated with 'undesirables' such as alcoholics, drug addicts, etc., the cost of hostel accommodation and little or no income.

An interesting point made by Carmody and noted in much of the Committee's evidence is the reluctance on the part of youth to leave their familiar surroundings and friends to move to an area where accommodation is provided, such as hostels in the inner city in the case of Perth.⁴⁴

Jesus People Welfare Services Inc. medical/social study of homeless youth at New Life Centres by Bill Plozza and Glen Brand, Perth

This survey is somewhat different from other studies of homeless youth as it is concerned with the medical and psychiatric health of the youth surveyed as well as their social background. Consistent with other studies with regard to social background, it found that characteristics of the youth included broken homes, unemployment, a police record and few stable relationships. Where general health was concerned, it was felt that in the main no significant trends had yet developed but that due to heavy smoking by many of the youth, a large proportion would be looking at disease such as chronic bronchitis, heart disease, cancer of the lungs, stomach and brain, etc. in 20 years time should the practice continue.

On the whole it was felt that the medical health of those observed was reasonable, but that the psychological health was poor and an area of concern. Though it was found that only a few were suffering from gross psychiatric disease, there was a high incidence of personality disorders which interfered with the youths' lifestyles and their ability to cope in society.

Of the 50 subjects interviewed, it was found that 70 per cent were unemployed, 42 per cent failed to complete 10 years schooling (compared to six per cent of West Australian school children in the general population), 52 per cent were from broken homes, 70 per cent had criminal records and 38 per cent had served goal sentences.⁴⁵

Physically, 38 per cent had dental problems, 10 per cent had ear disorders, 12 per cent suffered from skin disorders, 64 per cent of females had gynaecological disorders, 30 per cent were moderate or heavy smokers, 68 per cent smoked marijuana regularly and 28 per cent used hard drugs.⁴⁶

With regard to family background, 24 per cent lived from the ages of 5 to 14 with both parents. Thirty four per cent were brought up by one parent, six per cent were raised by relatives, two per cent had lived with non relatives and 10 per cent had been raised in institutions.⁴⁷

Only 14 per cent of the 50 youths had lived in Perth most of their lives while 64 per cent had been in Perth for less than two months. It was the opinion of the researchers that those who had been in Perth for longer than six months had obvious physical, psychiatric or drug problems. All were unemployed and appeared uninterested in acquiring employment. Sixty six per cent of the youths lived at the Centre due to lack of finance, and 34 per cent because of personal or family problems.⁴⁸

Though unemployment was regarded as a considerable problem by the researchers, they felt there were more important factors operating within the group. Very few had trade skills, most lacked initiative and ambition and were regarded as socially inadequate. It was felt that because of their social inadequacy it was difficult for the youths to interact and co-operate with workmates and employers, and this led to an early termination of employment. The researchers commented that 'this group does not constitute a physically or even psychiatrically disturbed population, but is socially handicapped'. They believed that social retraining plus a basic trade skill was needed.⁴⁹

The researchers also felt that an inefficient use of leisure time contributed to behavioural maladjustments and suggested the use of organised sport and other group activities to reduce idle leisure time, create interest, improve self-esteem and increase social interactions.⁵⁰

'Rough profile'

With the many qualifications in mind that one must allow for with the survey material, the Committee has extracted the following characteristics which it feels provide a rough profile of homeless youth:

- male or female
- 15 to 18 years of age
- probably Anglo-Saxon
- has experienced conflict within the family (for example, disputes with parents, unable to get along with defacto parent or authoritarian father)
- may have been subject to physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse
 - ... often comes from a 'non-traditional' family such as a single parent or defacto family
- low income, probably unemployed
- little education
 - ... possibility of a drug or alcohol problem
- possibility of a criminal record
 - ... lacking in basic living skills
 - ... poor diet and self-presentation
- low confidence and self-esteem
- may have institutional background.

The Committee stresses its awareness that there are homeless youth who do not fit this description. It feels, however, that the data does suggest that youth with these characteristics are particularly vulnerable to homelessness, or, at least, that it is youth with these characteristics who are most likely to approach agencies and refuges for support should they become homeless. The Committee is unable to draw any conclusions with regard to the 'hidden' homeless youth, those who are 'sleeping out', living with friends or in some other way securing shelter.

Effects of homelessness

It is very difficult to determine the effects of homelessness. Homelessness cannot be viewed as a single entity. It is a combination of situations such as family conflict, unemployment, low socio-economic background and emotional problems, and therefore what one may regard as the effects of homelessness need in fact to be regarded as the effects of a multiplicity of factors causing homelessness. As well, individuals will differ with regard to the impact homelessness will have on them.

The Committee was told that concurrent with homelessness there is often a total breakdown in the young person's support system, particularly family and friends. At a time when they are not ready for independence, the young people find themselves isolated. The Committee was also told that the problems of homeless youth are often escalated through frequent misuse of both alcohol and drugs. Motivation declines, which leads to a disinterest in seeking employment and in trying to cope. Self-esteem diminishes and the young person becomes more and more unstable. This can lead to moves towards subcultures in an attempt to find 'some form of existence for themselves and self-esteem and respect'.⁵¹

Unfortunately, homelessness can lead to criminal activity merely to secure the basic needs of food, shelter, clothing, etc. Young girls especially are susceptible to prostitution, particularly if there is the corresponding problem of a drug habit which needs to

be supported. Vagrancy, squatting, breakins and petty stealing may also be direct effects of homelessness. Should a criminal charge result from any of these activities, the young person may be affected for the rest of his or her life.

Needs of homeless youth

The basic need of many homeless youth is a 'home', supplying all the emotional and physical supports, as well as accommodation, that that word implies. However, needs do differ according to the individual. Homeless youth were outlined to the Committee as coming under several groups:

- Those who are capable of independence but hampered in their efforts to gain accommodation by other factors, such as high rents, lack of housing, discrimination by landlords;
- those who are facing a short-term personal crisis but with short-term accommodation and assistance would be able either to return to their support networks or become independent;
- those who require consistent professional aid as well as accommodation due to long-standing (often familial) problems;⁵²
- those who are socially maladjusted, or have moderate to severe emotional/psychiatric problems or are physically/intellectually handicapped. These are particularly vulnerable young people who are at risk of ending up in prisons or psychiatric institutions;⁵³
- those who are emerging from institutions and because of their lack of preparation for life require on-going support as well as accommodation;
- those who have been continually rejected by society, have little chance of becoming employed and are extremely vulnerable. Consequently, they too are more than likely to end up in prisons or psychiatric institutions.⁵⁴

Sheryl Carmody found in her study of homeless youth in Perth that human needs of a physiological nature (such as good nutrition), safety, love, self-esteem, affection and belongingness were either absent, inadequate or being threatened in the lives of the youths she surveyed.⁵⁵

The Department of Social Security's report (unpublished) on the Youth Services Scheme saw the needs of the youth to be as follows:

- firstly, and overwhelmingly, for immediate accommodation and assistance to effect a stable living situation, either at 'home' or independently;
- frequently for a breathing space from home and for assistance to arrange independent housing;
- frequently for personal counselling of emotional problems and family relationships;
- consistently for advice and assistance on 'basic living skills', housing, employment, and income security entitlements; and
- often for an adequate income to obtain and maintain independent housing, and facilitate access to that housing.⁵⁶

The needs of homeless youth undoubtedly differ with time. For example, immediate needs would include such necessities as food and shelter, and perhaps a sense of security and someone to talk to. Short-term needs may involve assistance such as financial, medical and legal aid, and some form of counselling. Long-term needs may also include counselling, but particularly will involve a secure and adequate income (hopefully through employment) and suitable long-term living arrangements.

As stated above, the needs of homeless youth will differ with the individual from merely assistance to find appropriate accommodation, to long-term counselling and support services as well as closely supervised long-term living arrangements. A variety of services are therefore required to meet these differing needs. These are discussed in later chapters.

Identified areas of concern

Unemployment

Perhaps one of the most disorienting effects of unemployment has been the hindering of what only a few years ago was a natural progression from school to the workforce and financial independence. With financial independence, residential independence was available to most of those who desired it.

An unemployed family member places enormous stresses on family resources and emotions, but it is particularly traumatic for the unemployed person. For the *young* unemployed person it restricts planning for the future and may affect his or her entire life.

The Committee believes that society is becoming more conscious of the problem of youth unemployment but too often the problem is denied and the young unemployed are viewed as nothing more than 'dole bludgers'. Indeed, parents themselves may be unable to understand chronic unemployment and place the blame on the individual. This creates friction within the family.

It does appear, however, that some youth have become very selective when choosing work. The Committee was told by young people on several occasions that they had resigned from a position after working for only two or three hours because it did not live up to their expectations. This type of attitude no doubt colours the employers' views of young people's willingness to accept employment.

Chronic unemployment means multiple rejection to job seeking youth resulting in a loss of self-esteem and confidence. This, in turn, makes it still more difficult for the young person to enter or re-enter the workforce. As time passes there arises the real danger that the youth will become 'unemployable'.

Average periods of unemployment have grown extensively over the last 10 years (see Chapter 6). As well, the younger the person seeking employment the higher the likelihood of unemployment. The unemployment rate for 15 to 19 year olds seeking full-time employment in April 1982 was 16.8 per cent, well over twice the national average for the population as a whole (6.3 per cent).⁵⁷ Adolescents are often employed at times of prosperity but, unfortunately, are often the first to be laid off during economic slumps.

There is a need for society to become more aware of chronic unemployment and its effects on youth, and to take a more tolerant and understanding attitude toward their plight.

Education and the school system

Undoubtedly to-day it is the school which is one of the major points of contact with the young. Consequently, the Committee believes that the school has an important role to play in identifying children in unsatisfactory home situations who require some form of assistance. The Committee recognises the argument that the school is an educative institution, not a substitute family, and should not be called upon to act as such. On the

other hand, the Committee also recognises that a child attends school during his crucial years of development and the school system cannot help but play a part in this.

Dr John Morris (physician and counsellor) and Mrs Mollie Campbell-Smith (teacher and counsellor) also believe that it is largely through schools that unsatisfactory home situations can be recognised. Indeed, they believe that the school may provide the only opportunity for children from difficult backgrounds to receive special care and support. In evidence to the Committee, they pointed to a need for trainee teachers to be helped in their own process of maturation and in developing an understanding of the emotional difficulties of children. They feel that teachers need to be more aware of the role they can play and when more qualified help is necessary.⁵⁸

The Wesley Central Mission sees a need to pay greater attention to personal development within high school education. The Mission believes that most teachers currently involved in personal development courses, such as they exist, are not conveying all that they should.

Dr R. F. Morland (Ph.D., M.Ed., D.P.E., Dip.Soc.Sc.), in evidence to the Committee, questioned the effectiveness of our primary and secondary schools:

'It is not appreciated that, for our children, our primary school teachers are the most important social change agents in the community after the parents. Yet they have a low social status, their training second class, and they are recruited from frustrated university students.'⁵⁹

The Committee believes that Dr Morland is rather harsh in his assessment of teachers, but agrees that whilst their training may equip them adequately academically, it falls far short of preparing them for their function at a more individual and personal level. Dr Morland believes that preparation for primary school teachers needs to be reconsidered because of the changing social structure of society. He says the same, to a lesser extent, can be said of secondary teachers' training. These social changes are subtle and difficult to understand. However, teachers need to understand their influences, their effect on the developing personality and how to counter them.⁶⁰

The Committee believes, however, that not only do we need to consider a revision of teacher training, but also the school curriculum needs to be refurbished. It would appear that only a small number of our youngsters are being served effectively by the current education system. Too many are being written off as under-achievers because they are unable to benefit from standard courses. Indeed, the Committee received much evidence suggesting that the current education system tends to demotivate students from further study. This may, to a large extent, explain why so many students leave school as soon as they are legally able to do so, or prior to entering years 11 and 12. Our approach to instructing young people must be flexible if we are to tap their potential.

A constant complaint made of the present system is that it is primarily geared to the minority of students seeking tertiary qualifications, that those young people who leave to enter the workforce possess few work and living skills. As stated above, increased technology has resulted in less unskilled jobs on the labour market and, consequently, young people leaving school in either year 10 or 12 are increasingly subject to unemployment. The Wesley Central Mission pointed out a need for school programs on surviving in Australia in the 1980s, considering such matters as coping with threatened long term unemployment.

Social work education is also seen by Dr Morland to be lacking. Currently, too much emphasis is given to the causative factors of a problem situation, at the risk of losing sight of the individual. Dr Morland believes that many graduates of social work today are not trained in how to go about helping the individual and that this is a major stumbling block. He sees a need to review the training of both primary and secondary

teachers and students of social work, because he maintains that the two most important 'change agents' dealing with potential homeless youth are inadequately trained.⁶¹

The Committee realises that teachers are presently taxed sufficiently with their academic demands without the added burden of a social welfare role. However, the Committee believes that the function of teachers would be largely to recognise the child with a problem and refer that child to social welfare workers who would be attached to each primary or secondary school district. Nonetheless, schools would need to recognise the added role of the teacher by employing more resources. It would be important that the welfare workers maintain close contact and communication with their schools and attain familiarity, trust and respect from both staff and students. The welfare workers would also need to work closely with the family and the community. Dr Morland suggests that a family specialist should intervene where it was found that a family situation required adjustment.⁶²

Conclusion

The education system has the potential to be a great support to children with difficult backgrounds through identifying those children and arranging for appropriate assistance to be made available to them. Individual teachers, to whom students (particularly primary school students) often relate, should also be capable of making an input into the lives of their 'problem' students. This will require additional training to that already offered by teacher training courses and extra resources within the school to enable the teacher to devote the necessary time to his added function.

The Committee is aware that the school is being turned to more and more as a means of dealing with issues that might justifiably be considered responsibilities of parents. Sex and drug education are examples. However, apart from family members it is teachers who spend the most time with the majority of children. Should an early intervention program be introduced the school is undoubtedly in the best position to institute it.

The school curriculum would appear to be unsatisfactory for many of our young people. Because the school plays such a significant part in young people's lives, it is important that it broadens its approach to cater for *all* students. It should enable those not academically inclined to acquire other skills which are more suited to their capabilities, and which will benefit them in the workforce.

Institutional background

No overall statistics are available on the number of homeless youth who have institutional backgrounds, but the Committee is particularly concerned that seemingly significant numbers of the young people at refuges have at some stage spent time under institutional care. The Committee was told that a large number of the chronically homeless come from this type of background. It was also told that a major factor contributing to homelessness in these cases is that being institutionalised dislocates the young person from their family and place of origin and alienates them from society. These youth generally suffer from inadequate educational and social skills.⁶³

There is now a movement away from large institutions. Instead, alternatives such as family placements and cottage care are being turned to. The Committee is anxious to see that, in the light of past experience, the alternatives sought to conventional institutional care receive deep consideration to ensure that the mistakes made in the past are not repeated in the future, and that the alternatives do not create a new set of problems.

The Committee views the subject of children and youth under institutional care as one requiring considerable attention. Consequently it has undertaken to examine this matter in its next inquiry.

Aboriginals

In evidence to the Committee, the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs made the following statement:

'Aboriginal extended families, through kinship systems and networks of friends, do much to assist young people who are away from their nuclear families. For this reason, the extent of homelessness among young Aboriginal people is not as great as it could be. Families who assist youth in such circumstances are usually already faced with serious difficulties such as over-crowding, poor living conditions and low income; their problems are increased when they shelter unattached youth.'⁶⁴

The Committee feels that it is important to recognise that homelessness amongst Aboriginal youth does vary from homelessness amongst the rest of the population. Kin networks are such amongst the Aboriginal people that a young Aboriginal person can almost always find somewhere where he or she will be accepted.⁶⁵ Also, homeless Aboriginal people are not isolates. A homeless Aboriginal youth would be able to attach himself to a homeless Aboriginal group and avoid the usual places frequented by homeless youth such as shelters and soup kitchens.⁶⁶ Further, it is widely accepted that homeless Aboriginal youth are generally loathe to approach non-Aboriginal services for assistance.

Aboriginal youth homelessness is camouflaged in two main ways:

- as mentioned above, through the support given by relatives
- through inappropriate residential and institutional care, prolonged due to a lack of suitable alternatives.⁶⁷

Welfare intervention has been described to the Committee as one of the most disruptive elements in Aboriginal family life:

'The problem of homeless Aboriginal youth must be seen against a background of family disruption, wardship, foster care and residential care.'⁶⁸

Indeed, statistical evidence shows that a disproportionate number of Aboriginal children are in some form of care. For example, although the Aboriginal population in Western Australia is only two per cent of that State's total population, just under 50 per cent of children in foster care and residential child care establishments (primarily in care for welfare, not educational reasons) at 30 June 1980 were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders (1599 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, 1632 other).⁶⁹ Also, in New South Wales during 1980-81, over 16 per cent of Aboriginal children were in substitute care, though Aboriginal people comprise less than one per cent of the total New South Wales population.⁷⁰

The Committee was told that during 1981 Aboriginal children were over 12 times more likely than white children to be taken from their families and put into substitute care. The majority of these youngsters are placed in white run institutions or with white families and not with their own people. This has destructive effects on the child's identity and on the Aboriginal community.

The lack of Aboriginal alternatives to white facilities is particularly noticeable with regard to Aboriginal children, who are being committed to corrective institutions because there are no Aboriginal alternatives for the courts to consider.

'Aboriginal workers are placed in the impossible situation of trying to find accommodation for children where no options exist. As a consequence, Aboriginal children are more readily committed.'⁷¹

Many of these children, particularly at adolescence, reject the white care they have grown up with and often run away to live with Aboriginal families. They may not, however, fit readily into the Aboriginal extended family network available to other children. Some of these children are unable to trace their families and others, because of identity problems, may not try.⁷²

It may be conjectured that the process of care, particularly wardship, has a momentum of its own that carries a child through a series of placements and through a series of officers, so that family and kin ties are weakened, personal identity is confused, and self esteem is low, to the point where anti-social behaviour makes correctional care necessary.⁷³

The Committee was told that the young people who tend to be reported as homeless are those with backgrounds of disrupted family life, of non-Aboriginal substitute care and of institutionalisation.

Needs of Aboriginal Youth

According to the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs, there is little available accommodation specifically for homeless Aboriginal youth. At the same time, the Department acknowledges that for various reasons, Aboriginal youth are often reluctant to approach non-Aboriginal hostels and refuges.⁷⁴ Other evidence received by the Committee supports this statement. The Committee was told that youth with welfare backgrounds or from country areas without relatives they can turn to in the city are particularly unlikely to approach non-Aboriginal services, through preference and due to a distrust of white facilities.⁷⁵ Aboriginal Hostels Ltd. run 103 hostels and many of these do accommodate homeless people when vacancies occur. The hostels, however, are not in general intended to cater for homeless people. The Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs told the Committee that it is not possible to determine the extent to which Aboriginal Hostels Ltd. cater for homeless Aboriginal youth.⁷⁶

One point that the evidence received by the Committee stressed was the need for special accommodation for Aboriginals, supervised largely by Aboriginal workers. This would meet the problem of the present lack of suitable accommodation after discharge from correctional institutions or other forms of welfare intervention, or after the breakdown of 'family' due mainly to overcrowding. Often, when children released from care return to their family or kin, they return to a very unsatisfactory family situation. This in turn may lead to further contact with the law and a history of imprisonment and court appearances.⁷⁷

The Committee was told by the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs that there is a shortage of housing for Aboriginals generally. Some forms of alternative accommodation have been developed, such as Aboriginal Hostels Ltd., but these are not equipped to handle homeless and problem children.⁷⁸

Evidence received from the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Co-operative Limited stated that most of its youth clients require non-structured but supportive private accommodation for periods varying between one week and several months to enable them to

- (a) re-group their personal resources and future direction after a court hearing, family or social disruption, or personal loss and disorientation;
- (b) settle into an environment after institutional experience with minimum outside intervention and pressure (whether that be from family, kin or peer group) whilst experimenting with employment, further educational training or basically learning to take care of oneself.⁷⁹

Many of the young people seeking assistance from the Legal Service only require the initial support and opportunity to enable them to start out. The Legal Service believes

that a community based short term accommodation program for young single adults would facilitate their transition to adulthood and self-management.⁸⁰

The Committee believes that the needs of homeless Aboriginal youth do not differ from those of white homeless youth. Indeed, the needs of Aboriginal youth as set out in the Legal Service's submission apply to almost all homeless youth regardless of race:

- (i) the opportunity to experience, understand and manage the responsibilities of living in private accommodation;
- (ii) the necessary time in which to learn to cope with independent living and gain the necessary survival skills;
- (iii) the support and advice from counsellors which are their own people able to establish realistic and relevant goals with our young adults and assist them in achieving these goals;
- (iv) a secure base from which to gain and maintain employment.⁸¹

Rather, what must be recognised and accommodated is the varying cultural background and life experiences of the young people concerned.

Where alternative accommodation for Aboriginal youth is considered desirable, it should be largely under the direction and supervision of Aboriginal people. This is recognised by the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs, which pointed out to the Committee that support services which could be of value to Aboriginal youth include crisis, information and recreation centres and 'would require significant Aboriginal input and involvement to be effective'.⁸² In its Report on the Youth Services Scheme, the Department of Social Security stated that the higher proportion of Aboriginal youths using the Scheme's services than represented in the general Aboriginal population suggests a problem of homelessness among Aboriginal youth. This is particularly so, the Report states, because it is known that Aboriginals prefer to seek assistance from their own communities. The Report points out that its data suggests a need for the provision of resources to Aboriginal communities to develop services for homeless Aboriginals.⁸³

Preventive measures to minimise the number of homeless youth of any race in our society are viewed by the Committee as fundamental to dealing with the problem of homelessness. It was put to the Committee that a long-term preventive measure where Aboriginal homeless youth are concerned is to drastically reduce the rate at which Aboriginal children are removed from their homes by more intensive help at the time of crisis.⁸⁴ There needs also to be a vast improvement in Aboriginal housing, employment and family support services.

Where removal from the family becomes necessary, however, it would seem that because of poor success rates in fostering or institutional care, preference should be given to cottage care, which appears to have a number of advantages over the other systems. The Committee was told that parents see cottage care, particularly from religious organisations, as a safe place for their children while they are temporarily away from home. It enables close contact with family, allows the children of one family to remain together and does not create the degree of competition between natural parents and cottage parents that occurs with foster care.⁸⁵ Wardship, on the other hand, often isolates children both physically and psychologically from their family. Fostering often breaks down and leads to multiple fostering placements and multiple rejections, with adverse psychological effects on the children. The Committee was told that cottage care should be under non-government control and cottage parents should be Aboriginal.

Conclusion

It would seem that the problem of homeless Aboriginal youth is largely hidden through supportive family networks and the reluctance of Aboriginal youth to approach non-Aboriginal services. Consequently, the relatively high number of Aboriginal youth appearing in available statistics is of grave concern to the Committee as the figures are largely derived from the type of services Aboriginal youth are not, in the main, approaching. There appears to be a real need for alternative accommodation for homeless Aboriginal youth directed by Aboriginals. The Committee urges the Government to give immediate attention to this issue, particularly in relation to the Committee's recommendations concerning crisis accommodation and medium to long term supportive household programs (see Chapters 4 and 5).

The Committee also urges the relevant governments to reconsider their policies with regard to Aboriginals and welfare intervention. The current approach seems to have led to many Aboriginal youth becoming disoriented as well as homeless. Again, services catering solely for Aboriginals and directed by Aboriginals, such as cottage care, appear to be necessary.

Indo-Chinese refugees

The Committee is limited in the remarks it is able to make on Indo-Chinese refugee youth as it received evidence on the matter from one organisation only—the Ethnic Communities Council of New South Wales. The Committee's information is confined in the main to the Sydney region and hence its comments are largely based on the situation in that area. To what extent these comments apply to other areas the Committee is unable to say. It would seem, however, that the experience (as outlined below) of that region would not differ significantly from other areas—particularly major cities.

The Committee did not hear of any youth with close family ties in Australia becoming homeless and it would seem that this is due to the strong family relationships which typify the Indo-Chinese people. Those young people who do require residential care tend to stem from two groups—unattached, and detached, refugee youth. Unattached refugee youth are those who arrive in Australia without relatives.⁸⁶ Detached refugee youth are those who have entered the country either with relatives, or with families they have attached themselves to in the refugee camps and to whom, for purposes of resettlement, they claim to be a part of.⁸⁷ Should either of these arrangements break down, the youth may become homeless.

The Committee was surprised to hear of arrangements between a youth and his relatives causing difficulties because of the close nature of Indo-Chinese families. It was told, however, that this might occur for various reasons. The relative may be a very distant one, and, faced by economic hardship, might be finding it extremely difficult to maintain the 'extra' family member. Problems may also arise due to tradition. For example, it is not considered the duty of a married female relative to take responsibility for male relatives:

'. . . if a brother attached himself to a married sister, then the married sister's husband usually feels that it is not his responsibility to look after that boy, sooner or later there is some conflict between her and her husband.'⁸⁸

It is estimated that there are over 600⁸⁹ young Indo-Chinese refugees without parents or close relatives in Australia, with about 160 of these being in Sydney.⁹⁰ The majority of these are males, and it seems that this is due to two reasons. First, the attempt to escape Indo-China is particularly hazardous and hence mainly attempted by males. Secondly, where a family may be able to afford for one or two of its members to make the escape, it is usually the young men who are sent out ahead. Not all of these

young people require emergency accommodation. There are a small number of young Indo-Chinese girls who require such services, but the Committee was told that the girls seem better able to cope with their situations in Australia:

'They live with the family they came with and no matter how hard the situation may be, they tend to cope with it longer than the boys.'⁹¹

Accommodation specifically for homeless refugee youth is currently available in Sydney (though the Committee was told that this was being fully taxed),⁹² and at the time evidence was taken, 40 boys were being housed. The Committee received evidence mainly on the Francis Street Centre in East Sydney and gained the impression that this type of accommodation plays a very significant supportive role for its occupants.

The Committee is aware of the argument that if special accommodation is provided for one group then other groups will expect similar treatment and the consequent cost would be exorbitant. What needs to be remembered in the case of homeless Indo-Chinese youth is the dramatic and often personally tragic circumstances from which they come:

'Many of these children and youth have experienced traumatic and dangerous situations in their country of origin, in the refugee camps, and in the process of flight. They have experienced general disruption in their educational and social development. Many have witnessed the deaths of relatives and friends. The emotional and psychological impact and manifestations of these experiences, particularly in the older children, have yet to be fully explored and documented.'⁹³

As well, the homeless refugee youth has no family he can turn to for support. Should other groups face similar circumstances, it may also be found that special accommodation is warranted. Where Indo-Chinese refugee youth are concerned, it seems to the Committee that the availability of specific supportive accommodation plays a very valuable role in preparing the youth for independence. The Committee was told that the period over which supportive housing would be needed would be about three years, or until the youth was familiar enough with the English language to cope independently.⁹⁴

The overwhelming need of homeless Indo-Chinese refugee youth would seem to be for complementary services, particularly English tuition. It was stressed to the Committee that difficulties with the English language are proving a significant hindrance to the youths' education, social interaction with non-Indo-Chinese youth and employment opportunities. The refugee youth receive only limited tutoring in the English language on arrival in this country before being placed in a normal school situation. The problem was explained to the Committee by the manager of Francis Street Centre for Vietnamese Refugees, as follows:

'Most of the boys after a short time in Australia had a brief introductory course in English and were placed in a high school either at year 10 or 11 level. Year 10 is the school certificate year, essential for apprenticeships and year 11 is the key year for higher school certificate preparation. At both levels the boys are confronted with the usual tasks allocated to native speakers of English, demanding not only sophisticated skills and knowledge of English, but also complex arrays of concepts which provide the key to making sense of life in this society. Needless to say, the boys are thoroughly stranded and baffled but they make valiant efforts. Unfortunately, they are tested and assessed like anyone else and even their most earnest efforts fail to score. Their high regard for top achievement generates much pressure, especially with regard to homework, pressure on both boys and staff. Many a night I have spent working intensely for three hours at a time, translating text-book pages, to see the boy then have to go and spend another couple of hours writing it up. This is one boy; and I know that at the same time there are about 10 others struggling with the same sort of task. The boys are at a level only a little better than that of the foreign phrase book but they are required to write large sections of text-books in their own words, words which they do not

have. So commonly, they set to with a Vietnamese-English dictionary or a Chinese-English dictionary. Anyone who has tried to sort out the array of meanings in a dictionary knowing English well will appreciate the dimensions of this task.⁹⁵

In its Report, 'Indo-Chinese Refugee Resettlement --- Australia's Involvement', the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence stated that many of its witnesses had considered that the English course provided at Migrant Centres was inadequate. The Report stated that in the view of the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, the course was intended as a survival course only, with a very basic level of competence being aimed for. English as a Second Language (ESL) courses are offered at schools and there are also English courses available to refugees once they leave the Migrant Centres.⁹⁶

This Committee believes that there are difficulties in both these areas. Refugee youth who are attending school would find little benefit from these classes whilst at the same time attempting to apply their grossly inadequate and slowly developing English language skills to other subjects. Far better that they receive adequate English training prior to being placed in the school environment.

Those refugee youth who are not at school but are working (many at laborious tasks) often are involved in jobs requiring shift work or are too tired to attend English night classes on top of maintaining full-time work. It was suggested to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence that employers should consider allowing refugees time off to attend English classes.⁹⁷ This Committee believes that where able, employers should do so.

The Committee's emphasis on the need for the youth to have an adequate grasp of the English language is not to suggest that this would provide a solution to all the problems of these young people. It would, however, remove a major barrier to their successful assimilation in the Australian community.

Homeless Indo-Chinese youth have problems quite different from those of other homeless youth. The Committee believes that existing refugees would not be able to provide the special assistance required by these young people with their vastly different cultural background, their inadequacy with the English language and their unfamiliarity with our society's values. Their greatest support would seem to come from young people with similar backgrounds and experiences, and from special housing provisions which, through staffing, counselling, etc., are specifically geared to deal with their particular problems.

Conclusion

A large proportion of our homeless youth are coming from broken families or families facing crisis. Statistics suggest that the rate of family breakdown is increasing. This seriously concerns the Committee. Is it that the stresses and demands of modern society coupled with economic hardship are placing unprecedented pressures on the family unit, or rather that the family unit today is not coping with pressures as well as it did in the past? It seems to the Committee that the answer may be a combination of both these factors.

Homeless youth, we are told, are coming from all backgrounds and are becoming homeless for a variety of reasons —no two cases are the same. The Committee acknowledges that this is undoubtedly so, but nonetheless finds it striking that so many of our homeless young people have a number of factors in common. Family conflict and

breakdown, unemployment, low socio-economic background, little education, lack of skills, emotional problems, social inadequacy . . . all these factors do seem to typify the majority of homeless youth using the available services. It was not the average, well adjusted teenager that the Committee was meeting in its numerous visits to homeless youth refuges. It seems to the Committee that it is more likely to be the youths who have already been socially disadvantaged, who have 'missed out' throughout most of their lives, who will end up homeless, not the young people who have enjoyed a fairly stable family life and a fair share of life's benefits.

If this is the case the Committee feels it is important to try to identify these youths before they become homeless, to adopt as far as possible a preventative approach. The school is perhaps the best place to perform this role because of its wideranging yet relatively personal contact with young people. Before the school can take on such a function, however, various changes need to be made. Teachers will require appropriate training and schools will need additional resources (including the attachment of social welfare workers) to enable the teachers to fulfil their new function. Close contact will need to be maintained between the school and the welfare worker attached to it.

Aboriginal and refugee homeless youth to a large extent need to be regarded as having special problems which require special solutions. Neither group is being catered for sufficiently by present refuge services. Aboriginal youth seem to have an inherent distrust of white services through the negative experience of Aboriginal people with the welfare system. Refugee youth find particular difficulties with available services due to differences in cultural values, but appear to be benefiting substantially from special accommodation arrangements. Neither group will benefit from the presently available refuge services to the extent one could consider satisfactory. Therefore, it is important that they be provided with services they will accept, can relate to and from which they will benefit substantially.

The plight of homeless youth is a difficult issue. It is the end result of a multitude of factors but more than that, it is a reflection on the very nature of society itself.

Endnotes

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2. Transcript of evidence, p. 1703.
3. Submission from The Westernport Youth Refuge Group, Victoria, p. 24.
4. Transcript of evidence, p. 1704.
5. Transcript of evidence, p. 3452.
6. Transcript of evidence, p. 1704.
7. Submission from The Westernport Youth Refuge Group, Victoria, p. 24.
8. Submission from the Australian Greek Welfare Society, Victoria.
9. Transcript of evidence, p. 3459.
10. Submission from Dr Barnardo's, A.C.T.
11. Youth Services Scheme Report, p. 12.
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18. South Australian Council of Social Services, Youth Housing, p. 13.
19. Victorian Consultative Committee on Social Development, Youth Accommodation Report, p. 7; South Australian Council of Social Services, Youth Housing, p. 14.
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25. Transcript of evidence, pp. 311-313.

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27. Submission from the Wayside Chapel, The Shepherd of the Streets Program, pp. 18-19.
28. Submission from the Australian Greek Welfare Society, Victoria.
29. Transcript of evidence, p. 3745.
30. Transcript of evidence, p. 3789.
31. Transcript of evidence, pp. 3728, 3730.
32. Transcript of evidence, p. 3747.
33. Transcript of evidence, pp. 3750-3751.
34. Transcript of evidence, p. 3752.
35. Transcript of evidence, p. 3753.
36. Transcript of evidence, p. 3754.
37. Transcript of evidence, pp. 3755-3756.
38. Transcript of evidence, p. 3757.
39. Transcript of evidence, p. 3760.
40. Transcript of evidence, p. 3761.
41. Transcript of evidence, p. 3766.
42. Transcript of evidence, p. 3770.
43. Transcript of evidence, p. 3798.
44. Transcript of evidence, p. 3799.
45. Transcript of evidence, p. 3644.
46. Transcript of evidence, p. 3644.
47. Transcript of evidence, p. 3650.
48. Transcript of evidence, p. 3652.
49. Transcript of evidence, pp. 3675-3676.
50. Transcript of evidence, p. 3676.
51. Transcript of evidence, p. 2817.
52. Transcript of evidence, pp. 1345-1346.
53. Transcript of evidence, p. 2773.
54. Transcript of evidence, p. 1346.
55. Transcript of evidence, p. 3769.
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57. Australian Bureau of Statistics.
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59. Submission from Dr R.F. Morland, Department of Social Welfare, Newcastle College of Advanced Education, p. 1.
60. Submission from Dr R.F. Morland, Department of Social Welfare, Newcastle College of Advanced Education, p. 1.
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63. Transcript of evidence, p. 2940.
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94. Transcript of evidence, p. 2222.
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CHAPTER 2

EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Surveys on the extent of the problem of homeless youth are completely unreliable. The Committee, however, has had to use this material as no other data is available. Consequently it has had to be particularly cautious when drawing conclusions.

Throughout the course of the public hearings, the Committee repeatedly asked witnesses for hard data on the extent of youth homelessness within a particular region or state. At best, most witnesses could only provide data relevant to their own organisation. Any attempt to give a wider account relied almost exclusively on anecdotal evidence and impressions gained from working with homeless youth within their region. The Committee is not critical of witnesses because of this, but the situation would seem to highlight a most unsatisfactory basis on which policy decisions have been made in this area.

Table 2.1: Summary of Surveys on Homeless Youth

<i>Author</i>	<i>Details of survey</i>	<i>Age breakdown</i>			<i>Conclusions of survey</i>
			<i>M%</i>	<i>F%</i>	
Victorian Consultative Committee on Social Development (V.C.C.S.D.) Victoria	A questionnaire was posted (and in some cases an interview was conducted) to a number of agencies, mostly in the Melbourne metropolitan area, of whom 123 responded. The survey was for the period 13 November 1978 to 3 December 1978	12-14 15-16 17-18 19-20 21-25	7.8 24.9 19.5 20.7 27.1	5.7 20.8 34.6 11.0 17.9	These figures represent a total of 300 requests per week, equivalent to 15 000 homeless youths per year
		Total No.: 897			
		M, F%			
Adelaide Council to Homeless Persons, S.A.	A questionnaire was posted to 31 metropolitan agencies, of whom nine responded. The survey was for the the period 3 to 9 December 1979	12-14 15-16 17-18 19-20 21-25	9.1 11.8 16.4 8.2 19.1		Projected to an annual level, between 5 500 and 6 000 young people are in need of housing assistance
		no response 35.4			
		Total No.: 110			
South Australian Council of Social Service S.A.	A questionnaire (with follow-up discussions) was posted to approximately 132 metropolitan agencies, of whom 52 responded. The survey was for the period 8 to 21 March 1980	<14 14-16 17-18 19-20 21-25	9.3 19.1 27.0 19.5 25.1	10.2 38.3 22.7 15.6 13.2	This represents a total equivalent of 9 000 young people seeking housing assistance each year

		<i>Age breakdown</i>			
<i>Author</i>	<i>Details of survey</i>		<i>M%</i>	<i>F%</i>	<i>Conclusions of survey</i>
Total No.: 362					
Department of Social Security, Cairns, Qld	Questionnaires were personally delivered to agencies in Cairns catering for the homeless of all ages. 17 agencies responded. The survey was for the period 21 January 1980 to 3 February 1980	<16 16-20 21-25	18.0 41.0 41.0	18.0 35.0 47.0	This represents about 1 000 young people per year
Total No.: 112 (39 under 26 yrs)					
M, F%					
Department of Community Welfare, Townsville College of Advanced Education, Qld	Questionnaires were personally delivered to 20 agencies in Townsville catering for the homeless of all ages. The survey was for the period 17 April 1979 to 14 May 1979	0-14 15-19 20-24	0.0 37.0 63.0		This represents about 600 young people per year
Total No.: 160 (46 under 25 yrs)					
North Brisbane College of Advanced Education, Qld	47 agencies in Brisbane were asked by phone to complete a questionnaire. 25 agencies, catering for the homeless of all ages, responded. The survey was for the period 18 to 31 August 1980	<18 18-24	37.0 63.0	52.0 48.0	This represents about 2 000 young people per year
Total No.: 182 (75 under 25 yrs)					
M, F%					
New South Wales Homeless Persons Advisory Committee, N.S.W.	A questionnaire was posted to 119 centres, of whom 83 agencies, catering for the homeless of all ages throughout New South Wales, responded. The survey was for the period 23 to 29 March 1981	<15 16-18 19-25	13.5 40.9 45.6		
No.: 363 daily					
<i>Numbers by State</i>					
National Committee for Evaluation of the Youth Services Scheme	Data on number of requests for emergency accommodation was collected from services throughout Australia funded under the YSP. The survey was for the 12 month period 1 October 1980 to 30 September 1981	N.S.W. Vic. Qld Tas. S.A. N.T. A.C.T.	4 870 3 407 1 874 1 575 331 58 189		This represents about 12 304 young people per year throughout Australia

Surveys

A number of the available surveys have attempted to gauge the extent of the homeless youth population either within the local region, or at a broader level through extrapolation. Because of methodology problems, however, they are either invalid or unreliable. The major problems shared by these surveys are:

- double or multiple counting;
- restricted numbers in survey samples (which raises doubts as to how representative the sample is and how meaningful any extrapolation from the sample to the population will be);
- relatively short periods over which the surveys were conducted;
- failure to take account of homeless youth not using agencies or shelters;
- failure to include all agencies or shelters in the area concerned.

One of these surveys is by the Victorian Consultative Committee on Social Development. This Committee found over a three week period in 1978 that 897 requests of assistance were received from homeless youths at 123 agencies in metropolitan Melbourne.¹ Of these, 518 (58 per cent) were from males and 379 (42 per cent) from females.² The study comments that 'this figure represents a total of 300 requests per week at least, equivalent to 15 000 homeless youths per year'.³

A similar study was conducted during a two-week period in March 1980 by the South Australian Council of Social Service Inc. for metropolitan Adelaide. Questionnaires were sent to 132 agencies of whom 52 responded (that is, about 40 per cent).⁴ The study comments that 'while the level of non-response appears high, it is likely that a majority of those non-respondents received no request for housing assistance during the survey period'.⁵

The survey found that 362 young people between the ages of 12 and 25 sought accommodation from the agencies who responded.⁶ They comment that 'this figure represents a total equivalent in excess of 9000 young people seeking housing assistance each year'.⁷ Of these 362 requests, 201 (55.5 per cent) were from males and 161 (44.5 per cent) from females.⁸

Another Adelaide study was conducted by the South Australian Council to Homeless Persons in December 1979. They sent questionnaires to 31 agencies of whom only nine replied.⁹ The survey found that over a two-week period, 110 people (80 males and 30 females) between the ages of 12 and 25 sought accommodation in the nine agencies that responded.¹⁰ The survey commented that 'projected to an annual level, a minimum of between 5500 and 6000 young people are in need of housing assistance in metropolitan Adelaide'.¹¹

A study of the homeless of all ages was conducted by the Cairns Co-ordinating Committee for Homeless Persons in June 1979. Over a two-week period, 17 agencies completed a questionnaire about the people requesting assistance.¹² A total of 112 people of all ages asked for help. Of these, 39 were under 26 years of age (22 male, 17 female).¹³ If a similar extrapolation is conducted on this survey as was done on the previous studies, this would mean that about 1000 young people are homeless per year in Cairns.¹⁴

In Townsville a study into the need for emergency accommodation was conducted over a four-week period by the Department of Community Welfare, Townsville College of Advanced Education. Twenty agencies who catered for homeless people of all ages were surveyed.¹⁵ Questionnaires were used to collect the data. It was found that a

total of 160 people approached the agencies for help.¹⁶ Of these 46 were under 25 years of age.¹⁷ If this figure is extrapolated it means that about 600 young people per year are homeless in Townsville.¹⁸

Students in Community Welfare at the North Brisbane College of Advanced Education conducted a survey of homeless people of all ages in Brisbane in August 1980. Altogether 47 were approached, of whom 25 completed the questionnaire.¹⁹ It was found that over a two week period a total of 182 people approached the agencies for accommodation.²⁰ Of these 75 were under 25 years of age (46 male 29 female).²¹ If this figure is extrapolated it means that about 2000 young people per year are homeless in Brisbane.

A recent survey was conducted by the former New South Wales Homeless Persons Advisory Committee. The questionnaire used in this survey was different from those cited above and is therefore not comparable. It asked for the number of people accommodated on each day of the week rather than the number who approached the agency over a certain period. The study found that on average 363 youths were accommodated in 83 agencies throughout New South Wales during the week 23 to 29 March 1981.²²

The only national surveys which have examined homelessness and homeless youth have been undertaken by the Department of Social Security. One of these (called 'A Place of Dignity') used a random sample to enable it to determine the typical characteristics of homeless youth. This type of sample, however, does not enable one to determine extent. Another national survey involved the collection of data from the Youth Services Scheme. It provides the most comprehensive information on extent of all the available data, but is also affected by the survey limitations listed above. Hence, as with the other surveys, it cannot be accepted as a valid estimate of extent.

The National Committee for Evaluation of the Youth Services Scheme commented in its report that:

'This data represents the largest and most detailed sample of homeless youth to be collected to date. It is adequate to allow for identification of major characteristics of users and trends in the nature of youth homelessness. However, there are limitations in this data.

The major lesson learned during the collection period is that data on this sensitive issue is extraordinarily difficult to collect. The data collection for the evaluation was very ambitious, and not all plans were fully realised. Data, particularly on demand patterns and occupancy, is patchy in some States, and not all agencies have consistently provided records of all attendances. Agency staff, in the main working long hours, do not put a high priority on data collection and resources available to departments for follow-up were extremely limited.

This data can only be regarded as a sample of the total homeless youth population because data could only be collected from agencies funded under this Scheme. Further, the impossibility of eliminating double counting means that it is not possible to determine an estimate of the size of the total homeless youth population from this data.²³

Table 2.2 sets out the number of requests made in each state, over the 12 month period 1 October 1980 to 30 September 1981, for emergency accommodation services funded under the Youth Services Scheme.

Table 2.2: Youth Services Program—Requests for Emergency Accommodation—1 October 1980 to 30 September 1981

<i>N.S.W.</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>W.A.</i>	<i>N.T.</i>	<i>A.C.T.</i>	<i>Total</i>
4 870	3 407	1 874	1 575	331	No data supplied	58	189	12 304

For Tasmania, Western Australia and the Northern Territory data was collected only for the period 1.4.81–30.9.81. The data is incomplete in all States. South Australian services have noted that workers are not covering services 24 hours, and that referral agencies do not make referrals when they are aware that services are at capacity.

Source: Commonwealth Department of Social Security.

Table 2.2 reveals that over 12 months, 12304 requests were received for emergency accommodation. New South Wales has the largest number of requests followed by Victoria. Tasmania has a very high number considering its small population. It is almost four times the number of requests per head of population for New South Wales or Victoria. Part of this can be accounted for by the apparent mobility of homeless youth who move from the more populous states of New South Wales and Victoria to Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia.

Conclusion

So unreliable are the statistics available on the extent of youth homelessness that the Committee was hesitant to refer to them at all. However, as these are the only estimates available on this aspect of youth homelessness the Committee felt obliged to present them in its report for the information of the reader. Until such time as a properly conducted survey is undertaken, with adequate supervision and controls, there will continue to be conjecture as to the actual extent of the problem and whether or not the problem is increasing.

Endnotes

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5. Transcript of evidence, p. 3267.
6. Transcript of evidence, p. 3270.
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8. Transcript of evidence, p. 3270.
9. Committee exhibit number 3.
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13. Committee exhibit number 7.
14. Committee exhibit number 7.
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17. Committee exhibit number 10.
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20. A Survey of Homelessness, Brisbane, August 1980, p. 7.
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CHAPTER 3

CRISIS ACCOMMODATION

Youth Services Scheme

The majority of youth refugees are funded under the Youth Services Scheme. This is a joint Commonwealth/state scheme whereby money provided by the Commonwealth is matched dollar for dollar by the states. It is a pilot program which commenced on 1 July 1979 and was due to finish on 30 June 1982. However, on 23 March 1982 the Minister for Social Security announced that the Commonwealth Government will provide continued financial assistance to the Scheme in 1982-83. This extension of time will allow the Commonwealth and the state governments to make an assessment of the evaluation of the pilot Youth Services Scheme.

The initial proposal for the scheme was put forward in November 1978 at the Welfare Ministers' Conference. The state Ministers asked the then Minister for Social Security, Senator the Honourable Dame Margaret Guilfoyle, to provide Commonwealth funding to assist them to meet increasing demands for emergency accommodation specifically for young people. They stressed that these adolescents needed a higher level of supervision, counselling and support than was available in other services which catered mainly for older homeless persons. It was proposed by the Minister for Social Security that \$1 million per year would be provided by the Commonwealth for a period of three years and that the states would match the grants. The allocation in each state for the three year period is shown in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1: Youth Services Scheme—Funding over Period 1979-80 to 1981-82

	<i>Available from Commonwealth</i>	<i>Matched by States</i>	<i>Total allocated</i>	<i>Commonwealth funds not taken up</i>
	\$	\$	\$	\$
N.S.W.	1 005 360	1 205 360(a)	2 210 720	
Victoria	789 300	1 064 300(a)	1 578 600	
Queensland	460 740	303 677	764 417	157 063
S.A.	277 740	209 998	487 738	67 742
W.A.	251 400	215 808(b)	251 400	114 579
Tasmania	95 460	95 460	190 920	
N.T.	36 000	36 000	72 000	
A.C.T.	84 000	..	84 000	
	3 000 000		5 603 795	

(a) N.S.W. contributed an additional \$200 000 to the Scheme in 1981-82. Victoria contributed an additional \$275 000 in 1979-82.

(b) Funded agencies in W.A. receive only Commonwealth funds: W.A. estimates this amount to be expended on similar State funded services. At the commencement of the Scheme, Western Australia stated it was already spending \$65 000 per annum. This has now increased to around \$73 000. (Transcript of evidence, p. 3609).

Source: Commonwealth Department of Social Security.

The Department of Social Security's definition of the scheme is 'a youth shelter program with support services to be focussed on youth aged to 18 years. At the discretion of sponsoring agencies, youth aged over 18 may be assisted through the program when appropriate'.¹

The emergency accommodation is provided in residential dwellings which offer lodgings for periods ranging from overnight to three months. These dwellings may provide accommodation for longer periods or on an intermittent basis in exceptional circumstances. However, it is not intended that this program provide long-term accommodation. The scheme also allows for payment to approved households which make available bed space for periods ranging from overnight to three months.

Support services are also provided in the program. It was anticipated that these would include counselling and information services for children and their parents; supervision of young people in accommodation; rent/lease guarantees to landlords; and subsidies.

Usually grants are made to community agencies. However, state or local government sponsorship of projects is permissible where no suitable community agency is available to sponsor a project. Grants are provided mainly for recurrent funding of projects. Capital grants for new buildings are not available, although the cost of reasonable modifications to existing facilities may be considered.²

Under the Youth Services Scheme, 68 agencies are funded and they offer 86 separate services. There are 51 refuges, 13 family placement/boardings services, six referral/co-ordination officers, nine detached youth workers, and seven bond/loan/cash assistance services.³ Altogether, these services provide about 750 beds for emergency accommodation. Table 3.2 shows the number of beds in each state:

Table 3.2: Youth Service Scheme—Number of Beds in Refuges

	<i>Period 1: October–November 1980</i>								
	<i>N.S.W.</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>W.A.</i>	<i>N.T.</i>	<i>A.C.T.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Refuge Beds	160	79	16	49	17	(a)	10	8	339
Family/boardings places	35	73	6	0	0	(a)	0	0	114
No. of services returning data	17	14	2	5	2	(a)	1	1	42
	<i>Period 2: October–November 1981</i>								
	<i>N.S.W.</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>W.A.</i>	<i>N.T.</i>	<i>A.C.T.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Refuge Beds	187	80	40	49	32	98(b)	10	17	513
Family/Boarding Places	18	214	6	0	0	6	0	0	244
No. of services returning data	21	22	4	4	4	5	1	2	

(a) Scheme not commenced. (b) Of these 98, approximately half are hostel beds which were available prior to the commencement of the Scheme.

Source: Commonwealth Department of Social Security.

In New South Wales the Youth Services Scheme is administered by the Department of Youth and Community Services. Twenty-two emergency accommodation services have been funded under the Scheme. Twenty of these are youth refuges, one is a fostering program called 'Stretch-a-Family' and one is a service comprising crisis and medium term accommodation, and housing information and referral.⁴

In Victoria the program is administered by the Department of Community Welfare Services. Within the program there are four service components:

- Residential Units (Youth Refuges)
- Boarding and Lodging Schemes
- Regional Housing Officers with associated Referral Services and Housing Information
- Bond and Rental Assistance.

The range of youth refuge services extends from large units operating on a rostered staff basis to smaller services utilising cottage parent staff.⁵

The Board and Lodging Schemes place and support young people in a variety of living arrangements.⁶ One part of this scheme is the Family Placement projects which recruit and train volunteer families to take young people into their homes on an emergency basis. The service also offers support for the young person and the family during placement.⁷

A development within the Youth Services Scheme in Victoria has been the funding of six full time and three part time regional Youth Accommodation Officers whose responsibility is to develop locally based accommodation services for young people. A Housing Information Service for young people in the inner city area has been established and a Regional Co-ordination and Information Agency has been set up in the Outer East Region.⁸

In Queensland there are 11 approved projects funded under the Youth Services Scheme. About seven of these are youth refuges, one is a family boarding scheme and there are five detached Youth Workers.⁹

In South Australia there are four projects funded under the Youth Services Scheme. All of these are refuges.¹⁰

In Western Australia there are seven projects funded under the Scheme. Three of these are youth refuges. The others include family boarding schemes, information services, street workers and bond and rental services.¹¹ The Youth Services Scheme has had major difficulties in Western Australia due to differing interpretations on practice and policy issues between this state and the Commonwealth.¹² Because of this, funding was delayed for over a year and a half. Finally, the Commonwealth agreed to give the funds as a specific purpose grant rather than a matching grant.¹³

In Tasmania the Youth Services Scheme funds six youth accommodation services. Four of these are youth refuges, one is a bond and rental subsidy scheme and one is a street work project.¹⁴

The Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory each have one youth refuge funded under the Youth Services Scheme.¹⁵

Refuges not funded under the Youth Services Scheme

Eight refuges (total of 128 beds) are funded under the Homeless Persons Assistance Program¹⁶ but many receive no government funding at all. Refuges receiving no government funds are usually run by voluntary agencies or church groups.

As noted in the previous chapter, the limited data that is presently available relates almost exclusively to programs funded under the Youth Services Scheme. Very little is known about the unfunded schemes and the extent to which they are able to meet the varying demands of homeless youth. While they may be part of a state-wide youth accommodation network, no attempt has been made by either state or Commonwealth Governments to assess their contribution.

The Committee did receive submissions and took evidence from a number of unfunded refuges. For example, in Victoria the Committee took evidence from the House of the Gentle Bunyip¹⁷ (located in Melbourne and Shepparton), and the Christian Alternative Remand Accommodation, Melbourne.¹⁸ A submission from the Barwon Regional Consultative Council listed a number of unfunded refuges or hostels that were catering for homeless youth in their region. In Tasmania the Committee took evidence from the North West Shelter Committee¹⁹ which runs a refuge for homeless girls.

The Committee also received evidence from organisations that have been involved in institutional care programs for state wards for many years. However, due to the changing attitude towards institutional care, many of these places have now closed down or are under threat of closure. In order to continue to provide a caring service for young people, many institutions have begun to modify their programs so as to help meet the needs of homeless youth.²⁰

The extent of unfunded refuges is not at all clear. While not all organisations outside the Youth Services Scheme could be said to be operating youth refuges along the lines of refuges under the Scheme, it does appear that they do provide some beds within their premises for crisis accommodation purposes. In order to gain a more comprehensive picture of the extent of crisis accommodation for homeless youth, the Committee believes that greater consultation should be encouraged between government funded programs and other programs.

The role of youth refuges

The role of youth refuges under the Youth Services Scheme has been formally set out by the Department of Social Security in the following terms:

- To provide accommodation places on a short term basis for youth (to about age 18) in need of emergency shelter.
- To assist the present clients to move into a stable living situation.²¹

The Department has also outlined the objectives which are necessary to achieve these goals. They are:

- To provide beds for temporary accommodation in specific purpose facilities and/or to sublet within private residences; also, to use other means as may be approved.
- To employ support and counselling personnel in such numbers and with appropriate training and competence to cater for the counselling or information needs (in terms of returning to a stable living situation) of each client.
- To provide material assistance in the form of loans subsidies or guarantees to assist those clients assessed as requiring such assistance to obtain a long-term stable living situation.²²

Many refuges continue to support young people after they have left the refuge. Some adolescents continue to visit the refuges and often participate in their activities.

Refuges provide convenient places for government welfare and legal bodies to place children. Several witnesses said that police welfare agencies and the courts refer children to them.²³ The data from the Youth Services Scheme reveals that of its sample about nine percent of those accommodated in the refuges were from institutions or foster care. While the data records both the young persons last place of living immediately prior to approaching the refuge and their last living situation of three months or more, it still does not indicate whether other clients have at some other stage experienced institutional or foster care. As stated above there has been some doubt over recent years

about the success of large institutions for children and many of the traditional childrens homes are closing. It may be that refuges are becoming an unofficial alternative to these institutions and this factor should be considered when decisions about funding of refuges are being made.

The movement away from formal institutional care has led to a situation whereby the responsibility for the care and protection of young people in need is not at all clear. This matter was discussed at some length in the Report to the Minister for Social Security - 'Families and Social Services in Australia'; Canberra 1978. Appendix 1 of this Committee's report contains a number of extracts from that report, particularly extracts dealing with legal and constitutional matters.

Youth refuges may provide a cooling off place for young people to consider their situation realistically. The Youth Services Scheme data reveals that about half of the children in refuges have come directly from home. Of this group about 42 percent return to their parents but there is no indication as to whether this return is of a temporary or permanent nature.

Another important function of refuges is to provide the first step in finding satisfactory long term accommodation for these young people where family reconciliation is not possible. Refuges provide a base where the client can be assessed in order to determine the most suitable type of accommodation to meet his needs.

The evaluation of the Youth Services Scheme included an assessment of the number of people requiring support services and the ability of the various programs in selected states to provide those services. Tables 3.3 and 3.4 were produced by the National Evaluation Committee as an assessment of the support services provided by the various youth refuges funded under the Scheme.

Table 3.3: Number of Cases Requiring Support Services in Each State

	N.S.W.		Vic.		Qld		S.A.		A.C.T.	
	Cases	% of total	Cases	% of total	Cases	% of total	Cases	% of total	Cases	% of total
Personal Counselling	979	75	581	71	547	58	36	55	73	74
Family Counselling	483	37	360	44	166	18	18	27	43	43
Basic Living Skills	629	48	441	54	406	43	39	59	53	54
Housing Information	386	30	452	56	399	42	28	42	66	67
Breathing Space	573	44	443	54	190	20	27	41	54	55
Assistance to seek -										
Employment	523	40	318	39	386	41	35	53	24	24
Benefit/Pension	260	20	242	30	308	33	13	20	24	24
Treatment (Drug/Alcohol)	126	10	122	15	150	16	4	6	8	8
Contraception Advice	107	8	106	13	48	5	5	8	10	10
Legal Advice	150	12	154	19	249	26	1	2	5	5
Other	66	5	24	3	72	8	4	6	4	4

Source: Supplementary evidence from the Department of Social Security.

Table 3.4: Percentage of Those Requiring Support Services Who did not Obtain Them

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	A.C.T.
	%	%	%	%	%
Personal Counselling	12	9	8	0	10
Family Counselling	46	50	48	44	65
Basic Living Skills	16	8	4	0	6
Housing Information	14	6	5	21	5
Breathing Space	2	4	0	4	0

	<i>N.S.W.</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>A.C.T.</i>
	%	%	%	%	%
Assistance to seek--					
Employment	20	19	38	40	21
Benefit/Pension	17	10	3	15	4
Drug/Alcohol Treatment	57	20	59	25	13
Contraceptive Advice	11	9	8	0	11
Legal Advice	7	5	34	0	0
Other	8	21	1	0	25

Source: Supplementary evidence from the Department of Social Security.

The Committee is unclear as to what is meant by each service and what constitutes an ability on behalf of a refuge to provide that service. Unfortunately, the tables do not give an indication of the quality of the service provided and whether or not the obtaining of the service proved successful.

As a result, the Committee is most reluctant to make any meaningful comments about the figures contained in Tables 3.3 and 3.4. The Committee believes that counselling and the provision of other support services are an integral part of the youth refuge network. It is therefore important that appropriately trained staff are made available to ensure that these services are properly maintained and conducted. The Committee has taken into account this important factor when making its recommendations concerning youth refuges.

The Committee was concerned that the proliferation of refuges may encourage children to leave home when it is not imperative for them to do so. Many witnesses were asked for their views on this issue and the response was varied. Some felt that refuges would not encourage children to leave home²⁴ because refuges are not attractive alternative places to live.²⁵ Some witnesses believed, however, that a small minority of children could be encouraged to leave home prematurely.²⁶ The Committee, however, would certainly not regard the possibility of such usage as a justification for the closure of youth refuges. The Committee **RECOMMENDS that the Youth Services Scheme guidelines issued by the Commonwealth Department of Social Security should state clearly that youth workers must attempt to ascertain the circumstances of a child becoming homeless and, wherever possible, should reunite the young person with his parents.**

While there already exists a clear legal responsibility for youth refuge workers to notify parents or a designated social welfare worker about the whereabouts of all people under the age of 16 years, the Committee also believes that, where appropriate, parents of all youth staying at a refuge should be notified that their child is safe and is being given food and shelter. In this respect, it would be seen as the first step in any future family reconciliation.

The need for youth refuges

It is impossible to measure the need for youth refuges as there is no adequate data on the extent of youth homelessness. The only available estimate of need is the measured demand for youth refuges under the Youth Services Scheme. Table 3.5 sets out the demand for government funded refuges and indicates to what extent this demand is, at present, being met.

Table 3.5: Demand (i.e. requests for emergency accommodation—period 1.10.80–30.9.81)

	<i>N.S.W.</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>W.A.</i>	<i>N.T.</i>	<i>A.C.T.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Total No. of requests	4 870	3 407	1 874	1 575	331	(a)	58	189	12 304
Per cent met	38	35	88	74	34	(a)	78	77	51
Per cent not met because service was at capacity	27	36	6	12	22	(a)	..	5	23
Per cent not met — other reasons	35	29	6	14	44	(a)	22	18	26
Total	100	100	100	100	100	(a)	100	100	100
No. of services in response	18 22	14 21	2 6	4	4	(a)	1	1	44-59

(a) No data available.

NB: Variations in percentage totals due to rounding.

For Tasmania, Western Australia and the Northern Territory data was collected only for the period 1.4.81–30.9.81. The data is incomplete in all States. South Australian services have noted that workers are not covering services 24 hours, and that referral agencies do not make referrals when they are aware that services are at capacity.

Source: Commonwealth Department of Social Security.

Once again, extreme care has to be taken when drawing any conclusions from Table 3.5. First, the possibility of multiple counting must be considered. The Committee is very sceptical about using the number of requests as equating demand for crisis accommodation. During questioning of witnesses at the public hearings it was agreed that one youth could make many inquiries within a particular city until such time as he found an appropriate place to stay. Each inquiry would be recorded as a request for accommodation but in actual fact it is only one person who is seeking such accommodation.

Secondly, the Committee was told that for many reasons, many young people move from one refuge to another, and for some their mobility takes them from one state to another. This can be very significant when one considers that the average length of stay in a refuge is around two to three weeks, with around 35 to 45 per cent staying less than a week. On these two factors alone, multiple counting would be very significant.

It has also been said that whilst acknowledging the significance of multiple counting, the figures are probably a reasonably accurate picture of the situation simply because many people who are homeless do not approach refuges or welfare agencies for help. It is anyone's guess as to whether the unrecorded demands for crisis accommodation compensate for the double or multiple counting in the recorded requests for emergency accommodation. However, the Committee would not be prepared to undertake specific policy initiatives based on these figures alone. The Committee has endeavoured throughout the course of its inquiry to determine reliable estimates from which it could make specific recommendations. It has not succeeded in this endeavour.

The data in Table 3.5 would suggest that demand exceeds capacity and it could therefore be expected that refuges would be fully accommodated most of the time. However, the occupancy data in Table 3.6 (which is also subject to qualifications) shows that this is not the case (except for Victoria).

Table 3.6: Occupancy (beds occupied on one Wednesday night during the period(a) expressed in numbers and in percentage of capacity)

	<i>N.S.W.</i>		<i>Vic.</i>		<i>Qld</i>		<i>Tas.</i>		<i>S.A.</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Period 1: October—November 1980												
Refuge beds	100	63	77	97	10	62	41	83	12	70	240	72
Family/Boarding places	19	54	32	44	3	50	(b)	..	(b)	..	54	47
No. of services returning data	17	..	14	..	2	..	5	..	2	..	..	..
	<i>N.S.W.</i>		<i>Vic.</i>		<i>Qld</i>		<i>Tas.</i>		<i>A.C.T</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Period 2: October—November 1981												
Refuge beds	128	68	78	97	31	77	11	22	4	44	252	67
Family/Boarding places	18	100	139	65	(b)	..	(b)	..	(b)	..	157	66
No. of services returning data	21	..	..	..	4	..	2	..	1	..	..	..

Period 1: Data not available for Western Australia, Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory.
 Period 2: Data not available for South Australia, Western Australia and Northern Territory.

(a) The date on which this count was taken varies from state to state, and in some cases from service to service. In Period 1 some refuges completed a return on the date of commencement of service, rather than from the requested date. (b) Denotes no beds/places.

The major observation about this data is the high proportion of gaps due to incomplete data or no response. This reflects the extreme difficulty in obtaining this data. The occupancy data cannot be regarded as reliable because of the gaps, and because it is known to be unrepresentative.

Family/Boarding places are treated separately from refuge beds because of high fluctuations in capacity from period to period. Also, while places may be nominally available (capacity) staff are obliged to be selective in placements. Occupancy of 75–80 per cent is regarded as tantamount to utilisation at full capacity.

Source: Commonwealth Department of Social Security.

The data in Table 3.6 is supported by the observations of the Committee, which found that only a minority of refugees were at maximum capacity at the time members of the Committee visited.

According to the Department of Social Security, this seeming discrepancy in data is 'attributable to difficulties with respect to data collection rather than lack of demand of services'. The Committee would argue that this reason makes a mockery of the whole exercise of obtaining the data. It highlights the ill-conceived approach taken by the planners at the very beginning of this pilot program in assuming that everyone involved in the scheme would have the time, resources and expertise to collect what is very sensitive, complex and subjective data. As it was a pilot program, it should have been imperative at the very beginning to ensure that data collected from participants would be uniform and consistent. It is regrettable that at the end of the three year pilot program, the Department is acknowledging the shortcomings of its data collection action methods. It is also regrettable that the Department is little better informed about the extent of youth homelessness than prior to the evaluation.

The Committee feels that the demand for emergency accommodation is high but that the situation is not as serious as the figures in Table 3.5 indicate. Our main concern is not that there is an overall lack of refugees, but that there is a shortage in certain

regions. In evidence, a representative from the New South Wales Association of Child Caring Agencies said:

'In the last couple of days under your government programs, a project was funded just down the street from this agency to try to get a property and open it. It would not be a mile away from where these 300 beds are. That \$40,000 was given to another group to try and start a program. To me that is idiocy and that is occurring every day because of the lack of planning. No one is looking at what resources are available and making the optimum use of those and recycling them. They are constantly coming up with new programs.'²⁷

Members of the Committee visited this new refuge in Blacktown and were disturbed to find a total occupancy of one, at that particular time, when the capacity was six.

Much has been said about the number of refuges that have sprung up in the Kings Cross/Darlinghurst area. This area attracts a large number of young people and it might be argued that the proliferation of refuges there encourages them to stay. The Committee strongly believes that no new refuges should be established in the area. Relocation of one or two of these refuges to other areas within the Sydney metropolitan area should be seriously considered. This would then enable many young people to stay in areas where they have already established some sort of network and are familiar with the services available.

In the Committee's opinion, the present geographical spread of government funded youth refuges is inappropriate and needs to be rationalised. For example, the Committee was concerned at the lack of facilities in the Latrobe Valley, Victoria, and in Gladstone, Queensland. Indeed, the Latrobe Valley was one of the very first areas to demonstrate a need for a youth refuge and yet it has still not received any government funding.

The future of youth refuges

The Committee was favourably impressed with the work of some refuges. However, they are not the solution to the problem of homelessness. The Committee believes that the most effective response to this problem is to provide medium and long term accommodation. This is fully discussed in Chapter 4. It is felt that if longer term accommodation is provided, much of the demand for refuges would be eliminated. Nonetheless the Committee **RECOMMENDS that the Commonwealth/State funded Youth Services Scheme be continued but that there be a rationalisation of existing services.** For most young people their support network is in the region where they have lived for many years. Hence, some refuges should be closed down and relocated in areas where there is a demonstrated need for their service. Access to public transport and other services must be given consideration when choosing locations.

Staffing

The Committee was informed that many refuge staff work long hours,²⁸ and that 'burn out', as a result of stress and fatigue, is a serious problem. The National Committee for Evaluation of the Youth Services Scheme has noted that 'burn out' is a particularly serious problem in New South Wales and Queensland. It reports that

information on this matter is not available from other states, but that Victoria seems to have the least problem in this respect.²⁹ Mr Thomas Keating, Co-ordinator of the Youth Accommodation Services in Victoria, attributed the situation to the different approaches taken by states in staffing their projects. He told the Committee that ' . . . our (Victorian) major shelters . . . have a staffing component of four and a half workers, which means that there tends to be much more support for workers. They are not working as long hours as for instance workers do in New South Wales.'³⁰

In recommending the continuation of the Youth Services Scheme, the Committee maintains that it is necessary to ensure that proper staffing ratios are maintained in each refuge. High staff turnover is not conducive to the successful provision of support services within the refuges.

Another matter that concerned the Committee was the type of person selected to work in the youth refuges. The Committee was told that the main criteria for choosing staff in many cases is the ability to identify and work with youth.³¹ Often, many of the workers do not have formal training.³² To date, the level of salary and the conditions of work have made it difficult to attract and retain suitable staff. The Committee does not see the need to make formal qualifications mandatory, but it maintains that if the support services are going to be provided properly, then some form of training is essential. For many, the most appropriate form of training would be of an 'in service' nature.

The Committee **RECOMMENDS** that as part of the continuation of the Youth Services Scheme, adequate funds be made available to provide a nationally co-ordinated 'in service' training program. Further, funding of particular programs under the Scheme should be conditional on that program ensuring that its staff undertake some form of approved 'in service' training.

In addition, the Committee **RECOMMENDS** that a rate of pay be determined by the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission to establish a salary scale for youth refuge workers which would be consistent with other rates of pay in the social welfare area.

Funding for crisis accommodation

Finally, the Committee has considered the level and method of funding that would be appropriate for the continuation of the Youth Services Scheme. There is some debate over the manner in which funds for youth refuges should be allocated to the states. Some state governments³³ told the Committee that they would prefer to have the funds in the form of a block grant. This would give them major control of guidelines, evaluation, data collection, etc. The Committee believes, however, that the problem of youth homelessness should be managed at a national level. This will ensure that all programs have standard guidelines and a uniform basis for evaluation, and that data on the extent and nature of the problem can be collated and used for policy making purposes. The Committee therefore **RECOMMENDS** that the present form of funding for the Youth Services Scheme—Commonwealth/state matched grants—be continued for the majority of expenditure on the Scheme.

As already noted, the Committee was unable to obtain any reliable data from which to make firm and specific recommendations concerning levels of funding, staffing, bed requirements, etc. Consequently, the Committee can only **RECOMMEND** that matching grants provided by the Commonwealth and State Governments should be 'substantially' increased from their present level of \$2 million per annum.

In addition, the Committee **RECOMMENDS** that the Commonwealth provides further funds to ensure that a properly co-ordinated data collection study is undertaken and that a nationally supervised 'in service' youth refuge worker training scheme is established.

Conclusion

It is the Committee's belief that the present level of bed capacity (around 750-800) will be sufficient to meet demand, provided the Committee's recommendations concerning medium to long term accommodation are implemented. However, there needs to be a substantial upgrading of accommodation facilities in most existing refuges. In addition, a certain degree of rationalisation and relocation is necessary.

Without uniform and reliable statistics it is most likely that policy initiatives in this area will be of an ad hoc nature. A properly financed and managed statistical collection must be undertaken to enable more effective and relevant program initiatives.

Because youth refuge work is a relatively new field of employment, it is difficult to determine what type of person and qualifications are most suitable for this work. The Committee believes, however, that the development of an 'in service' training scheme which is nationally co-ordinated will be of substantial benefit to youth workers.

Finally, where possible, all government funded programs should endeavour to complement existing unfunded refuges and hostels in many regions throughout Australia.

Endnotes

1. Commonwealth Department of Social Security, 'Youth Services Program: Profile', unpublished paper, p. 1.
2. Commonwealth Department of Social Security, 'Youth Services Program: Profile', pp. 1-2.
3. National Committee for Evaluation of the Youth Services Scheme, 'Report on the Youth Services Scheme 1979-82'.
4. Transcript of evidence, p. 1104.
5. Transcript of evidence, p. 1708.
6. Transcript of evidence, p. 1745.
7. Transcript of evidence, p. 1708.
8. Transcript of evidence, pp. 1708-9.
9. National Committee for Evaluation of the Youth Services Scheme, 'Report on the Youth Services Scheme 1979-82'.
10. National Committee for Evaluation of the Youth Services Scheme, 'Report on the Youth Services Scheme 1979-82'.
11. National Committee for Evaluation of the Youth Services Scheme, 'Report on the Youth Services Scheme 1979-82'.
12. Transcript of evidence, p. 3577.
13. Transcript of evidence, p. 3619.
14. Commonwealth Department of Social Security, 'Youth Service Scheme - Refuge Capacity'.
15. Commonwealth Department of Social Security, 'Youth Service Scheme - Refuge Capacity'.
16. Transcript of evidence, p. 18.
17. Transcript of evidence, p. 914.
18. Transcript of evidence, p. 927.
19. Transcript of evidence, p. 2751.
20. Transcript of evidence, pp. 890, 1374.
21. Transcript of evidence, p. 28.
22. Transcript of evidence, p. 28.
23. Transcript of evidence, pp. 350, 2843, 2914.
24. Transcript of evidence, pp. 127, 1886, 2065.

25. Transcript of evidence, p. 2476.
26. Transcript of evidence, pp. 2037, 2267, 2687, 3037.
27. Transcript of evidence, p. 1398.
28. Transcript of evidence, p. 3059.
29. National Committee for the Evaluation of the Youth Services Scheme. 'Report on the Youth Services Scheme 1979-82'.
30. Transcript of evidence, p. 1777.
31. Transcript of evidence, p. 2878.
32. Transcript of evidence, p. 3054.
33. Transcript of evidence, pp. 3215, 3613.

CHAPTER 4

BEYOND THE YOUTH REFUGE

Introduction

Youth refuges have been able to provide very low cost (and in many cases, free) accommodation for several hundred homeless youths throughout Australia. Much of this accommodation could be described as very basic. It is crisis accommodation and at best gives young homeless people enough breathing space to enable them to move back home or, if necessary, additional time to seek more appropriate and longer term accommodation. Youth refuges have brought to the public's attention the plight of homeless young people throughout Australia, and have highlighted the need for access to low cost medium to long-term accommodation.

While the objectives and stated aims of most youth refuges go beyond the simple provision of shelter, the mere nature, funding and structure of refuges make the achievement of other aims very difficult (for example, the teaching of basic but very necessary living and work skills). However, it has become readily apparent to the Committee that one of the major obstacles faced by homeless youth is their very limited access to affordable and appropriate medium to long-term accommodation (for many young people this should still be of a supportive household type).

Why has the housing shortage arisen?

A combination of factors has led to the current housing shortage, not only for homeless youth but for many other disadvantaged groups within the community. First, by Australian standards, the level of unemployment has been very high in recent years. When this is translated into the payment of unemployment benefits, it is not difficult to understand why the demand for low cost housing has continued to rise sharply. In addition, there has been a very sharp rise in the number of other benefit recipients, particularly supporting parent beneficiaries, and this has also increased demand for low rental accommodation.

The demand for low-cost housing is shown quite clearly by the steady rise in the number of people seeking public housing. Table 4.1 shows that around 100 000 people were on state housing authority waiting lists for rental housing accommodation as at 31 December 1981. All states have experienced an increase in the number of people on their waiting lists in recent years. This is particularly so in New South Wales. At 31 December 1980, 37 358 people were on the Housing Commission list in that state but this number rose to 45 194 twelve months later (an increase of 20 percent). In Victoria there has been an increase of just over 10 percent in the numbers seeking public housing accommodation in the 12 months ending 31 December 1981.

Table 4.1: State Housing Authorities Applications for Rental Accommodation—Outstanding (a)

<i>At</i>	<i>N.S.W.</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>W.A.</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>Total (6 States)</i>
Dec. 1973	34 748	14 336	6 033	13 500	14 010	2 910	85 537
June 1974	35 673	16 290	7 865	15 200	11 813	3 222	90 063
Dec. 1974	36 030	18 097	8 270	21 683	11 799	3 427	99 306
June 1975	37 373	18 262	8 193	22 906	13 500	3 876	104 110
Dec. 1975	35 010	19 109	8 053	23 086	13 721	3 927	102 906
June 1976	32 393	21 005	7 695	23 747	14 437	4 114	103 391
Dec. 1976	29 657	23 138	7 750	23 296	14 660	3 866	102 367
June 1977	27 159	21 917	7 214	23 821	16 086	3 851	100 048
Dec. 1977	27 040	21 181	5 383	21 620	14 731	3 490	93 445
June 1978	28 697	12 863	4 670	20 042	7 033	3 564	76 869
Dec. 1978	28 498	12 807	4 591	19 355	5 473	3 188	73 912
June 1979	29 915	12 836	4 141	18 539	6 292	3 468	75 191
Dec. 1979	30 656	12 056	4 787	17 551	5 845	3 569	74 464
June 1980	35 102	12 190	4 813	18 615	6 491	3 932	81 143
Dec. 1980	37 358	13 861	5 515	19 765	5 271	4 082	85 852
June 1981	41 459	16 813	6 184	20 854	6 031	4 288	95 629
Dec. 1981	45 194	15 345	7 469	21 400	5 503	3 972	98 883

(a) Figures from and including 30 June 1978 are for rental only. Earlier statistics for some states include applications for the purchase of a housing authority dwelling. Figures from New South Wales are applications received. For other states, figures are numbers admitted to the waiting list (approved).

Source: Information and statistics on Commonwealth Government Housing Schemes funded through the states. Public Housing Branch, Department of Housing and Construction.

Secondly, there has been a decline in the number of houses and flats completed by State housing authorities over recent years. Table 4.2 indicates that the number of houses and flats completed in Australia has dropped from 9622 in 1974-75 to 7490 in 1980-81. In addition, State housing authorities have been selling much of their stock and this has resulted in only a very small rise in the total number of public housing rental units available for use in 1981 (see Table 4.3 and 4.4). From 1 July 1976 to 30 June 1981 the stock of lettable dwellings has increased by 23 000. Over the same period, a further 43 000 dwellings have been completed by state housing authorities. This in effect represents a very significant number (around 50 percent) of dwellings being sold during the same period.

While the Committee would accept the sale of public housing stock at full replacement cost, it is regrettable that sales have been allowed to continue at such a high rate and that houses may have been sold at well below their market or replacement value (this was particularly so in many states up until 1978) when there remains an increasing demand for such housing. This is particularly so when funds from house sales are not immediately recommitted to the building of replacement stock.

Table 4.2: Commonwealth-State Housing Agreements and Grants to States for Rental Assistance to Pensioners Dwellings Completed

<i>Financial year</i>	<i>N.S.W.</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>W.A.</i>	<i>Tas.</i>
1974-75 (a)	2977	2746	1359	862	723	704
(b)	30	23	172	10	16	..
1975-76 (a)	4574	2520	1069	1321	265	817
(b)	665	196	81	44	64	17
1976-77 (a)	2769	2318	696	1176	821	752
(b)	245	148	87	105	82	39
1977-78 (a)	2207	2330	897	1380	1277	862

<i>Financial year</i>	<i>N.S.W.</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>W.A.</i>	<i>Tas.</i>
(b)	152	146	76	87	58	14
1978-79 (a)	2920	1835	604	1857	745	810
(b)	151	67	70	..	..	..
1979-80 (a)	2983	1185	436	1392	764	790
(b)	30	10	6	..	..	..
1980-81	3089	954	647	1379	753	668

(a) Includes dwellings provided through the 1973-74 and 1978 Housing Agreements, and dwellings provided through grants under Part III of the 1978 Housing Assistance Act. (b) Includes dwellings provided under the *States Grants (Dwellings for Aged Pensioners) Act 1969*, and the *States Grants (Dwellings for Pensioners) Act 1974*.

Source: Department of Housing and Construction.

Table 4.3: State Housing Authorities Stocks of Lettable Dwellings

<i>As at</i>	<i>N.S.W.</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>W.A.</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>Total</i>
30.6.76	77 092	34 367	14 858	37 852	24 090	6 023	194 282
30.6.77	79 226	33 445	15 121	39 013	24 263	6 800	197 868
30.6.78 (a)	74 386	36 263	15 940	40 129	23 387	7 762	197 867
31.12.78 (a)	75 930	36 656	16 200	40 701	23 781	8 183	201 451
30.6.79 (a)	77 211	36 463	16 355	41 048	24 307	8 517	203 901
31.12.79 (a)	78 803	36 294	16 453	41 699	24 747	8 855	206 851
30.6.80 (a)	80 119	36 431	16 693	42 115	24 960	9 258	209 576
31.12.80 (a)	81 563	36 715	16 951	43 059	25 443	9 539	213 270
30.6.81 (a)	83 328	37 663	17 278	43 652	25 642	9 807	217 370
31.12.81 (a)	84 832(p)	38 652	17 624	44 592	25 677	10 211	221 588

(a) Excludes dwellings provided for Aborigines under the Department of Aboriginal Affairs programs, Servicemen, Teacher Housing, Decentralisation dwellings, etc. In previous years, some states have included these dwellings.

(p) preliminary; subject to revision.

Source: Department of Housing and Construction.

Table 4.4: 1945 and 1956-1966 Housing Agreements and States Grants (Housing) Act 1971-73, 1973 Housing Agreement, and 1978 Housing Assistance Act

<i>Financial year</i>	<i>N.S.W.</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>W.A.</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Total Sale of Dwellings							
1974-75	1 283	2 083	1 304	196	608	315	5 789
1975-76	1 453	2 881	591	273	1 158	230	6 586
1976-77	1 002	3 201	781	251	779	33	6 047
1977-78	131	2 365	573	376	455	1	3 901
1978-79	260	1 779	330	143	64	67	2 643
1979-80	211	1 440	243	158	80	61	2 193
1980-81	250	527	206	178	95	56	1 312
Total	4 590	14 276	4 028	1 575	3 239	763	28 471

Source: Department of Housing and Construction.

Table 4.5: Vacancy Rates (private residential rental dwellings)

	<i>March 1980</i>	<i>September 1980</i>	<i>March 1981</i>	<i>September 1981</i>	<i>March 1982</i>
	%	%	%	%	%
Sydney	2.2	2.1	2.0	1.8	1.2
Melbourne	2.3	1.9	0.9	1.2	0.9
Brisbane	4.0	2.2	1.4	0.7	1.0
Adelaide	4.2	3.2	1.3	2.0	0.6
Perth	7.5	6.1	2.8	4.5	1.9
Canberra	4.0	2.0	1.3	2.8	1.1

Source: Real Estate and Stock Institute (Australia).

Thirdly, there has been a steady decline in the availability of low cost private accommodation. In most capital cities many of the old boarding and terrace houses are being pulled down and replaced by either office or more luxurious private accommodation. This has been accompanied by a move back to the inner city areas by many middle to high income earners. They have in effect boosted the price on existing dwellings in the area as well as stimulated developers to demolish or modernise the old low cost dwellings and replace them with more expensive rental or strata units. As a result, the traditional inner city dwellers (that is, the low income group) are finding it increasingly more difficult to compete with the new dwellers who are demanding and getting high quality, high cost accommodation.

Fourthly, there is a serious shortage of vacancies in the private rental market. Table 4.5 shows quite clearly the deterioration in the vacancy rates in each State from March 1980 to March 1982 and all are well below an optimum operational level (around five percent). Investment in private rental accommodation provides a very low rate of return. The only attraction for an investor is the long-term capital gain that can be made on the resale of the property. Therefore, the stock of private rental accommodation is unlikely to increase in the very near future while investors and property developers are able to put their money into more attractive investments, particularly in the short term.

Against this background, it is not difficult to appreciate that many young people who leave home (for whatever reasons) are finding it almost impossible to obtain satisfactory and affordable accommodation. This is particularly so of young people who have not acquired appropriate living skills and are unable to obtain secure full-time employment.

Access to private and public rental accommodation

At present, any gains made by young people in the area of public housing will mean that other low income groups must lose, for while the size of the public housing cake remains unchanged, any concessions by one group must always be at the expense of another.

Although the stock of public housing may not be increased in the short term, it was brought to the attention of the Committee during the course of its public hearings that some of this stock is lying idle. The Committee believes that when there is an acute housing shortage, both Commonwealth and state Governments need to adopt a more flexible approach to the allocation and usage of public housing. However, additional expenditure on public housing would be wasteful, if in fact some of the existing stock is not being used to its fullest potential. The Committee strongly believes that part of this

general housing shortage can be overcome by Governments making more efficient use of existing resources. Dwellings leased by the Defence forces from state housing authorities should not be allowed to lie idle simply because there may be a future need for such housing. In Victoria, around 4000 dwellings are presently let to the Department of Defence.¹ A representative from the Victorian Government told the Committee that on one occasion a number of vacant houses leased to the Defence Department in Holden Street North Fitzroy were occupied by squatters.² The state housing authorities should be able to reclaim those dwellings and accommodate people in them on six to 12 month leases. This would still enable the housing authorities to hand back these dwellings to the Defence forces when such a need arose.

Similarly, the purchase by state road authorities of houses that lie in the path of future freeway construction should not be allowed to remain idle and deteriorate if many of these freeway plans have been delayed for a substantial period of time or scrapped. (The South Australian Housing Trust does lease houses from the Highway Department for emergency accommodation.) The Committee was told that education departments, state railway authorities, state electricity commissions and other statutory authorities also have, at various times, vacant houses on their books.

The Committee is pleased with recent moves in South Australia in this regard. The South Australian Government has acknowledged that surplus accommodation is available in the metropolitan area and, should it be suitable, it will be offered, without charge, to various voluntary organisations to operate as youth shelters.³ Further, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is compiling a register of unused, or under-utilised, publicly-owned property. This register will be made available to both the Department for Community Welfare and the South Australian Housing Trust.⁴

The extent of unused or unoccupied dwellings, particularly in the inner city and adjacent areas, can be seen by an examination of the 1971 and 1976 census figures. The 1976 census showed that 12.5 percent of all dwellings in these areas remained unused or unoccupied. In 1971 the figure was only 9.5 percent. Not all these dwellings are publicly owned and neither are they all suitable for residential purposes. Even so, there are many premises available which could be utilised to help overcome part of the current low cost housing shortage.

As a first step, the Committee **RECOMMENDS that more flexible housing policies at both Commonwealth and state levels be implemented. This will enable more efficient use of existing housing stocks and the conversion of other government owned dwellings to suitable residential accommodation.**

Access to private market

Homeless youth, in particular unemployed homeless youth, are faced with an almost insurmountable barrier to the private rental market. Table 4.6 shows that the average private rental per week by dwelling type in capital cities, even for the most modest form of accommodation, is beyond the reach of anybody who is not in full time employment. In addition, Tables 4.7 and 4.8 show that for over 60 percent of young people renting private accommodation, more than 25 percent of their income is paid out in rent. In fact, 36 percent of young people under 20 years of age pay over 50 percent of their income on rent.

Table 4.6: Average Private Rent per Week by Dwelling Type, Capital Cities, August 1980

<i>Dwelling type</i>	<i>Syd.</i>	<i>Melb.</i>	<i>Bris.</i>	<i>Adel.</i>	<i>Perth</i>	<i>Hob.</i>	<i>All capital cities</i>
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Bedsitter	34.03	..	..	..	..	..	30.53
1-Bedroom flat	52.93	34.34	31.57	..	37.11	35.83	40.72
2-Bedroom house	55.78	43.19	45.79	41.98	39.16	..	48.05
2-Bedroom flat	65.13	44.15	52.36	37.63	42.05	49.37	55.54
3-Bedroom house	75.85	56.85	52.29	49.02	50.31	46.50	59.81
3-Bedroom flat	78.31	..	..	..	..	..	67.20
4-Bedroom house	126.99	66.46	56.95	54.57	62.52	..	81.41

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, August 1980, Survey of Housing Occupancy and Costs (unpublished tables).

Transcript of Evidence, p. 181.

Table 4.7: Rent as a Proportion of Income, Privately Renting Household Heads Aged under 20 Years, Capital Cities, June 1976 (a)

<i>Rent as a proportion of income</i>	<i>Syd.</i>	<i>Melb.</i>	<i>Bris.</i>	<i>Adel.</i>	<i>Perth</i>	<i>Hob.</i>	<i>Dar.</i>	<i>All capital cities</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
20% or less	7.7	11.2	8.2	7.6	7.2	7.7	26.5	8.7
20.1% - 25%	8.2	11.4	9.3	9.7	9.5	13.3	13.2	9.8
25.1% - 30%	11.8	13.0	10.0	12.8	12.8	9.4	8.8	12.1
30.1% - 40%	18.1	18.8	18.4	20.8	18.7	15.0	19.1	18.6
40.1% - 50%	14.7	13.3	15.5	16.5	16.0	9.9	10.3	14.6
50.1% or more	39.5	32.3	38.6	32.6	35.9	44.7	22.1	36.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Calculations exclude private renters with nil income.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1976 Census. Transcript of Evidence, p. 182.

Table 4.8: Rent as a Proportion of Income, Privately Renting Household Heads Aged 20-24 Years, Capital Cities, June 1976 (a)

<i>Rent as a proportion of income</i>	<i>Syd.</i>	<i>Melb.</i>	<i>Bris.</i>	<i>Adel.</i>	<i>Perth</i>	<i>Hob.</i>	<i>Dar.</i>	<i>All capital cities</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
20% or less	16.4	25.5	20.6	24.6	26.5	26.3	35.3	21.9
20.1%-25%	19.3	22.9	19.1	21.6	21.2	20.1	14.4	20.8
25.1%-30%	15.3	13.7	16.9	16.3	16.1	13.7	11.8	15.1
30.1%-40%	23.1	18.4	21.6	17.6	15.9	15.4	20.4	20.0
40.1%-50%	8.0	5.1	7.9	6.2	5.9	6.1	5.6	6.7
50.1% or more	17.7	14.4	13.9	13.6	14.4	18.3	12.6	15.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Calculations exclude private renters with nil income.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1976 Census. Transcript of Evidence, p. 182.

The payment of rent, however, is not the major obstacle for homeless youth. Before a person can avail himself of a dwelling, bond money, rent in advance, leasing fees, stamp duty, electricity connection fees, etc. must be paid. Appendix 2 gives a listing of the rental conventions in each capital city as at March 1981. Tables 4.9 and 4.10 show the estimated establishment costs for different dwelling types in each capital city as at

August 1980. Even within the cheapest 20 percent of the market, establishment costs in the major eastern state capital cities can still range from \$300 to \$400. The overall average market establishment costs for the same cities range from \$400 to \$550. Given these establishment costs and average weekly rentals, it is not surprising that private rental accommodation is beyond the reach of all unemployed and most low income youth, even if they are sharing accommodation.

Table 4.9: Estimates of Establishment Costs (estimated establishment costs for different dwelling types in the cheapest 20 per cent of the market, capital cities, August 1980)

<i>Dwelling Type</i>	<i>Syd.</i>	<i>Melb.</i>	<i>Bris.</i>	<i>Adel.</i>	<i>Perth</i>	<i>Hob.</i>
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
1-Bedroom flat	321	303	139	..	161	163
2-Bedroom house	316	339	173	192	159	..
2-Bedroom flat	368	356	198	182	175	212
3-Bedroom house	384	400	183	208	189	185

Source: Estimates by the Department of Housing and Construction on the basis of data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics August 1980 Survey of Housing Occupancy and Costs (unpublished tables), and information provided by estate agents and electricity authorities in each capital city (see Appendix D).

Transcript of Evidence, p. 185.

Table 4.10: Estimated Establishment Costs for Different Dwelling Types of Average Market Rental, Capital Cities, August 1980

<i>Dwelling type</i>	<i>Syd.</i>	<i>Melb.</i>	<i>Bris.</i>	<i>Adel.</i>	<i>Perth</i>	<i>Hob.</i>
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
1-Bedroom flat	397	370	169	..	206	207
2-Bedroom house	415	443	227	256	217	..
2-Bedroom flat	472	450	254	233	231	280
3-Bedroom house	537	554	254	293	273	266

Source: Estimates by the Department of Housing and Construction on the basis of data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics August 1980 Survey of Housing Occupancy and Costs (unpublished tables), and information provided by estate agents and electricity authorities in each capital city (see Appendix D).

Transcript of Evidence, p. 185.

It has been suggested by several witnesses that the housing needs of young people could be improved by the establishment of bond and rental assistance schemes. For example, in Tasmania, part of the Youth Services Scheme funding (\$16 500) has been used to set up a bond and rental assistance subsidy scheme (BRASS).⁵ This money is used to help establish young people who could not otherwise afford to do so in private rental accommodation.

The Committee cannot stress too strongly that the establishment of any youth housing policies by either the Commonwealth or states must not isolate young people from the rest of the community. Consequently, the Committee sees a need to enable more young people to have access to the private rental market. The Committee **RECOMMENDS that all state governments should seriously study the establishment of a universal bond insurance scheme.** Such a scheme would lower the costs of access to private market housing for young people by avoiding the payment of very high bonds. The scheme would be of more benefit to landlords than is the current bond system because landlords would be able to claim larger sums, where necessary, for actual damage sustained. If landlords have a guarantee of full cost recovery for damage that may occur, it is feasible that such a scheme will encourage more people to make properties available for rental.

While the insurance money is not refundable to the tenant, the payment of around \$15.00 per agreement would be far more within a young person's means than trying to raise an initial amount of \$200 to \$400 for a bond.⁶ In any case, there is no certainty that all or part of any bond money will be returned to a tenant if he moves from one rental dwelling to another. The Committee was told that young people are sometimes treated unfairly and made to pay for damages that occurred prior to their tenancy. Regardless of whether a bond and rental assistance scheme or a universal bond insurance scheme is introduced, there is still the very real problem in all states of trying to find affordable private rental accommodation.

Access to public housing

Access to public housing by young people differs considerably from state to state. In New South Wales, the Housing Commission does not admit to its waiting list single persons other than pensioners (as defined in Section 2 of the Housing Assistance Act 1978).⁷ Under the Youth Services Scheme the Housing Commission has provided six dwellings to be used as refuges or emergency accommodation for young people.

Periodically the New South Wales Housing Commission does make available rental dwellings to voluntary organisations for emergency housing purposes.⁸ Some groups have made use of this scheme. Each group, however, must be able to recover 80 percent of the market rent that could be obtained from that dwelling.⁹ This in effect means that, given the present levels of market rents, most organisations need to have access to additional funds to supplement the very limited finances of the prospective young co-tenants.

In Victoria, the Ministry of Housing has developed a Youth Housing Program which will provide independent and long-term accommodation for young people aged 16 years and over. First, the Victorians have the Singles and Sharing Scheme.¹⁰ Those allocated accommodation sign a joint tenancy agreement with the Ministry and the flats involved are managed in the normal way. Single applicants or groups of two or three people are allocated two bedroom and three bedroom flats respectively. Only high rise and top floor walk up flats have been made available under this Scheme, and therefore it is restricted to three inner metropolitan districts. The commitment to date is to make available 200 flats.¹¹

Because of the location and nature of the dwellings, however, the scheme has not been successful. Indeed, the flats tend to further isolate youth and compound their problems.¹² Vandalism, violence and lack of security were cited by many witnesses as being of major concern to all tenants of these buildings.¹³

Secondly, the Victorian Housing Ministry has recently announced a scheme whereby up to 25 flats and houses (to be managed by community groups) will be made available throughout the state for medium and longer term housing for young people.¹⁴ Some funds will also be made available for small boarding houses. The Committee will be watching with interest the progress of this particular youth housing scheme. If successful, it will complement the Committee's recommendations (outlined below in this chapter) concerning medium to long term accommodation.

At the time of writing this report, the Committee was aware that allocations were being made under the scheme to several locally based community groups. The Committee understands that a further five houses have been made available through the scheme. There is little information at this stage, however, on which the scheme may be evaluated.

In Queensland, the Housing Commission does not specifically allocate housing either directly or through community bodies to young single persons.¹⁵ The Commission

claims that it is a question of priorities, and that its limited resources dictate that it provide housing for the aged and invalid pensioners.¹⁶

The South Australian Housing Trust believes that the needs of homeless youth must be seen within the context of the aggregate public housing demand from various disadvantaged groups. These include the aged, lone parents, other low income working households, the handicapped, etc., whose housing problems are generally no less urgent than those of young people.¹⁷ The Trust has various leasing arrangements with voluntary organisations and community groups, who provide a minimally supervised housing service to youth under 18 years of age.¹⁸ Such assistance is provided in conjunction with support from various Government funded programs and is conditional upon the group or organisation paying an economic rent for the Trust's accommodation and satisfying any local government requirements.¹⁹

On 4 April 1981, the South Australian State Government announced its plans to ease the youth housing problem. The central point of the announcement was the creation of a special pool of 50 Housing Trust houses for needy young people. The plans also include an expansion of the role and resources of the Emergency Housing Office to process applications for those houses and to provide general help, previously outside its charter, to the needy young.²⁰ In addition, as outlined above, the South Australian Government will investigate the suitability of making any unused or under-utilised public dwellings available for use by voluntary organisations for youth shelters. As at 30 June 1982, 24 houses had been leased under this scheme.²¹ The Committee understands that the slowness in allocating these houses to youth housing schemes is due to many groups not receiving recurrent funding, and also to an opposition by local municipal councils to group housing schemes. As also mentioned above, a register of unused or under-utilised state-owned properties has been compiled in South Australia. These properties are being considered in terms of their potential for accommodating youth and other needy groups.²²

The State Housing Commission of Western Australia is not involved in the provision of housing assistance to homeless youth.²³ The Commission claims that it is not aware of a demand for assistance to homeless youth in Western Australia.²⁴

The Housing Division of the Tasmanian Department of Housing and Construction has not rented any dwellings to young single persons without children.²⁵ The Division has been able to provide only one house to be used by single young women for short term crisis accommodation.²⁶ Other dwellings which have been made available to voluntary organisations have mainly been used as crisis or refuge centres for older age groups.²⁷

The Northern Territory Housing Commission does not currently allocate public accommodation to any category of single persons without dependants, except single pensioners.²⁸ The Commission does operate an Industry Housing Assistance Scheme whereby under the Northern Territory Housing Act community/welfare organisations such as those concerned with youth accommodation are eligible for housing assistance.²⁹ To date, no accommodation has been allocated under the Scheme for youth accommodation purposes.³⁰

The Australian Capital Territory Housing Commission has allocated 20 houses for tenancy by groups of young people on low incomes.³¹ However, each household must include a person over the age of 18 years in order that the legal requirement to sign a lease can be met. In addition, an old Commonwealth hostel, Ainslie Village, has been handed over to a community group to be run as a co-operative for young people and other persons who are on low incomes or are unemployed.³² A charge of \$7 per week for a room has brought this accommodation within the reach of young unemployed

people.³³ Because of the wide range of clientele who use this facility, however, the Committee was told that it is not suitable for young girls, and in many cases young men.³⁴

Australia-wide, it would appear that young people have a varied access to public housing. In those states where young people are eligible for such housing, eligibility has only been recognised in very recent times. The Committee would see that while young people are just as much a part of the community as any other group, and that their rights to public housing should be recognised, this recognition must be seen in the context of the needs and priorities of all other disadvantaged groups.

The gap between the supply and demand for low cost public rental accommodation in Australia has been growing in recent years. That gap is affecting not only homeless youth but all other disadvantaged groups within the community. Compounding this problem is the diminishing reality for many young people to own their own home. The recently announced new housing assistance program by the Commonwealth Government, which includes an additional \$65 million grant for welfare housing during 1982-83, may help reverse this trend. However, this inability or delay in being able to purchase has meant that many people are staying in the private rental market for longer periods. This has led to an acute shortage of private rental accommodation in many states. In the meantime, the demands on both the limited public and private rental accommodation will not be eased while funds for public housing continue to fall.

The plight of homeless youth is being recognised by some housing authorities. There is an immediate need, however, for Commonwealth and state housing bodies to meet with the view to reassessing public housing policies in an effort to achieve equilibrium in the general supply and demand for low cost housing. Once this is achieved the needs of newly emerging groups requiring support in and from the community, such as homeless youth, can be expected to receive more favourable treatment from the various state housing authorities.

Specific youth housing schemes

If changes which are designed to increase the stock of lettable dwellings are to be made to public housing policy, it will be necessary to consider the needs of all disadvantaged groups. The Committee has considered a number of schemes which, if implemented, would specifically cater for homeless young people. In particular, the Committee has concentrated on housing proposals which would be eligible for funding under the \$10 million Homeless Persons Assistance Program special capital grant.

On 30 September 1980 the Commonwealth Government made a commitment to make \$10 million available, over three years, to provide additional capital funds under the Homeless Persons Assistance Program. The Committee is concerned that many worthwhile homeless youth housing schemes will not be able to make use of these funds under the existing guidelines. In evidence to the Committee, a representative of the Department of Social Security stated the following:

'the Homeless Persons Assistance Act, as many members will know, is geared specifically to chronically homeless people who have traditionally been catered for by very well established organisations which by and large have had firstly, considerable managerial experience, and secondly, some very real fund raising capacity in the community'.³⁵

Despite the fact that the commitment of September 1980 made special reference to homeless young people,³⁶ the Committee is concerned that the guidelines under the

Homeless Persons Assistance Program may make it very difficult for many organisations or community groups to avail themselves of this money for programs specifically catering for homeless youth.

The Committee consequently believes that it is necessary to change or modify the guidelines so that the Homeless Persons Assistance Act is geared not only to cater for the chronically homeless, but is able to help meet the needs of homeless young people. In addition, the Committee believes it will be necessary to broaden the interpretation of the meaning of the words 'temporary accommodation' in the Homeless Persons Assistance Act 1974 to enable funding to go to youth housing projects that will provide supportive medium to long-term accommodation but not permanent accommodation. (In the past the traditional skid row shelters have offered very temporary accommodation by insisting that people stay only overnight. They have had to re-register for accommodation if they wished to stay the following night.)

The Committee would also point out that any programs for homeless youth initiated under the Homeless Persons Assistance Program should be developed separately from the traditional skid row programs. The Committee is concerned that there could be a conflict of interests with an organisation or group that endeavours to run two different homeless persons programs in shared facilities or facilities that are in close proximity to one another. It is important that homeless youth programs are developed independently of the chronically homeless persons' programs. The needs, aspirations and supervision are so different from the older skid row homeless that placing both groups together suggests, in the Committee's view, that these homeless young people cannot be helped and will automatically drift into a skid row existence.

If the guidelines under the Homeless Persons Assistance Act cannot be modified in such a way as to assist homeless youth housing schemes, the Committee would **RECOMMEND that part of the \$10 million special capital grant be transferred to another area where youth housing schemes will be given more favourable treatment.** Further, the Committee **RECOMMENDS that money available under the \$10 million capital grants program be made available to fund medium to long-term supportive households. No funds should be made available from this grant to provide additional youth refuges such as those established under the Youth Services Scheme.** The Committee strongly believes that a proliferation of youth refuges is not going to be of long-term assistance to homeless youth.

Regardless of from where the money is made available, the Committee **RECOMMENDS that funding for homeless youth under the \$10 million special capital grant program should give priority to community groups who put up medium to long-term supportive household proposals.** The development of this type of housing program within the community will take pressure off the youth refuges. At present, there are very few options for homeless youth. This has led to a situation where many of these young people move from one refuge to another or continually return to the same refuge after unsuccessfully trying to find more permanent accommodation. The Committee believes that if regionally based medium to long-term supportive housing programs for homeless youth are established, and if the existing youth refuge program undergoes a certain degree of rationalisation (as outlined in Chapter 3), there will be little or no justification for the introduction of more youth refuges.

The Committee is particularly attracted to proposals that aim to renovate existing dwellings or to convert non-residential dwellings to suitable youth accommodation facilities. The Committee **RECOMMENDS that all youth housing proposals should seek a commitment to both the conversion of non-residential properties and the renovation of vacant dwellings in order to provide as much accommodation as possible and**

to offer a range of housing alternatives for homeless youth. In this way the contribution of Commonwealth funding to housing projects will result in the mobilisation of housing resources many times greater in value than the contribution made.

The success of such a scheme depends on such dwellings being made available to regionally based community management committees. The Committee believes that there are many dwellings lying idle in various regions which could form the basis of supportive youth housing schemes. Local government bodies could make available vacant properties, and, as well, many former children's homes and other institutions could be released for youth housing.³⁷ Not all vacant dwellings would be suitable for youth housing programs. The Committee believes, however, that there are sufficient existing dwellings which, once converted or updated, would meet the varied needs of homeless youth.

In evidence to the Committee, the Executive Director of the New South Wales Association of Child Caring Agencies, Mr Quirk, stated:

'Much of the accommodation they have provided in the past is inappropriate for present day use because it was often built as special purpose accommodation for large groups of children. But the agencies that control those assets find that they would like the opportunity to remodel and keep the assets alive as a service to children. Government policies often prevent that. So at a time when accommodation, per se, and buildings, are supposedly in short supply, our members find that they have often large quantities of inappropriate accommodation available and it is not used.'³⁸

The Committee **RECOMMENDS that Commonwealth funds be made available for youth housing proposals which require the purchase of a dwelling if, and only if, there are no existing dwellings which could be made available to a particular community group within a specified region.** The Committee would prefer to see money being spent on renovating existing dwellings. At the same time, it would not want to exclude a proposal from a region simply because it did not have such dwellings at its disposal. Uppermost in the Committee's mind is to ensure that the Homeless Persons Assistance Program special capital grant can be used to provide accommodation for as many homeless youth as possible. It is envisaged that organisations seeking capital grant assistance from the Commonwealth will have access to funds from various sources (both community and government) to meet the ongoing expenses that inevitably will be incurred by each housing program.

Bearing in mind the need to make full use of existing resources, the Committee has drawn up a broad outline of the way in which funds should be made available for specific youth housing programs. First, it is becoming readily apparent that many of the traditional voluntary agencies are finding it more and more difficult to meet the varied demands for assistance from within the community. This is placing undue pressure on their resources and in many cases some of these resources have had to be withdrawn because of limited funds. While the Committee fully appreciates the desire for each organisation to maintain its own identity and style of welfare delivery, more effective use of resources will be achieved by the establishment of regionally based community management committees. The Committee envisages that legal title to properties owned by individual organisations would remain with the organisation but the management, programming, staffing and funding could come from a wide range of interests within a particular region. This style of community managed project is already in operation in some regions and it enables each organisation to avail itself of a resource which would have been beyond its individual means.

The Committee believes that it is this type of broadly based community structure which will have a greater chance of success in establishing and maintaining viable youth housing projects. The Committee believes that the Minister for Social Security should

request the formation of community based management committees within various regions. These committees should then be asked to put forward proposals for youth housing schemes, stating clearly their aims and objectives. In this way there will be greater utilisation of existing resources and less likelihood of duplication and waste, which can occur when welfare agencies are fiercely competing against one another to secure resources.

Secondly, the Committee believes that preference should be given to housing proposals which go beyond the provision of accommodation only. Preliminary data from the Youth Services Scheme indicates that the type of youth who approaches youth refuges is likely to be under 18 years of age, without family and community support, to have no income (or to be in receipt of unemployment benefits) and be lacking in living and work skills. If this is the target group, then the Committee maintains that any housing proposals that receive Commonwealth Government funding under the \$10 million grant should be of a supportive household type.

In Melbourne, the Brotherhood of St. Laurence submitted a detailed proposal for the establishment of a supportive boarding house scheme. This scheme embraces the following factors:³⁹

- long-term accommodation
- the opportunity to develop survival skills through skill transference methods
- the opportunity to participate in the management process
- the opportunity to become part of a group through which personal relationship skills can be developed
- the opportunity to develop local linkages which might provide support after leaving the accommodation
- the opportunity to choose permanent accommodation from a range of options
- the opportunity to be supported in the early stages of living in permanent accommodation.

The Brotherhood of St. Laurence believes that due to a lack of time and security, short-term accommodation and non-residential skills learning programs do not make up for the deficit experienced by many disadvantaged homeless youth during their childhood. It believes that the living and work skills programs will be more effective in a residential environment where there is a continuous daily input. A full outline of their proposal is contained in Appendix 3.

At the Committee's public hearings in Melbourne, Canon Barry Smith, Chairman of the Northcote Accommodation Project for Unemployed Homeless Youth, told the Committee that this project had commenced as a result of funding from the Church of England Diocese of Melbourne (\$50 000), the Brotherhood of St. Laurence (\$20 000) and the Northcote City Council (\$11 000).⁴⁰ In addition, the Ministry of Housing in Victoria responded positively to the proposal and purchased, on their behalf, a five bedroom house in Thornbury.⁴¹ The house has a detached flat which will accommodate a residential worker. This housing project has been able to draw on the resources, expertise, skills and enthusiasm of the people within the local community. Canon Smith told the Committee that there are 50 members of the Northcote community that have become involved in the project and monthly meetings are attended regularly by 20 to 25 people.⁴² The Committee sees a great deal of merit in the way in which this particular project has evolved, and believes it could become a blue print for further community based schemes specifically designed to assist homeless youth.

Homeless youth programs should not be confined to urban areas. The Committee is aware that there are many properties lying idle in rural areas, including former children's homes, other institutions, boarding schools, etc. While the Committee does not want to isolate homeless youth from mainstream society, these rural establishments

could fulfil a number of services. They could be used for medium-term youth housing and, at the same time, provide a non-threatening and relaxing environment in which occupants could undertake a school to work transition course. This alternative would enable those homeless youth who are not coping satisfactorily with city life to have a period away from it, which may provide the necessary breathing space to enable them to overcome many of their problems.

A youth refuge in Hobart (McIntyre House) has recently acquired a rural property, including a house, which it proposes to use as a medium to long-term supportive household for up to 15 young people. It is proposed that a number of skills associated with farming and market gardening will be taught to the residents to enable them to improve their prospects of securing permanent and satisfying long-term employment. The Committee believes that this scheme meets the Committee's guidelines regarding medium to long-term supportive households, and that it should therefore receive financial assistance to help bring the existing accommodation up to an acceptable standard.

The Committee believes that the actual disbursement of Commonwealth funds could be by way of a non-repayable grant, a concessional low interest loan or a combination of the two. The supplementary financial resources associated with each community proposal should be fully investigated by the Minister before the actual type of financial assistance is determined. Although the \$10 million capital grant must be viewed as a one-off Government initiative, the Committee believes it is necessary that scope for continuous funding is available if it can be demonstrated that these innovative youth housing schemes do meet their stated aims and objectives. This Committee has already made clear its attitude towards the need for on-going evaluation of government assisted programs ('Through a Glass, Darkly', Evaluation in Australian Health and Welfare Services, A.G.P.S., Canberra, 1979). The Committee therefore **RECOMMENDS that further funding from both Commonwealth and state governments be made available under the Housing Assistance Act 1981, only upon it being clearly demonstrated that the medium to long term supportive households are providing a necessary and beneficial service to homeless youth.**

Conclusion

The long-term housing needs of young people cannot be ignored. They must, however, be considered in the context of the needs of all other disadvantaged groups.

The Committee has outlined a number of recommendations and suggestions which it believes will help alleviate the medium to long-term housing needs of homeless youth. As a first step, the Committee has recommended that part of the general low cost housing shortage could be alleviated by more effective utilisation of existing stocks of Commonwealth and state dwellings. Too many government owned dwellings are lying idle at a time when there is a growing demand for low cost accommodation. The Committee believes that both Commonwealth and state governments need to monitor closely the utilisation of all public housing stocks and adopt a more flexible approach to the leasing and renting of such dwellings.

While the above recommendation is applicable to the general need for low cost housing, the Committee has made a number of specific recommendations covering homeless youth. In particular, the Committee has outlined a proposal which it believes should be used by the Commonwealth Government when it determines how the remainder of the \$10 million under the Homeless Persons Assistance Program special

capital grant is to be allocated. The Committee has recommended that the Minister for Social Security encourages voluntary organisations and other interested groups to form community based project management committees throughout various regions. These committees would be asked to devise housing proposals for homeless youth suited to each particular region. Existing resources, talents, expertise and other financial resources within the region should be employed by the committees to ensure that the allocated Commonwealth funds will, in effect, provide assets many times greater in value than the contribution made. The Committee strongly recommends that this money be made available to renovate, refurbish and modernise existing dwellings that are currently lying idle within a number of regions. While the ownership of these dwellings would remain with the individual organisation, the planning, management and staffing would come under the control of the community based management committee.

The Committee believes that this approach, rather than general advertising for housing proposals, will result in a greater utilisation of resources and less likelihood of duplication of facilities within regions. Preference for Commonwealth funding should be given to those proposals which aim to provide more than basic shelter for their clients. Such proposals would best cater for the target group that has been identified by the Youth Services Scheme data. The Committee also believes that if such schemes can demonstrate that they are able to provide a supportive household environment, then both Commonwealth and state governments should give further consideration to providing additional funds for such schemes under the Housing Assistance Act 1981.

Finally, the Committee is conscious of the need to ensure that homeless youth do not become isolated from the rest of the community. Consequently, the Committee sees a great deal of merit in the introduction of a universal bond insurance scheme and/or a bond and rental assistance scheme. Such schemes would help homeless youth whose only barrier to successful independent living is one of limited financial resources. They would also be of assistance to youth who are ready to move from a supportive household to full independent living.

Endnotes

1. Transcript of evidence, p. 1808.
2. Transcript of evidence, p. 1809.
3. Transcript of evidence, p. 3198.
4. Transcript of evidence, p. 3198.
5. Transcript of evidence, p. 2388.
6. Transcript of evidence, p. 665.
7. Transcript of evidence, p. 171.
8. Transcript of evidence, p. 1109.
9. Supplementary evidence from NSW Government.
10. Transcript of evidence, p. 1714.
11. Transcript of evidence, p. 1714.
12. Transcript of evidence, p. 1714.
13. Transcript of evidence, pp. 661, 1795.
14. Transcript of evidence, p. 1714.
15. Transcript of evidence, p. 171.
16. Transcript of evidence, p. 171.
17. Transcript of evidence, p. 171.
18. Transcript of evidence, p. 171.
19. Transcript of evidence, p. 171.
20. Transcript of evidence, pp. 171, 3208-9.
21. Supplementary evidence from South Australian Government.
22. Transcript of evidence, p. 3210.
23. Transcript of evidence, p. 172.
24. Transcript of evidence, p. 172.

25. Transcript of evidence, p. 172.
26. Transcript of evidence, p. 173.
27. Transcript of evidence, p. 173.
28. Transcript of evidence, p. 173.
29. Transcript of evidence, p. 173.
30. Transcript of evidence, p. 173.
31. Transcript of evidence, pp. 352-3.
32. Transcript of evidence, p. 341.
33. Transcript of evidence, p. 341.
34. Transcript of evidence, p. 339.
35. Transcript of evidence, p. 60.
36. Prime Minister's Policy Speech, 30 September 1980
37. In New South Wales alone, 21 children's homes have reportedly closed since January 1979 and many of these are apparently still lying idle.
38. Transcript of evidence, p. 1378.
39. Submission by the Brotherhood of St. Laurence.
40. Transcript of evidence, p. 1919.
41. Transcript of evidence, p. 192.
42. Transcript of evidence, p. 1921.

CHAPTER 5

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND INCOME SECURITY

The Youth Accommodation Coalition would argue for

- an immediate increase in the under 18 unemployment benefit to the adult single rate;
- rationalisation of both benefits and allowance levels;
- abolition of waiting periods;
- extension to eligibility to 15 year olds;
making benefits available from the date an applicant leaves school;
- abolition of the work test;
- standardising permissible income to \$50.00 per week.¹¹

The Victorian Council of Social Services stated that:

‘ . . . the expenses were \$25.00 for rent, \$21.00 for food at a minimum of \$3.00 a day, \$2.00 for electricity and gas, \$1.50 for telephone calls for jobs at about three a day, \$5.00 for bus and train fares to the city to seek work, \$2.50 for one taxi a week to meet a job appointment, an average of \$6.00 for clothes and shoes, \$2.40 for newspapers, \$1.40 for washing clothes, detergent, soap and shampoo, and \$1.50 for a haircut. These total \$64.80 for living expenses including rent of \$25.00.’¹²

The Brotherhood of St. Laurence proposed that:

1. Everyone who has left school, including those who have left on exemptions, should be eligible for unemployment benefits if they are registered for employment.
2. The level of unemployment benefit for people under 18 being increased to a minimum of \$44.10 a week.
3. An additional accommodation allowance of \$20.00 a week be paid to people under the age of 18 who are living away from their parental home.
4. Allowances under the Secondary Allowance Scheme be increased to \$44.10 with a liberalised means test of family income to ensure that financial difficulties do not prevent young people from continuing education.
5. Young people participating in pre-training programs in post-secondary institutions should be paid a means tested TEAS equivalent to the appropriate level of unemployment benefit, that is, for those aged under 18, \$44.10, if living at home, with an additional accommodation allowance of \$20.00 if living away from home.
6. Young people participating in on-the-job training should be paid NEAT allowances equivalent to the appropriate level of unemployment benefit.
7. Participants in EPUY be eligible for unemployment benefits of \$44.10 if under 18, with an accommodation allowance of \$20.00 if living away from home.
8. The adult single rate should be raised to \$64.10 a week so as to line up with the living away from home junior single rate.’¹³

These are just a few of the many recommendations put forward to the Committee regarding proposed levels of unemployment benefits and other forms of financial assistance. The general thrust of all income security recommendations could be summarised as follows: that the junior rate be raised to the adult rate and that all benefits be raised to a level which is at or near the ‘poverty line’.

The Committee acknowledges that it would be impossible for any young person to live independently on \$36.00 a week, and also that it would be very difficult for anyone to live on \$58.10 a week unless living in a group situation (these are the present under 18 and over 18 years of age unemployment benefits respectively). However, to simply raise unemployment benefits to the recommended levels would not, in the Committee’s view, be of any long-term assistance to unemployed homeless youth. In addition, the cost to revenue would be prohibitive. Even more importantly, such a policy would have

a very destabilising effect on our entire wage structure, particularly the level of payment to apprentices, and on other benefit payments. The Committee does not dispute the financial needs of homeless unemployed youth, but it does have grave concerns as to how additional financial assistance should be given to these young people.

Youth unemployment

Table 5.1 shows that the general level of unemployment rose from 4.5 per cent in 1975 to 5.9 per cent in August 1980, but fell to 5.6 per cent by August 1981. The latest figure available to the Committee showed that unemployment was 6.6 per cent as at March 1982. At the same time, youth unemployment rose from 12.9 per cent in August 1975 to 16.7 per cent in August 1980 and then fell to 13.9 per cent in August 1981. In March 1982 this rate had risen to 17.3 per cent. (The youth unemployment rate is the number of unemployed as a percentage of the labour force in the 15 to 19 year old age group.)

Table 5.1 shows that youth unemployment (15-19 year olds) accounted for around 32 per cent of total unemployment in August 1975. It remained at around that figure until August 1981, when the figure dropped to around 28 per cent. By March 1982 the figure had risen to 30.5 per cent. If one looks at the age group 15 to 24, the figures indicate that since 1975 it has accounted for over 50 per cent of the total number of people unemployed.

Table 5.2 shows that the number of people on unemployment benefits has doubled during the period 1975 to 1982. It is also interesting to note that while youth unemployment has maintained its relatively high share of total unemployment, the percentage of youth benefit recipients (under 20 years old), as a proportion of the total unemployment benefit recipients, has fallen from around 41.5 per cent in 1975 to around 33.6 per cent in 1981. This could be accounted for by a number of factors. First, it may indicate a high number of people who have just left home and have not registered for work. Secondly, it may indicate that a number of young people have decided to leave a particular job of their own accord. Thirdly, it may indicate that many young people are simply unaware of their unemployment benefit rights.

Table 5.1: Employed and Unemployed Persons by Age, August 1975 to 1981 and March 1982 ('000)

Age	August							March
	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982
15-19—								
Employed	615.7	607.1	618.4	630.8	617.7	650.9	652.0	673.1
Unemployed	91.1	100.4	135.3	127.6	129.7	130.7	105.6	140.6
20-24--								
Employed	841.8	848.5	862.2	845.0	885.2	914.3	943.3	958.2
Unemployed	52.9	58.2	70.6	85.2	78.8	88.0	87.7	99.7
15-24---								
Employed	1 457.5	1 455.6	1 480.6	1 475.8	1 502.9	1 565.2	1 595.3	1 631.3
Unemployed	144.0	158.6	205.9	212.8	208.5	218.7	193.3	240.3
25-44—								
Employed	2 613.9	2 665.3	2 752.0	2 798.5	2 868.8	2 986.0	3 055.9	3 121.4
Unemployed	88.2	90.6	106.7	123.6	117.9	122.7	130.6	163.2

Age	August							March 1982
	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	
45-54—								
Employed	1 066.3	1 085.5	1 067.5	1 034.0	1 026.7	1 029.9	1 040.6	1 049.6
Unemployed	29.4	29.1	29.9	37.6	30.5	32.0	31.0	34.7
55 and over—								
Employed	703.7	691.6	695.2	661.3	643.2	665.3	664.5	658.8
Unemployed	16.8	14.3	16.7	21.8	16.9	18.9	22.1	21.4
All ages —								
Employed	5 841.2	5 897.8	5 995.5	5 969.6	6 041.5	6 246.7	6 356.3	6 461.1
Unemployed	278.4	292.7	359.3	395.7	373.8	392.3	377.1	459.7

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Table 5.2: Unemployment Benefit Recipients by Age, 1975 to 1981 ('000)

Age	June 1975	August						February 1982
		1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981 (a)	
Under 18	29.7	35.0	39.6	38.7	42.6	38.8	33.7	51.3
18-20	34.4	42.5	56.1	62.2	69.5	70.8	69.9	83.6
21-24	24.7	29.6	42.7	49.9	54.4	55.0	60.2	71.9
25-44	40.8	51.8	72.1	85.5	89.0	88.9	101.2	117.9
45-54	15.0	18.8	23.4	26.5	25.5	23.4	25.2	27.3
55 and over	10.0	12.9	15.9	18.1	17.1	15.8	17.6	19.1
Total	154.4	190.6	249.8	280.8	298.1	292.6	307.8	371.2

(a) Survey conducted early in September.

Note: The above figures are obtained from surveys of Unemployment Benefit Recipients conducted by the Department of Social Security. The surveys usually cover about 96% of Unemployment Benefit Recipients.

Source: Department of Social Security.

Not only has youth unemployment remained high in recent years, but as well the average duration of unemployment has increased substantially. In August 1975 the average duration of unemployment for 15 to 19 year olds was 13.2 weeks. By August 1978 it had risen to 23.5 weeks and by August 1981 to 25.4 weeks. Table 5.3 shows that the average duration of youth unemployment has been below the average duration of total unemployment.

At first impression, this average duration seems to be inconsistent with the other youth unemployment statistics. However, a further examination of recent figures shows that in September 1981 the median duration of youth unemployment was 14.9 weeks whereas the median duration for 20 to 24 year olds was 14.3 weeks. For 25 to 34 years olds it was 12.2 weeks and for 35 to 54 year olds, 20.2 weeks. This figure is more consistent with other youth unemployment statistics in that it shows that the majority of young unemployed people experience far greater periods of unemployment compared to other age groups, with the exception of the 35 to 54 year olds. In general terms this means that more young people are likely to spend greater periods out of work compared with most other age groups in the work force.

The payment of unemployment benefits and other allowances has always been viewed as offering temporary relief to people while they seek work. The notion of temporary assistance relates to the sixties and early seventies, where the average duration of unemployment was less than five weeks. When the average duration of unemployment rises to its current level, the word 'temporary' takes on an entirely new meaning.

Table 5.3: Average Mean Duration of Unemployment by Age, August 1975 to 1981 and March 1982 (weeks)

Age	August							March 1982
	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	
15-19	13.2	18.5	21.1	23.5	25.9	26.7	25.4	20.7
20-24	9.8	14.1	17.8	24.7	(18.0) 27.9 (15.5)	(19.2) 28.2 (14.6)	(16.3) 32.4 (11.9)	27.7
25 and over	13.5	18.2	22.9	28.8	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
25-34	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	22.8	28.5	31.3	27.3
35-54	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	(11.7) 33.2 (16.3)	(12.9) 42.8 (21.1)	(11.6) 45.7 (21.2)	40.0
Total	12.7	17.5	20.9	26.2	28.4 (16.4)	32.1 (17.8)	35.1 (15.7)	29.8

n.a.— not available.

() median duration.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

In its submission to the Committee the Victorian Government stated:

'Analysis of various aspects of unemployment such as rates of unemployment, the ratio of job seekers to unfilled vacancies within different occupational areas and shares of unemployment borne by different age groups provides extremely strong evidence of the relative disadvantage of young people in the labour market. A 1980 study by the Department of Community Welfare Services found that young people bear a disproportionate share of unemployment in Victoria. Nearly four in seven people unemployed in Victoria are aged between 15 and 24, even though they comprise just over one-quarter of the total labour force. The rate of unemployment for 15 to 19 year olds in Victoria increased from 5.7 per cent in August 1974 to 15.9 per cent in August 1979, whereas it increased from 2 per cent to only 3.7 per cent for people over 25 years of age during the same period.'

The Tasmanian Government's submission reported that youth unemployment in its state had risen from 14 per cent in 1976 to somewhere between 20 and 25 per cent by 1980.⁵ The South Australian Government's submission reported that youth unemployment had risen to 28 per cent by February 1981.⁶ Indeed, as the Committee visited every state and territory, it was given the same disturbing picture concerning youth unemployment.

Unemployment benefits

The Committee acknowledges the various rights of young people but at the same time it must be recognised that with those rights come obligations. Every young person over the age of 16 years of age has a right to be paid unemployment benefits. However, it is not an unconditional right. According to the Department of Social Security, the payment of unemployment benefits is made on the condition that the person

- is unemployed—
- is capable of undertaking and willing to undertake suitable paid work
- has taken reasonable steps to obtain such work
- is not unemployed due to being or having been engaged in industrial action, and

- is not unemployed due to industrial action by other members of a trade union of which that person is a member.

Benefit levels

The junior unemployment benefit rate (16 to 18 year olds) has remained unchanged at \$36.00 a week since 1975. The adult rate for unemployed people aged 18 years and over without dependants is currently \$58.10. Since May 1975 the adult rate has risen from \$36.00 to \$58.10 a week.

All unemployment benefits are subject to an incomes means test. In respect of unmarried persons aged 16 or 17 years (with at least one parent living in Australia) the benefit is reduced by 50 cents a week for each dollar of income earned per week in the range of \$3.00 to \$40.00, and by \$1.00 a week for each dollar of income over \$40.00. In respect of other persons, the benefit is reduced by 50 cents a week for each dollar of income earned per week in the range of \$6.00 to \$50.00, and by \$1.00 a week for each dollar of income earned per week over \$50.00. (Prior to August 1981 each dollar earned resulted in a one dollar deduction in benefits.)

Benefit eligibility

Unemployment benefits are not paid to people under the age of 16 years. On application, however, a special benefit can be paid to select youth aged between 11 and 15 who are suffering hardship because they are unable to earn an income, or have insufficient money to support themselves. (This benefit is only payable if the person does not qualify for another benefit or pension.) A 16 year old who has just left school must wait six weeks before becoming eligible.

Government responsibility

In the majority of cases the government's responsibility is to support the family, not to take over its function. The real dilemma of government is knowing at what point family support for a young person can be considered to have ceased to exist. Both parents and youth should not be enabled to readily shirk their responsibilities and obligations. At the same time, governments should not wait until the last moment to provide assistance. It is in this grey area —the shared responsibility of the care and support of young people —that witnesses before the Committee have differed markedly in their views.

The Committee is well aware of the tragic and traumatic family backgrounds of many of the young people it met with throughout the course of this inquiry. In the majority of these cases, government would have a very decisive role to play in the provision of shelter and financial support.

Overseas experience

In most countries the responsibility of unemployed youth is left entirely up to the family and relatives, with government playing a very passive role. In Australia, on the

other hand, we have come to expect that government will provide a significant amount of financial support to assist all people who are unable to find full time employment. The Committee has looked at a number of income security schemes and other forms of assistance to youth that have been implemented in various countries.

It is interesting to note that most other Western countries have introduced employer/employee financed social insurance schemes. New Zealand is the only other country apart from Australia to finance its unemployment benefit system entirely from general revenue. Another interesting fact is that most other countries require participants to have been in employment, and to have contributed to an insurance scheme, before consideration of any payments can be made. Consequently, young people who have left school or university and are about to seek employment are generally not eligible to claim any income from these schemes until such time as they have been able to contribute. In most countries examined, there appears to be a very strong attitude that families should support unemployed youth. For example, in West Germany there is a statutory requirement that families and relatives must support all children until such time as they are able to obtain full time employment.

Like Australia, most countries have introduced school to work transition schemes. A Swedish Act of Parliament in 1980 made the school responsible for ensuring that all 16 and 17 year olds are either in education or employment. An average of 80 per cent of 16 year olds presently go on to upper secondary school immediately after nine years in the comprehensive school. This practice is highly encouraged. Consequently the majority of young people attend school until 17 or 18 years of age. For those who do not, and are unable to gain employment, a number of orientation and vocational courses are available. These either provide the young person with certain basic skills or with information on occupations and various educational alternatives. Practical experience of working life at various places of work is also available. As well, it is possible to arrange training for young people in which the school and companies co-operate.⁷

In Britain the Youth Opportunities Program now caters for around half a million unemployed young people every year. Around 90 per cent of the people in this program are provided with work experience while the remaining 10 per cent attend work preparation courses.⁸

Appendix 4 contains a brief description of various overseas income support schemes and other measures specifically designed to deal with unemployed youth. The countries covered include Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The Committee sees merit in many schemes operating overseas and believes that they can offer viable alternatives to unemployment.

Income security recommendations

Income security issues concern not only homeless unemployed youth but all unemployed youth. The Committee has therefore found it very difficult to make recommendations concerning income security which are unique to homeless unemployed youth. The Committee believes that all unemployed youth face similar obstacles when seeking full time employment.

The Committee has framed its income recommendations around a demonstrated needs basis. Consequently, it has been unable to accept recommendations from many witnesses who have proposed across the board increases in unemployment benefits and

other allowances. While across the board increases would be by far the simplest of schemes to administer, the cost to revenue would be extremely high, and the implementation of such a scheme under the present economic conditions would almost certainly mean less funds available for other social welfare programs.

It would seem that the present philosophy of the Government with regard to the junior unemployment rate of \$36.00 is that it is only meant to support those 16 and 17 year olds living in the parental home. The economic and social factors on which the junior rate was set six years ago have altered significantly, however, and the Committee believes that it is important for the Government to make clear the basis on which the junior rate is determined and what that rate is expected to cover. In 1975, the payment of \$36.00 a week was equivalent to 22.5 per cent of average weekly earnings. The payment of \$36.00 a week in 1982 now represents around 12 per cent of that sum.

The pegging of the junior under 18 unemployment benefit at \$36.00 per week has no doubt caused serious hardships for other unemployed youth, not just those who are homeless. Not only, as stated above, would it be impossible for anyone to live independently on \$36.00 a week, but also, for some unemployed youth, that amount of money would not be sufficient to support them in the family home (particularly if the parents are unemployed or in receipt of a pension). The Committee **RECOMMENDS that an allowance equivalent to the difference between the over 18 years of age unemployment benefit rate and the junior unemployment benefit rate should be made available to certain unemployed youth under 18 years of age. These would include:**

- (a) those who have had to establish themselves, for one reason or another, away from the family or statutory home;
- (b) those whose family's financial circumstances are such that the additional benefit would enable the family to remain together as a unit rather than the young person being forced into possible homelessness.

Apart from special instances, the allowance would be paid directly to the hostel or supportive household which is accommodating the young person after an appropriate application has been made on his or her behalf.

The allowance would be regarded by the hostel or household as a portion of the young person's board. The application form for the allowance should require as much information from the applicant as is necessary to enable the Government to assess the stated reasons for homelessness and any access to parental financial support. This will ensure, as far as possible, that only those genuinely in need of the benefit will receive it.

A difficult task for the Committee was to determine what form and level of financial assistance should be given to homeless youths who wish to continue with their secondary education. The Committee suggests that for those under 16 years of age, the most appropriate course of action would be to bring them under the care and attention of the State Welfare Department. This will ensure that proper care and attention is given to them. For those aged between 16 and 18 years of age, it would appear that under present state legislation they are in a 'no man's land'. There is no clear policy as to who should be responsible for the safekeeping and care of these young people.

The Secondary Allowance Scheme, which provides up to \$14.00 a week on a family income means tested basis, is certainly inadequate for many young people who are not residing in the family home. It is quite obvious to the Committee that the Scheme was designed to help support the family to keep their children at school. It was not designed to contribute to board and lodgings outside of the family home, as the payment under most circumstances goes directly to the student's parents or guardians. Table 5.5 shows that the maximum allowance under this Scheme has risen from \$304 in 1974 to \$726 in 1982. Table 5.4 indicates that many students throughout Australia have made use of

youth refuges. Unfortunately, the data does not indicate whether or not these students have stayed on at the youth refuge or returned to the parental home after two or three days.

Table 5.4: Employment Status/Education

	<i>N.S.W.</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>A.C.T.</i>
SECTION 1—					
Total Population: Cases	1 298	813	947	66	99
per cent in labour force	64	70	87	68	67
per cent not in labour force	32	23	4	26	28
per cent status unknown/unstated	4	7	9	6	5
	100	100	100	100	100
SECTION 2—					
(A) Sub-population:					
In labour force: Cases	825	566	821	45	66
per cent of cases in labour force —					
per cent no hours worked/seeking f/t work	68	75	90	81	86
per cent part time work/seeking f/t work	5	4	2	7	3
Total per cent seeking f/t work—					
per cent not seeking work	13	5	5	4	5
per cent part time work	2	2	5	—	—
per cent full time work	13	14	3	2	6
	101	100	100	100	100
(B) Sub-population:					
Not in labour force: Cases	420	183	38	17	28
per cent of cases —					
per cent students attending	65	73	29	76	86
per cent students not attending	22	20	37	6	11
per cent other	13	7	34	18	3
	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Department of Social Security.

Table 5.5: Secondary Allowance Scheme: Level of Allowances and Students Receiving Assistance, 1974 to 1982

	<i>Maximum allowance</i>	<i>Adjusted family income</i>	<i>Number of students</i>
	\$	\$	
1974	304	3 100	7 274
1975	450	3 500	6 796
1976	450	4 300	12 369
1977	550	5 100	12 983
1978	550	5 800	17 632
1979	550	5 800	19 400
1980	550	6 200	23 100

	<i>Maximum allowance</i>	<i>Adjusted family income</i>	<i>Number of students</i>
	\$	\$	
1981	660	7 440	25 500
1982	726	8 432	26 200(est.)

Source: Department of Education, Annual Reports; 1981-82 Budget Papers; Ministerial Statement 20 August 1980.

The Committee **RECOMMENDS** that if senior secondary students (over 16 years of age) are homeless and have to seek accommodation in a youth hostel or supportive household, the Commonwealth Government should pay the cost of that person's board and lodgings and ensure that the Secondary Allowance is paid directly to the young person concerned. The total cost involved should not exceed the adult unemployment benefit rate.

Parents who have the financial resources to care for their children should not be allowed to opt out of their responsibilities. However, if parents have the financial capacity to care for their children but are unwilling to do so in an appropriate manner within the family home, then every assistance (e.g. legal aid) should be given to these young people so as to ensure that they have access to sufficient financial resources to enable them to cover the costs of their forced independent lifestyle. Uppermost in the Committee's mind is the need to ensure that those in need are given appropriate assistance and that this assistance is provided as quickly as possible.

Conclusion

Youth unemployment continues to remain at an unacceptably high level and added to this is the significant increase in the duration of unemployment. When youth unemployment is coupled with homelessness, the resultant economic and social problems are compounded. The Committee acknowledges that no-one on \$36.00 a week (junior unemployment benefit rate) could expect to live independently. In addition, the Committee believes it would be almost impossible for anyone on \$58.10 a week (adult unemployment benefit rate) to successfully maintain a full independent lifestyle.

The issue of unemployment benefits is far broader than the terms of reference of this inquiry. The Committee has found it difficult to isolate the issue of homelessness and income security from the general issue of income security. Nonetheless it has made two specific recommendations. First, that an allowance equivalent to the difference between the junior and the over 18 years of age unemployment benefit rate be made available for unemployed youth under the age of 18 years on proof that these young people have had to establish themselves away from the family or statutory home, or are in genuine need within the family home. Except for special circumstances, this allowance is to be paid directly to the supportive household or hostel accommodating the unemployed youth. While the Committee has not made any recommendations regarding the level of the junior rate, it believes it is important for the Commonwealth Government to spell out the basis on which that rate is determined, and what that rate is expected to cover.

Secondly, for those homeless youth who are attending secondary school but who have no access to financial support from their family, the Committee has recommended

that the Commonwealth Government meet the cost of their full board and ensure that the payment under the Secondary Allowance Scheme goes directly to them.

Endnotes

1. Transcript of evidence, p. 497.
2. Transcript of evidence, p. 1986.
3. Income and Allowances for Young People, Brotherhood of St Laurence, submitted by the Council to Homeless Persons, Victoria, Transcript of evidence, p. 865.
4. Transcript of evidence, p. 1705.
5. Transcript of evidence, p. 2379.
6. Transcript of evidence, p. 3195.
7. Birgitta Magnusson, Current Sweden, What is being done in Sweden for Unemployed 16 and 17-Year-Olds?, No. 275, September 1981, p. 3.
8. Education, Employment and the Youth Opportunities Programme: some sociological perspectives, p. 211, Oxford Review of Education, Vol. 7, No. 3, 1981.

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.¹ The following types of services are provided under the scheme:²

- 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⁽¹⁾</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	

⁽¹⁾ 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.³

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.⁴

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.⁵

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.⁶

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.⁷ 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 50.⁸

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.⁹

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.¹⁰ 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.¹¹ 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.¹²

Social workers have a particular responsibility to ensure that all eligible persons and organisations receive accurate information on the Department's programs.¹³ 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
Total	161.6	220.9	276.7

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:¹⁴

- (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.¹⁵

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.¹⁶

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.¹⁷

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.¹⁸

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:¹⁹

- 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.²⁰

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.²¹ 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.²²

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.²³ 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.²⁴ 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.²⁵

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.²⁶

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.²⁷

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.²⁹

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.³⁰ Employers can receive on-the-job training subsidies. These are:³¹

- 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 Aboriginals

The Government has taken specific measures to encourage the training and employment of Aboriginals, including:³²

- promotional activities to boost employment opportunities for Aboriginals in private industry;
- skilled training and work experience for Aboriginals 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.³³

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:³⁴

- 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).³⁵ 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.³⁶

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:³⁷

- 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:³⁸

- 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.

CHAPTER 7

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Terms of reference

Part (c) of the Committee's terms of reference asked it to consider the appropriate responsibilities of governments at all levels in the provision of services to homeless youth. To a large extent this matter has been dealt with already throughout the report. There remain a few issues, however, which require some discussion.

It became apparent to the Committee during the course of its public hearings that all state governments and the Northern Territory have developed new programs, or have modified existing programs, to help come to terms with the growing problem of youth homelessness.¹ In all written and oral evidence provided by Commonwealth and state governments and the Northern Territory, it was acknowledged that governments do have a responsibility towards homeless youth.² The extent to which this responsibility should be a combined Commonwealth/state matter, however, was not at all clear.

Identified areas of responsibility

The New South Wales Government stated in its submission to the Committee that the role of government in respect of homeless youth should be twofold:

'Firstly, more accurate information should be collected on the extent of demand by youth for permanent housing and their opinions regarding permanent housing alternatives.

Governments should encourage, directly or indirectly, the provision of the most satisfactory alternatives. This need not necessarily be limited to direct Government financial support, but should include the creation of a suitable regulatory and planning framework, conducive to the construction or establishment of youth housing.

Secondly, Governments should investigate areas of special need in respect of young people who would be totally unable to sustain self-support but cannot otherwise be housed, and consider the provision of suitable dwellings to be made available through welfare organisations.³

The Victorian Government, in its submission to the Committee, stated:

'Overall, the primary level of support services should maintain and strengthen the integrity of the family, especially at times of stress. At a secondary level, government services should offer a place for 'time out' while family difficulties are resolved. Only at times of actual family breakdown should the thrust of government services be geared towards providing youth with semi-permanent or permanent accommodation away from their families. In broad terms, it is appropriate for the Commonwealth Government to assume principal responsibility for funding of major programs while the State government's responsibility should lie in standard supervision and program maintenance and monitoring; local governments should be concerned with community structures and local support services.⁴

With the exception of state wardship, the problem of youth homelessness can be approached sensibly only by assuming that families, the community and government (at

all levels) have a responsibility towards homeless young people, but that this responsibility cannot be clearly delineated.

Most state responsibility for young people is set out in statutes. The state will intervene only where families are deemed by the courts not to be providing adequate care and protection for their young, or where young people have offended against the law. Should these young people come before the courts and be made wards of the state, however, the states have a clear responsibility towards their care and protection.

Where homeless youth have either rejected or been rejected by their families and are not under state supervision, there is a problem in determining which level of government, if any, is responsible for providing them with accommodation and related services. The Committee believes it is important to note that most families provide for the care and development of their children with minimal assistance from government.

The Review of Commonwealth Functions stated that 'states and local governments are closer to the recipients of many services and are better placed to administer those programs. Their structure and location permits maximum response and involvement by those most affected by the decisions of government'.⁵ Provided appropriate financial adjustments are made, all states and the Northern Territory would appear to support the receipt of many social service functions to avoid duplication and waste. The Committee's only reservation about such an arrangement is that it believes the Commonwealth should be able to insist that when additional funds are made available for programs of national concern, they are spent as originally intended. In this way, if the Commonwealth Government acknowledges that a problem exists and requires national co-ordinated action, there needs to be some guarantee that action will be undertaken in all states.

Perhaps the greatest bone of contention in the area of shared responsibility is the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement.⁶ The reduction in funds both in real and money terms under the Agreement in recent years was raised quite strongly in most state government submissions, and very strongly in the majority of other submissions to this inquiry. What is not clear from the Committee's point of view is the extent to which general purpose allocations have replaced part or all of the specific purpose grants under the new federalism.

Unfortunately, while the debate continues as to who should be providing the necessary money to maintain and increase the stock of public housing in Australia, the waiting lists for public housing in most states have grown dramatically. The states clearly prefer to receive their portion of Commonwealth revenue via general purpose allocations in order to have greater flexibility and freedom in initiating policies. They see the existence of specific purpose grants in some way diminishing their flexibility, apparently assuming that no further funds can be made available from other sources. It would appear that the states are reluctant to understand that funds from a general purpose allocation could be used in areas where specific purpose grants exist.

The balance between general purpose allocations and specific purpose grants under the new federalism go beyond the terms of this inquiry. However, the Committee has felt it necessary to raise this issue as it relates to public housing. Until such time as this debate is resolved satisfactorily, both the Commonwealth and state governments will continue to come under increasing criticism from many sectors of the community. In the meantime, claims by state governments that they are unable to provide more funds in a particular area because of fixed Commonwealth allocations, and counter-claims by the Commonwealth Government that the states have been given greater flexibility in financial matters (and therefore it is their responsibility to allocate the general purpose funds to areas of high priority), will not build houses.

Most states have set up emergency youth housing committees. From both the written and oral evidence submitted to the Committee it is evident that each state has responded differently to the plight of homeless youth. It is against this background of varied response that the Committee sees the need for the continuation of a nationally co-ordinated youth refuge scheme, and the introduction of a nationally co-ordinated medium to long term supportive household scheme. In this way there is a guarantee that at least a minimum level of service will be available in each state. Beyond that, the Committee believes it is up to the states to respond accordingly by meeting any outstanding needs.

Conclusion

There is no easy formula which neatly divides the areas of responsibility for homeless youth among the various levels of government, families and the community at large. The Committee believes that there needs to be a minimum level of service provided nationally which can be supplemented at the state or local level, depending on the particular needs within each region. If governments provide the necessary resources to enable homeless youth to cope with their immediate problems of food and shelter, and to help them become productive members of the community, the immediate cost is likely to be far outweighed by the long term benefits. Failure to address the problem of youth homelessness in the short term may be, in effect, to nurture a potential skid row population.

Endnotes

1. Transcript of evidence, pp. 1103, 1108-10, 1697, 1714, 1723, 2375, 2889-90, 3002, 3070, 3191, 3197, 3203, 3208-9, 3575.
2. Transcript of evidence, pp. 1103, 1108-10, 1697, 1714, 1723, 2375, 2889-90, 3002, 3070, 3191, 3197, 3203, 3208-9, 3575.
3. Transcript of evidence, p. 1108.
4. Evidence from Department of Social Security.
5. Review of Commonwealth Functions.
6. Transcript of evidence, pp. 1106, 1719, 3211-12, 2384-5, 491-6.

CHAPTER 8

BACKGROUND AND CONDUCT OF THE INQUIRY

On 5 December 1980, the Senate agreed to a motion by Senator Knight (on behalf of Senator Walters) setting out the terms of reference which appear at the front of this report.

The inquiry was advertised in the national press on 31 January 1981 inviting written submissions. Letters were sent to five Commonwealth Ministers and all state Premiers. Invitations to write a submission were also sent to about 50 individuals and organisations. In response, a total of 126 submissions were received (see Appendix 6).

The Committee commenced public hearings in Canberra on 1 May 1981. During the course of the public inquiries, the Committee took evidence from 214 witnesses (see Appendix 5). Of these, 160 were from organisations, 39 from government departments, 11 from individuals appearing in their own right and one from a Northern Territory Member of Parliament. Altogether, 18 public hearings were held throughout all capital cities of Australia as well as in Morwell, Victoria and Alice Springs, Northern Territory. As a result of the public hearings, 3906 pages of transcript were compiled.

In order to gain further information, the Senate Committee Secretariat collected many articles and reports relating to homeless youth. Also, close liaison was kept with the section of the Commonwealth Department of Social Security which administers the evaluation of the Youth Services Scheme. The Committee visited 15 youth refuges during the course of its public inquiry, and met another seven organisations and groups who were directly involved with homeless youth. This enabled the Committee members and staff to gain first-hand knowledge of the problem and expectations of homeless youth.

Acknowledgements

The Committee wishes to thank all the witnesses who appeared before it to give oral evidence. The Committee also expresses its gratitude to those who presented submissions but were not called upon to give evidence. Much of the information in these submissions was used in the Committee's deliberations and in writing the final report. The Committee wishes to thank all state Premiers and the Northern Territory Chief Minister, as well as their departments, for the co-operation that they gave. It also thanks the staff of the Parliamentary Library for its assistance.

The Committee particularly wishes to thank the young people in the refuges that it visited. Their conversations with Committee members, often on very difficult personal matters, gave the Committee an insight into the problems of homeless youth that would not have been possible otherwise. The Committee would also like to thank the staff of these refuges for being most helpful in arranging the visits.

Finally, the Committee wishes to thank the staff —the Secretary, Mr Peter Keele, the Research Officers, Mrs Patricia Mayberry and Miss Pamela Gulloni, and the Steno-Secretary, Mrs Eleanor Gilmour, and the word processor operators—Miss Linda Rutter and Miss Robyn Graham.

The Senate
August 1982

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "M. S. Walters". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

M. S. WALTERS
Chairman

**EXTRACTS FROM FAMILIES AND SOCIAL SERVICES IN AUSTRALIA
REPORT TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY, VOLUME 1, AGPS,
CANBERRA, 1978**

Summary of recommendations

1. There should be a mechanism at the Federal government level which brings together planning for income security and personal social services across functional departments and provides for co-operative data collection and program evaluation as between the Commonwealth and the States.
2. An intergovernmental planning mechanism should be established to continue the co-operative collection of data and planning information commenced by this Committee.
3. The creation of a mechanism in each State which provides a focus for co-ordinated policy development for personal social services across functional departments.
4. The capacity of State welfare departments should be strengthened to undertake planning functions consistent with recommendation 1.
5. The role of local government in planning and service delivery for social services should be determined within each State in consultation with the Commonwealth.
6. Commonwealth and State governments should determine public policies and set down funding guidelines for government financing of non-government agencies in statutory service provision, innovative and experimental service provision, research and policy development and co-ordination activities.
7. It is recommended that:
 - (a) priority be accorded to the activities of the Commonwealth-State working party on the collection of co-ordinated national welfare statistics;
 - (b) adequate data about the characteristics of the population be collected on a regular basis through the national census and through other State and Commonwealth surveys; and
 - (c) governments at all levels ensure that the value of statistical collections is explained and that there is publicly available feedback.
8. The question of providing improved funding information should be referred by the Minister to her colleague the Treasurer with a request that he in turn takes up the issue with his State colleagues.
9. A minimum network of social services which should be provided by the public purse should be agreed upon by the Commonwealth and States in consultation but in the first instance the following minimum service listing should be considered as a basis for shared planning and funding. This would include the current granting programs of the Department of Social Security:
 - (a) information/referral services;
 - (b) emergency housekeeper services;
 - (c) homemaker and budgetry skills—advisory services;
 - (d) day care and occasional care;
 - (e) out of school and holiday care programs;
 - (f) parent counselling, education and support services;
 - (g) crisis care, emergency accommodation and counselling services; and
 - (h) services to the handicapped (in particular to assist the socialisation and integration where possible into general community activities).
- N.B. Services to include particular provision for special groups, e.g. Aborigines, migrants etc., where appropriate.
10. Negotiations should be undertaken between the Commonwealth and each State government about the activities to be undertaken with government financing by the non-government sector and local government for social service provision. These agencies would then enter into an agreement with the State as to the nature, extent and quality of the service to be provided.

11. A funding program of three to five years should be mutually agreed upon by the Commonwealth and the States for the minimum network of social services. As a first step the present welfare grants programs of the Department of Social Security should be integrated into a single social service grants program. As a second step the services listed in the minimum network should be included in this program. Funding arrangements for constituent parts of the program may vary and are to be mutually agreed between each State government and the Commonwealth.

12. The Commonwealth and each State government should carefully examine the detailed information provided in each chapter and in particular chapters 2, 3 and 5 and Appendix 1 and assess the implications these may have for policy development.

13. Commonwealth and State governments make regular budget provision for co-ordinated expenditure on research into welfare service provision which at least matches the outlay on provision for research into health services.

Chapter 2—Families in Australia today

Changing role of youth

The role of youth within the family is ill defined and highly variable. They are not depended on and only just dependent. The Committee has gained the impression that their position might best be seen as a yearning for independence in the face of dependence enforced by society.

(i) Labour force participation

Enforced dependence is most clearly seen in the decreasing labour force participation of youth and in their increasing unemployment rates.

The decreasing labour force participation of youth coincides with their increasing participation in higher education. The training function has been transferred from families to institutions.

Indeed, socialisation in general is now a function a family shares with a number of social institutions. With society plural and continually changing, and with the family more individualised, the chance of the values transmitted by various social institutions being inconsistent with those of an individual family is increased. Consequently the effectiveness of the family's authority as a source of information and social control is reduced.

Erikson¹, among others, has addressed himself to these and other problems faced by youth, placing emphasis on their striving for independence.

(ii) Independence

An expression of the desire of youths not in the labour force to be independent of the social interactions of the family can be seen in the growing numbers of youth drop-in centres and refuges. The State and Commonwealth governments are establishing an increasing number of programs for youth. For example the Commonwealth has recently established a Youth Affairs Bureau within the Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development.

Those youths who have entered the labour force express their independence through increased social and geographic mobility and early family formation.

The median age of Australian bachelors marrying has dropped from 27 in 1910 to 25.3 in 1947 to 23.3 in 1974. The median age of spinster brides has also dropped from 22.5 in 1947 to 20.9 in 1974.² A very effective procedure for terminating emotional dependence on a family is for an individual to transfer that dependence to a new familial arrangement.

Conclusion

Families in Australia vary considerably in their composition and in the roles enacted by family members. It seems likely that this variability will increase given existing demographic and attitudinal trends.

Services designed to support families in Australia should cope with this variability as well as with central direction of the trends.

In particular it should be kept in mind that:

- (a) There are over two million primary families in Australia supporting well over four million children; 10 per cent of these families contain more than three children, children in these large families constituting 21.3 per cent of all children.
- (b) There is a definite trend away from the institutional residential care of children. Those in such care are being cared for by more institutions, so that the number of children per institution is declining.
- (c) At present, 8.8 per cent of all families have only one parent and it is likely that this percentage will increase. The increasing proportion of one-parent families with divorced heads may mean that services assuming a widowed head are not as appropriate as in the past.
- (d) Increasing participation in the labour force by married women raises the possibility that the families tasks may be increasingly shared between parents or by institutions. That an estimated 285 900 mothers would be interested in a job if suitable child care was available is notable.
- (e) Attitudes towards and roles within marriage are becoming increasingly variable. Services and their legal bases may need to adapt accordingly.
- (f) Increasing numbers of young people are remaining dependent on the family for longer periods due to their increasing participation in higher education and their increasing unemployment. Programs designed for youth need to consider this growing dependence and youth's yearning for independence.
- (g) Although children remain dependent on the family their rights as individuals should also be considered in the provision of services.

Chapter 3

Needs of families

Basic needs of families

The following is a set of goals for public policies to create a favourable environment in order for families to fulfil their four major functions:

- (a) Security of an adequate cash income to purchase through the market those goods which are normally supplied through the market, which are necessary to maintain an acceptable standard of living for all members. (This is affected by wage rates and accessibility to employment, pension and benefit rates and eligibility criteria, and the family allowance system. Hidden cash subsidies to families such as subsidised housing also affect the adequacy of a given income, though not allowing full market choices.)
- (b) Access to additional financial resources in the form of compensation, special grants or credit, in times of added expense or crisis, such as home purchase, removal, illness and birth of children.
- (c) Access to and security of tenure of a dwelling suited to the form and activities of the family, which provides self-contained facilities and allows for the autonomy, privacy and interaction of the family group and its members, in the combination they choose.
- (d) The opportunity to occupy such a dwelling from which community facilities and services and employment are easily accessible to individuals according to their mode of transport.
- (e) The availability of employment, educational and recreational opportunities appropriate to the interests, ages and abilities of all members, including some which allow whole family involvement.
- (f) Access to a variety of practical family support services which suit its patterns and respect its privacy, for the running of the home and the caring for young children, such as homemaker/housekeeper, emergency, occasional, part-time and full-time child care, which may be used either to increase a family's efficiency or supplement its own resources in times of additional pressures. (Accessibility is influenced by factors such as distance, waiting lists, financial costs, information on service, cultural differences between those providing the service and its potential users.)

- (g) The opportunity to obtain information, advice and counselling on family matters, when this is sought.
- (h) The possibility of sharing information, experience and other resources with other families.
- (i) The preservation of individual human and legal rights within the family, such as freedom from exploitation, protection from assault and a fair share of resources over which the individual has independent control.

Chapter 4

Legal and constitutional matters . . . to families

State and territory child welfare legislation

As there had been no comparative analysis of legislation within the Australian States and Territories affecting children and families, the Social Welfare Commission made a research grant to Lynne Foreman of the Department of Criminology at the University of Melbourne to undertake such an analysis. The analysis was only intended to cover selected aspects of child welfare legislation, excluding the extensive legislation relating to adoption and Commonwealth Government legislation concerned with the broad spectrum of social welfare.

Readers of this Report are referred to Lynne Foreman's paper as it is impossible to reproduce extensively here her findings. A brief summary only of the main points follows.

The aim of Lynne Foreman's study was to describe succinctly the legislative framework in Australian States and Territories with respect to welfare, 'to determine whether it is child, family or community orientated and how policy is expressed in the legislation'.

Ms Foreman asserts that:

. . . the process of State intervention is based currently upon the premise that the child is part of a family unit which ought to have been organised to protect itself and its members, and if it fails in the fulfilment of this objective then State intervention is justified to remove the child from the prevailing family circumstances. Underlying this premise is the notion that the law upholds the cultural view that the preferred family unit is one that is legally sanctioned, economically independent of the State and generally is able to support, maintain and develop its own internal structure along the lines of socially acceptable criteria.

Nowhere in Australian law is there a clear enunciation of what the rights and responsibilities of the States and the Commonwealth are with respect to child and family welfare. Nor is there a readily accessible overview of the basis for regulating parental rights. Further it is difficult to extract from legislation and case law a simple statement of what the legal rights of parents and children are.

The imprecision and confusion surrounding this topic is to a large extent accentuated in Australia as a result of the constitutional powers vested in both State and Federal bodies. Because of the constitutional split of legislative functions each Australian State and Territory has different child welfare legislation and this is undoubtedly implemented differently.

The result of the study does not break new ground, but reinforces the view, which is probably widely held by those engaged in the provision of services to the child and family in Australia, that our welfare legislation is generally orientated towards responding only when the activities of the child the child's circumstances or a composite situation has occurred which requires State intervention, ostensibly to protect the child from itself or others. The grounds for intervention are basically the same throughout Australia and with some rare exceptions the legislation does not aim to prevent or mend family dysfunction. The element of social control is directed at the child.'

Chapter 5

Current provision of personal social services directed towards the family

Discussion

The aims of the State and Territory welfare departments are broadly similar with commonly repeated sentiments such as:

principles of co-operation, integration of services, research and education and aimed at the prevention of family dysfunction, stating a belief in the family unit
fundamental belief is in the preservation of the family unit as the basis of society and as the place in which the child is best developed¹

the importance of the parent-child relationship, the desirability of maintaining the family unit²

However, despite this commitment to the family, project officers stated that very few services were directed to the family as a whole, but were rather directed to individuals (perhaps within family units) who were in need of assistance. There appeared to be little involvement and follow-up (beyond counselling) to the broader problems of the family from which these individuals' problems may stem or be accentuated. Similarly, project officers could identify few programs which they considered had the family as their client group.

The aims of the State welfare departments do however suggest some differences in their approach to the provision of services. The Victorian, Queensland, Tasmanian and New South Wales departments' aims are mainly or totally the protection of, and provision of services for, children. However, the aims of the welfare departments in South Australia and Western Australia, while retaining the child protection and service provision function, involve a wider concern for the needs of the whole community. There is evidence of a significant extension of services provided by the South Australian department in line with these broader aims.

The aims of the welfare departments also consider their function when families break down and their obligations towards children of these families. It appears that all States and Territories consider that where adoption is not possible, foster care is the best service for them to aim to provide for these children. If residential care is necessary, there is evidence in some States of a growing preference for and use of family group care. These trends and preferences are discussed later in this section.'

Endnotes

Chapter 2

1. E.H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York, 1968).
2. DBS, *Social Indication No. 1, 1976, No. 13-16.*

Chapter 5

1. Department of Youth and Community Services Act, 1973, N.S.W., from the State research report.
2. Aims of the Tasmanian Department of Social Welfare as stated in the State research report.

APPENDIX 2

RENTING CONVENTIONS, CAPITAL CITIES MARCH 1981

A telephone survey of real estate agents and electricity authorities in each capital city was undertaken by the Department of Housing and Construction in March 1981 to obtain information on the establishment costs that persons would most likely be required to pay in order to rent a dwelling. The findings of the survey are listed below.

Sydney

Bond: usually 4 weeks rent (maximum charge is 4 weeks rent for unfurnished, 6 weeks rent for furnished)

Rent in Advance: usually 2 weeks

Leasing Fee: normally \$35 (can vary between \$10 and \$70)

Stamp Duty: 35c per \$100 or part thereof on total rent for term of lease

Electricity Connection Fee: \$40

Melbourne

Bond: usually 4 weeks rent (maximum allowed is 4 weeks, but in practice is often a little more)

Rent in Advance: 4 weeks

Leasing Fee: nil

Stamp Duty: 60c per \$100 or part thereof on total rental for term of lease

Electricity Connection Fee: \$90

Brisbane

Bond: usually 2 weeks rent (in practice is often a little more)

Rent in Advance: 2 weeks

Leasing Fee: nil

Stamp Duty: 35c per \$100 or part thereof on total rental for term of lease

Electricity Connection Fee: \$40

Adelaide

Bond: 3 weeks rent Rent in Advance: 2 weeks

Leasing Fee: nil

Stamp Duty: \$1 per \$100 or part thereof on total rental for term of lease

Electricity Connection Fee: \$35

Perth

Bond: 3 weeks rent (varies from 2 to 4 weeks rent)

Rent in Advance: usually 2 weeks (4 weeks in some cases)

Leasing Fee: 1 weeks rent

Stamp Duty: 25c per \$100 or part thereof on total rental for term of lease

Electricity Connection Fee: \$18

Hobart

Bond: 3 weeks rent (can vary from 4 weeks down to 1 week for a very delapidated house)

Rent in Advance: 2 weeks rent (varies from 2 to 4 weeks)

Leasing Fee: nil

Stamp Duty: \$1 per \$100 or part thereof on total rental for term of lease

Electricity Connection Fee: \$20

A PROPOSAL FOR A DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE—BROTHERHOOD OF ST LAURENCE

The framework for the proposal takes the following order: assumptions, objectives, planning factors, recommendation, implementation.

Assumptions underlying a developmental program for homeless youth

1. The numbers of homeless disadvantaged young people will increase.
2. That some young people are disadvantaged by the unequal and unjust distribution of opportunities for personal development in Australian society.
3. That resources, in particular temporal and physical space, are requirements for personal development.
4. That independent living skills can be learnt through skill transference, experimental learning and participation in decision making about the choice of life-style to be pursued.
5. That experimental services of this type are essential to provide knowledge for policy development and social action programs to change those institutions which contribute to the unequal distribution of opportunities for young disadvantaged people.
6. That links with families and friends are maintained and existing networks strengthened if accommodation services to young people are locally based.¹

Objectives of a developmental program for homeless youth

One of the lessons which has been learnt from the recent demonstration projects conducted by the Brotherhood, for example, the Family Centre Project, SPAN and the Neighbourhood Employment Development Project, has been that a multiplicity of goals is a deterrent to successful outcomes in an experimental program. The objectives, or goals of a program must be simple, clearly expressed, and few in number. Martin Rein has expressed this idea in the following way:

A proliferation of goals in a program usually reflects low confidence in major achievements. Multiplicity and alteration of goals often substitutes for effectiveness of action.²

With Martin Rein's comments and Brotherhood experience in mind, the following objectives have been devised:

1. To provide an environment for disadvantaged, homeless young people in which they can master the social, practical and relationship skills necessary for independent living.
2. To ensure that young disadvantaged people can remain in this enabling environment until they choose to test newly acquired independent living skills in the community.
3. To test the techniques of skill transference, mutual support, self-help and participation in decision making as the means of developing independent living skills.
4. To improve the access of disadvantaged unemployed young people to the community's permanent accommodation resources by developing a network of accommodation alternatives, and providing information and funds to enable their utilisation.
5. To help young people develop and/or strengthen their links with the community into a support network which will sustain them when they move into permanent accommodation.³
6. To ensure that the information obtained from the program is used to change government policy towards homeless young people to improve accommodation and support services for them.

Planning factors

When a new program is being devised, there are several questions which must always be considered despite the type of program or the system in which it intervenes. A discussion of these common questions as they relate to this particular program follow:

Location

Should the program be located centrally in close proximity to other programs conducted by the auspice; or in the area demonstrating the greatest need?

(a) A locally-based program would mean that the young people may already have contacts with relatives and friends upon which they could build to form a permanent support network.

(b) The Brotherhood experience in the King Street Job Centre and in the Unemployed Rights Service has shown that a central location does not always offer the best service to consumers.

(c) It is more possible for a program based in a local area to become part of the local network of services with the consequent advantages of mutual support and the exchange and integration of services. For example, if the program was situated in Northcote, it would form part of a network of services for the young unemployed which includes Northcote Unemployed Resource Group, the Unemployed Workers' Union and SPAN, enabling the young people in the Boarding House to participate in, and exchange, services with all of them.

(d) The Youth Accommodation Coalition Co-ordinator has advised that the regions with the greatest need for emergency accommodation are the north-east and the north-west, but that all regions have a need for long-term accommodation.

Auspice

Questions about auspice are constrained by the funding already collected; clearly, the Church of England and the Brotherhood must be involved. However, both organisations either are, or can be, regionalised.

In a recent seminar about Children's and Youth Services conducted in the Inner Urban Region,⁴ two prominent Victorian social workers, produced evidence to show that 'community services should have a regional or local community base'⁵ and, wherever possible, should be 'accessible, have local input, encourage participation, and have local decision-making responsibilities over funding and policy issues'.⁶

From the Brotherhood's own experience in the 'SPAN: A Community Project for Older and Retired People', and the Neighbourhood Employment Development Program projects, community involvement is the main factor which is producing successful outcomes. There are, of course, different levels and types of community involvement and the exact arrangements should be clear from the outset. From the Brotherhood's point of view, it would be an interesting departure from previous practice to attempt to involve the local community in service delivery at the outset, rather than 'hand over' the service to the community after it is established.

Service or Demonstration

Arguments considered under this heading are:

(a) The need for long-term accommodation has been demonstrated already by reports and other services. All that will be tested is the method of providing the service.

(b) There is a great deal of statistical evidence that the need will be ongoing.

(c) The Brotherhood has always provided some type of service for disadvantaged youth and with the change in Action and Resource Centre's goals will have to continue its service commitment in some other way.

(d) Innovation is not unique to demonstration projects. Rothman lists the various characteristics of innovative organisations, all of which can apply to services, in particular, he has shown that any organisation with many linkages to external influences can be innovative.⁷

- (e) In a critical analysis of demonstration as a strategy of change, Martin Rein claims: 'The assets of the demonstration project are that it is fashionable, politically attractive, rationally appealing, inexpensive and not binding'. He sees the disadvantages as promoting unequal distribution of money and resources, distracting from national policy and overemphasizing success.⁸ Although Martin Rein is discussing broad national demonstration programs in this article, his comments do have some application.
- (f) Demonstration programs require, by their very nature, much greater research inputs. For example, the Brotherhood Unemployment Rights Service (a service program), has had little research input other than data collection, whereas the SPAN program (a demonstration project) occupies half the time of one full-time researcher.

Target Group

The evidence presented in the VCCSD report showed that young girls, 18 years and younger, were the largest group to seek accommodation assistance from the organisations surveyed. The report states:

For whatever reasons, the fact is that young girls are subject to housing crises and the concomitant economic, social and moral difficulties, at an earlier age than their male counterparts.⁹

However, part of independent living is to be able to live with persons of both sexes, and this should be one of the skills learnt in the program, therefore, the target group should include a mixture of sexes. Similarly, a mixture of age groupings is important.

The only other social characteristics the participants should possess are that they are unemployed, and disadvantaged to the extent that they are likely to benefit from the skills transference program. It is also preferable, although not mandatory, that the participant is eligible for unemployment or other benefit as part of the program will be to learn financial management skills.

Length of stay and follow-up

Length of stay is governed by many variables; individual differences, level of disadvantage, readiness for independent living, more permanent accommodation. However, it should be quite clear at the outset that length of stay is limited and some contractual arrangement should be made with each young person at the beginning of the stay. Although length of stay will vary with the person, the average length of stay is expected to be six months. The young person should decide on the actual date of departure within the general terms of the original contract.

The eagerness of young people at this age to learn, and test themselves out in the real world will automatically limit the duration of stay. However, mistakes will occur and the task of one of the workers in the house will be to support the young person in the new accommodation and to keep the door of the house open if return is indicated. It is expected that returning to the house will be quite common and at least one space should always be open for such emergencies.

Size

Six to eight people is the optimal size of a group for the transference of skills, for mutual support, and for communal living. Apart from some large boarding houses, this size approximates the size of the various types of living arrangements in the community. However, a rather large house will be required if accommodation for 6-8 people of mixed sexes, plus staff, and an 'emergency' bed, is to be provided. A smaller group may decrease the cost of premises, but increase the staffing costs by decreasing the staffing-/participant ratio. In summary, a house which will accommodate 10-12 people will be required.

Staffing

A great deal of the physical work in the house (cleaning, cooking, shopping, gardening) will be carried out by the participants as part of the skill learning program. Thus, the number of staff will be small and their tasks very specific, mainly requiring support/relationship and networking abilities. Staff should be residential and chosen according to the tasks and abilities required, but a mixture of ages and sexes would be desirable. It is probably important that one staff member is indigenous to the group of participants; if possible, an indigenous person who has had some experience or training in work with young people.

One of the indigenous youth workers from Action and Resource Centre who has had in-service training is the type of worker required. Another staff member should have administrative, organisational and community development skills.

The proposal has been designed on the basis that there will be only two employed staff members. However, the experience of other programs suggests that at least three staff members will be needed. If resources allow this level of staffing, the third person would be allocated some of the tasks envisaged for the two staff members already described. It would be particularly useful to have more input in the following areas: the development of community linkages, the initiation of alternative accommodation networks, the ability to select and support volunteers.

It is important that unemployed volunteers (such as teachers) are used in the house for skill transference and relieving duties.¹¹ Many of the tasks overlap and it will be difficult to write exact job descriptions for the various people involved in the program. It should also be remembered that skill transference may occur between participants, between neighbours and participants, as well as between expert volunteers and participants.

Research

Expertise is required in this area, and researchers capable of social research are difficult to find; the Brotherhood has this expertise and as one of the groups represented in the auspice, could be expected to provide this resource. The research input would be similar to that available to all Brotherhood services, that is, the setting up of a data collection system and evaluation carried out periodically. The type of evaluation used in a demonstration program —monitoring and research feedback —is considered inappropriate as it could produce a 'hot-house' effect which is not used in accommodation houses and which might influence the program's outcomes.

Recommendation

That the Brotherhood of St. Laurence initiate a new service for homeless, disadvantaged, unemployed youth as part of its contribution to welfare services and to reaffirm its on-going commitment to disadvantaged young people. The service will be located in a large house which will be known as a boarding house.

The service will be composed of three elements:

- (a) it will provide long-term accommodation for 8-10 young people of both sexes between the ages of 15-18 years;¹²
- (b) it will provide a skill transference program to assist the young people to obtain independent living skills;
- (c) it will provide a follow-through service —seeking out and developing a network of alternative, permanent living arrangements in the community in which the house is situated and offering support during the transition between the boarding house and permanent accommodation alternatives.

The auspice for the new service should be a steering committee composed of persons working with young unemployed people in the chosen area, plus representatives of Action and Resource Centre, Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Church of England.

The Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Church of England should guarantee funds for the service, but the local steering committee should make all policy and funding decisions.¹³ Funds

should be supplied, or resources obtained: to employ two staff members; to meet the shortfall between the costs of running the service,¹⁴ and the contribution of the young people; to form a bond loan fund.¹⁵

The house will be managed by the young people.¹⁶ The staff, although residential, will work as resource people assisted by volunteers who will be unemployed people with specific skills. At least one staff member should be indigenous to the group for whom the service is designed.

Service delivery methods should include local involvement, mutual support, self-help, skill transference and consumer participation in decision making—all methods which are useful in the pursuit of independent living skills.

A data collection system should be installed in the service at the outset and a research consultant should be available to the house at staff or participants' request.

Implementation

1. The first draft of the proposal was circulated and commented upon by relevant people within Brotherhood of St Laurence and Action and Resource Centre. It was then redrafted. The proposal proceeded through the normal channels for approval within the Brotherhood where the Executive decided that the most appropriate areas to test the proposal were Thornbury, Northcote, Fairfield, Kensington, Port Melbourne and Brunswick.
2. The proposal in its redrafted form will be circulated to relevant people and organisations within these local communities and a reasonable time limit set for comments. An offer to discuss any aspect of the proposal with its designer will also be made. On the basis of these comments and discussions, one area will be chosen for the site of the Boarding House. The proposal will then be submitted for final approval to the Brotherhood Board and the relevant committee within the Diocese of Melbourne of the Church of England.
3. A steering committee will be formed, composed of people with relevant experience, from the local community suggested by the groups already circulated, plus representatives of the Brotherhood, the Church of England and Action and Resource Centre. The main criteria for selection of committee members should be their ability to act as resource people to the house when it is properly functioning.
4. The first task of the steering committee will be to select a staff member with administrative skills for the boarding house.
5. The staff member, in consultation with the steering committee, will then seek out a suitable building in the local area. (The General Manager of the Housing Commission has already offered assistance in purchasing a suitable building.)

The following steps in the implementation process are offered merely as suggestions. The Steering committee may prefer a completely different course of action and its wishes will prevail.

1. At the same time, the Steering Committee and the staff member will explore government funding possibilities, for example, the Department of Youth, Sport & Recreation through its Special Youth Development Program offers a subsidy for the employment of full-time youth workers by community agencies; and the Commonwealth Government offers assistance to youth organisations through the Program of Assistance to Youth Organisations (PAYO) grants. The fact that the program already has some funds committed to it will assist in this task.
2. After exploring funding possibilities, the Steering Committee and the staff member will compile an accurate costing of the boarding house and the program. Some guidance for this task is available in the report written by Eilish Cooke in 1977 for the Social Welfare Department, entitled 'Emergency Housing Service Program'. One important factor in devising a budget for the program is that the young people living in the house are charged the type of rental they will eventually have to pay in the community.
3. The staff member will occupy the house and a second staff member (probably an indigenous worker) will be appointed, at least one staff member will live in the house. At the same time, referrals for accommodation will be accepted from local community contacts. The first group of young people to occupy the house will be chosen by the two staff members in consultation with the steering committee. Subsequent applicants will be chosen by the existing occupants and the staff. It is assumed that, by this time, the first group of occupants will have learnt the appropriate skills for selection.

4. As soon as the house is occupied and the staff members appointed, a research worker from the Brotherhood will be allocated to the program to set up a data collection system with the staff, and to be available for consultation whenever required. The Steering Committee, the staff and the participants may all require such consultation from time to time.
5. After the first group of occupants have arrived, a skills transference program will be developed in conjunction with the young people. People with the expertise to impart the skills for independent living will be contacted (these people could be Steering Committee members, volunteers, or professionals). In particular, volunteers who are unemployed and who have the required and needed skills will be recruited. In this context, it should be remembered that the young people themselves have skills and that part of the program will be for the young people to learn the necessary tasks involved in running a house —cleaning, working, shopping, washing, etc. One of the special skills to be learnt is the ways in which linkages into the community can be developed and existing networks with relatives and friends strengthened.
6. One of the goals of the program is that the young people will run the program themselves, and part of the skills transference program will be to impart the necessary skills for them to do so. It is expected that the boarding house will always have a core group who can transfer skills to newcomers.
7. After the first group of participants have 'settled down', the appropriate staff member will embark on the task of collecting information about existing permanent accommodation in the local community, e.g. private boarding arrangements, communal households, Housing Commission flats, etc., and in developing new, permanent accommodation possibilities. This information will be shared with the young people and eventually 'matching by mutual consent' will occur. The 'support' staff member will be responsible for overseeing the move into permanent accommodation and maintaining contact with the young person accommodated. The participants should feel secure in the knowledge that they can return to the house if the arrangement proves to be unsuitable.
8. Every effort should be made to produce a normal living situation, rather than a protected artificial environment, for example, the house should be 'elastic' enough to accommodate the occasional friend who wants to 'crash' on the sitting-room floor because this behaviour is part of the pattern of living of young unemployed people.
9. A full-scale evaluation of this service should occur after it has been fully operating for two years. However, the participants must agree to this evaluation and the reasons for it must be fully explained to them. Evaluation rather than an action-research program is suggested because the program is a service and not an experimental program, and in order to keep at a minimum, 'fish bowl' effects on the participants.

Endnotes

1. This sixth assumption is stated with some reservation. Although network theory is currently fashionable, it has been the author's experience that a great number of disadvantaged young people do not develop or maintain networks due to the mobility of their families —mobility caused by the inadequate housing provision for low-income people in Victoria.
2. Rein, Martin. 'The Demonstration as a Strategy of Change', *Social Policy: Issues of Choice and Change*, Random House, New York, 1970.
3. This objective supports the argument for a local program and acts as a mitigating force against institutionalization of the program and dependency of the young people on it.
4. Held in the Carringbush Library, Richmond, on October 29, 1980.
5. Graeme Gregory, *The Power and the Glory*, paper delivered to an Inner Urban Region Seminar, October 1980.
6. Jeeny Wills, 'Children and Youth in the Inner Urban Area', *Ibid.*
7. Jack Rothman, *Planning & Organising for Social Change*, Columbia Press, 1974, p. 457.
8. Martin Rein, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
9. Victorian Consultative Committee for Social Development, Youth Accommodation Report, August 1979.
10. Such often being an important part of experiential learning.
11. It has been suggested that unemployed volunteers might not provide the skills or the continuity which this program requires. Family Centre Project experience belies this. Some unemployed professional people were volunteers in the Project, particularly teachers, and welfare workers between jobs. Frequently, they became so involved in the project that they continued as volunteers after they found work. It is the suitability of the volunteer which is the most important factor, not his employment status. The selection and support of

volunteers during the program will be crucial. In addition, offering a caring service is often very beneficial to the confidence and self-esteem of the unemployed person, while his unemployed status assists him to understand some of the difficulties experienced by the participants in the program.

12. It is often assumed that there are legal complications in housing a young person under 16 years. These difficulties are discounted in the following article, 'Teenagers Leaving Home: The Legal Position', Helen Gamble, in *Living Together*, Dorothy Davis et al (eds). Centre for Continuing Education, A.N.U., Canberra. 1980.

13. Graeme Gregory in the paper quoted previously makes the following observation: 'None (traditional welfare agencies) to my knowledge, have said to a community 'We have the resources, you have the need. Here is the money, you determine its use, you fully manage the service, or facility, or organisation that meets your need.'

14. It is envisaged that the young people would pay the 'communal living going rates' for their board, but the program will entail charges which are not usual, e.g. out-of-pocket expenses for volunteers, accommodation of staff, etc., so that the board paid by the young people cannot fully meet the costs entailed in running the house and the program.

15. Those people who work in the field report that loans of bond money to young people for accommodation have a high rate of return.

16. Initially, management by participants will be difficult and it is expected they will need a great deal of assistance until a core group has learnt management skills, after this phase it is expected that participants will transfer skills to each other.

APPENDIX 4

INCOME SUPPORT SCHEMES AND OTHER MEASURES—OVERSEAS EXPERIENCE

(Compiled largely from information supplied by the Commonwealth Department of Social Security)

Belgium

General

Income support for the unemployed in Belgium is provided through a social insurance system financed by employer and employee contributions, with the Government meeting out of its general revenue any deficit in the insurance fund. Benefits are related to past earnings, subject to an upper limit. Additional amounts are payable to specified occupational groups whose benefit entitlements is below a specified minimum.

To qualify for benefits a person must have had, before becoming unemployed, a prescribed period of 'insured employment' (that is, employment where contributions are paid to the insurance fund by employer and employee). This prescribed period increases with the age of the claimant, ranging from 75 days in the last 10 months to 600 days in the last 36 months.

Unemployment benefits for youth

Claimants under 25 years who have just completed their education or training generally qualify for unemployment insurance benefits after 75 days of registration as seeking employment (as distinct from actually being employed). These benefits may be paid for up to one year.

Special measures

Employers were exempt from social security levies for three months in respect of new employees engaged permanently during 1977, provided—

- there was an increase in total personnel; and
- the new employee was wholly unemployed.

In addition, it was required that the new employee had been either registered for one month and in receipt of unemployment insurance benefits or had been registered for six months though not in receipt of benefits.

Enterprises employing 100 workers or more are required to take on, without public financial assistance, trainees at the rate of one for each 100 workers. The minimum period of engagement is six months and may be extended for a further six months. The trainee receives 75 per cent of the normal wage for the job during the first six months and 90 per cent if the six-month extension is applied. Enterprises employing less than 100 workers can engage one trainee, for whom a public subsidy is paid at the end of the training period.

Between 1975 and 1977, financial assistance equivalent to the rate of unemployment insurance benefits otherwise payable was given to enterprises which employed young graduates from secondary and higher education who were under 25 years and register as unemployed. It is not known whether this scheme is still in operation.

Canada

The Canadian unemployment insurance program involves compulsory participation and covers the contingencies of illness and maternity as well as unemployment. It is financed jointly by insured workers, their employers and the Federal Government. Rates of benefit are earnings — related with minimum and maximum payments. To be eligible for the benefit, an unemployed

claimant must have spent at least 10 to 14 weeks in 'covered employment', depending on the unemployment rate in his region, during the last 52 weeks. Most unemployed 16 and 17 year olds would fail to qualify under this system as they are unlikely to have the required length of covered employment.

Provincial and municipal social assistance programs are residual programs providing income to meet basic needs when all other resources have been exhausted. Although the programs are administered by the provinces and municipalities, funding is shared with the Federal Government. These programs are commonly called 'welfare'. The eligibility criteria and levels of assistance vary from province to province. A means test applies and the minimum qualifying age ranges from 16 to 19 years of age depending on the province concerned.

Canada provides most of its assistance to the young unemployed through employment and training measures. The most important of these which would apply to 16 and 17 year olds are below.

Job Experience and Training Program

Objective: To contribute to the placement of young people with serious job placement problems through exposure to a selected work environment and employment counselling.

Provisions: The programme provides subsidised work experience and is carried out in cooperation with community groups. There are two parts of the program—one gives work experience to those unlikely to complete secondary school; the other is aimed at recent school leavers between the ages of 15-19 years likely to have difficulty finding jobs. Both parts of the scheme provide 9 weeks of work experience.

Canada Works Program

Objective: To utilise the expertise of local organisations in the development of proposals that will create new short-term employment opportunities by funding job creation projects.

Provisions: The program operates on a year round basis with the possibility of project funding for up to 52 weeks. Projects must be sponsored by established organisations or corporations and must be non-profit projects of community benefit. Projects aim to provide workers with job experience that will assist them in securing further employment upon completion of the project. Youth make up about 40 per cent of the participants.

Federal Labour Intensive Program

Objective: To create additional temporary employment in the federal public service in areas of high unemployment during the winter months.

Provisions: This program provides temporary employment in federal departments.

Student Summer Employment and Activities Program

Objective: To facilitate the development of temporary summer employment for students through direct job creation.

Provisions: This program is a co-ordinated set of 17 programs involving a number of government departments and agencies. The major program components include the Canada Manpower Centres for Students, the Summer Job Corps Program, and Young Canada Works Program. Projects sponsored through this program operate between April and September and a majority of the positions are offered to post-secondary students.

Denmark

Denmark has a subsidised voluntary unemployment insurance system run by trade unions in a variety of industries. Contributions are made by employers and employees and the government meets any shortfall in funding. To qualify for payments the unemployed person has to serve a qualifying period of employment and must have contributed to the fund for six months. Benefits are earnings-related. Under these conditions, few unemployed 16 or 17-year-olds could qualify

for benefits. Assistance is available to the young unemployed under social assistance provisions if their families are unable to support them.

Denmark also has a number of job creation and educational measures to assist the young jobless. Those who have received training assistance and have reached age 18 are either found work or qualify for special compensation for loss of income.

Social assistance

Act: Social Assistance Act 1974, came into effect 1 April 1976.

Provisions: Types of cash assistance for the young unemployed would apply under the following provisions:

- temporary aid given in situations of acute need to prevent previous standard of living being substantially reduced. Continues as long as applicant may be able to support himself again at some stage. Position reviewed after 3 months on temporary aid to see if other help is needed to encourage a return to the labour market.
- aid under the children's and young person's welfare provisions.
- can be granted if there are special circumstances without an actual assessment of need.

Rates of Benefit:

Temporary assistance - weekly maximum for living expenses (basic pension rate)

— single 310 dkr—average additional payment per week—250 dkr

— children -70 dkr each.

Children's additions are equal to the rates of family allowances.

Special measures

Unemployment compensation

Youths who have reached age 18 and have participated in training programs are immediately eligible for special compensation for loss of income if they cannot find work; these allowances are financed through general revenue. Where work cannot be found for large numbers of young unemployed persons aged 18-25, youth employment projects are set up. Those who have been unemployed for 50 days continuously or for 100 days in the preceding year are eligible for such work.

Job creation

Objective: A subsidy scheme financing additional work carried out by, or on behalf of, national, regional or local public authorities and private organisations.

Provisions: Work done under the subsidy scheme must be of benefit to the community and of a kind which would not otherwise be carried out. Participants are selected for referral to the schemes by local labour exchanges. Workers are paid the current pay rate, and the sponsor is paid a subsidy consisting of 20 per cent of gross wage costs in the case of work sponsored by national State bodies, and 80 per cent of work under municipal authorities and private bodies. Project proposals are submitted by sponsors to the local labour exchanges, which then must be approved by the appropriate labour market board. Sponsoring authorities are responsible for the whole operation, including paying participants' wages and social security contributions. Participants may stay in a scheme for six months of any one year, and leave if offered a suitable permanent job by the local labour exchange. Work financed under the scheme includes construction projects and supplementary social service functions.

Education

(a) Special short-term courses

Objective: A series of special courses in technical, higher and further education institutions of a short-term nature.

Provisions: The courses at upper secondary, commercial and technical courses last from between 2 weeks and 6 months. Students receive unemployment benefits throughout the courses.

(b) Courses for vocational preparation

Objective: To provide an introduction to trades for young people.

Provisions: The courses are for unemployed young people under 25 who have had either no vocational training or training in a field where employment cannot be found. The courses last 6 to

8 weeks and are followed by a trainee period of 4 weeks in an enterprise. Trainees receive financial support and those entitled to unemployment benefits continue to receive them. Extraordinary apprenticeships and trainee places in state institutions

Objective: To supply the need for trainee places in basic vocational education.

Federal Republic of Germany

Unemployment benefit in West Germany is provided through a social insurance scheme under which employees are required to contribute a percentage of earnings and employers contribute a percentage of payroll. Any deficit in the insurance fund is met by the government. Benefits are related to previous earnings.

To qualify, an applicant must have spent at least 26 weeks in insured employment during the last 3 years. The duration of payment varies from a minimum of 13 weeks to a maximum of 26 weeks.

Where the unemployed person fails to qualify for benefits under the above provisions or where his entitlement to those benefits has been exhausted, he may receive unemployment assistance if unable to support himself by other means. Assistance is payable for an indefinite period and is related to previous earnings.

The young unemployed of 16 or 17 years of age would normally not qualify for either unemployment insurance or unemployment assistance as they would have no workforce experience or previous earnings to enable them to meet the initial qualifying conditions. They would, however, qualify for social assistance payments if their family was unable to support them.

Social assistance

Social assistance is administered by local government and financed by local taxes. Social assistance may be granted in the form of personal assistance, cash benefits, loans or benefits in kind. There is a close link between the Social Welfare office in each district, which administers social assistance, and the voluntary welfare agencies. There are two forms of social assistance — subsistence aid (for which the young unemployed are eligible) and assistance in special circumstances (not available to the young unemployed).

Subsistence aid

Subsistence aid is awarded to meet the necessities of life for those who are unable to provide for themselves or to obtain help from other sources.

The aim of subsistence aid is to assist the individual regain his independence. A claimant does not have to be unemployed to claim benefits; it is available to a person whose resources fall below his requirements. However, he is expected to make use of his income and capital assets and those of his spouse (with certain exceptions, notably the family home and the means of livelihood) before applying for assistance. *Close relatives also have a legal liability to maintain such persons.* The unemployed are expected to seek work and may be required to perform some kind of public work in some districts.

Subsistence aid is granted in the form of regular and non-recurring benefits and there is considerable flexibility in the amount and type of aid provided. The regular benefits to meet subsistence needs are usually granted at standard rates which are calculated using a "Basket of Goods" approach. Heating and accommodation costs are paid separately from the standard rates and are usually met in full if the costs are reasonable. A standard rate is set for the head of a household and the amounts for other members of the household are calculated as a percentage of that standard rate. These percentages vary with age.

The standard rate for the head of the household is also used for single persons. The actual amount of the standard rate is laid down by each State, although the rates do not vary greatly between States.

Non-recurring benefits are available both to regular recipients of subsistence aid and to others who do not require regular assistance but have a specific need they cannot meet. Payment can be

made by voucher or by the transfer of money to the claimant's bank account. Payments are most often given for clothing, furniture and household items.

Special measures

Job creation

Objective: To provide temporary jobs for the registered unemployed in short-run projects sponsored by public bodies, voluntary social service agencies and private enterprise.

Provisions: Participants are paid the appropriate rate for the job and stay in the scheme for six months, with the option of an extension for a further six months. The projects must serve a public need and provide extra work which would not have been possible without the scheme. They are not restricted to young people, but local labour exchanges are supposed to favour needy categories. The projects can be subsidised for a 12-month maximum of at least 60 per cent of gross wage costs. Most sponsors are local authorities or other public agencies and more than 50 per cent of the projects are in office or administrative work.

Compulsory part-time education up to 18

Objective: To facilitate transition from school to work and to continue some general education beyond compulsory full-time for all new entrants to the labour force, employed or not.

Provisions: Part-time education is compulsory by law up to the age of 18 for those who leave school after compulsory education (age 15 or older). The courses are two-thirds vocational and one-third general. The vocational element is co-ordinated with apprenticeship. The law covers those who leave school before the age of 18 (i.e. about 50 per cent of the age group).

Netherlands

The Netherlands has a dual system of compensation for unemployment—an employment related insurance scheme and a complementary 'unemployment provisions' scheme operated by the municipalities to cover those who cannot claim unemployment insurance or whose insurance benefit is exhausted. As recipients would need to have been a member of the workforce and have served a qualifying period of employment to qualify for the earnings-related payments under either of these schemes, the young employed of 16 or 17 years of age would not be covered under these schemes.

The young unemployed person of 16 or 17 years of age who cannot be supported by his or her family and who has no other means of support would qualify for assistance under the Public Assistance Act of 1965, although it could be expected that few 16 or 17 year olds would be living independently.

Apart from income support schemes the Netherlands also has a number of specific schemes aimed at assisting the young unemployed.

Social assistance

Law: Public Assistance Act of 1965.

Social assistance is provided for those not covered by insurance arrangements.

Types of assistance: In addition to general continuing assistance, special or incidental assistance may take the form of a long-term addition to benefit or an exceptional needs payment. Special assistance is subject to local discretion and there is no obligation to make payments, or pay any specified amounts. Welfare services are provided by other bodies.

Rates: A single person's rate is about 70 per cent of the married couple's rate (which itself is usually equal to the net minimum wage less employment expenses).

Special measures

Job creation

Objective: A job creation scheme for young people under 23.

Provisions: The job-creation scheme, financed by the employment service of the Ministry of Social Affairs, provides temporary jobs in short-run projects sponsored by government organisations or non-profit making institutions which are themselves government-subsidised. The projects must be of community value and supplementary to the normal work of the organisation. Participants, who must have been continuously unemployed for at least two months, are referred from local labour exchanges. They can be employed for a maximum of six months, and are paid the current rate for the job. The project sponsor is paid a per capita grant equal to the gross wage cost of employing the participants. Sponsors submit the projects to the appropriate Regional Co-ordination Board for Public Works, which then applies for government approval and finance. Most of the sponsors are either public or voluntary social welfare agencies.

Vocational training

Objective: To maintain vocational training levels among junior workers.

Provisions: Employers making an employment contract with a school leaver and an apprenticeship contract for primary training was eligible for a subsidy towards training costs.

Temporary junior workers wage subsidy scheme

Objective: To encourage firms to employ unemployed young people aged between 17 and 23 who have been registered as unemployed for at least six months.

Provisions: Employers hiring unemployed young people for an indefinite time with a working week of 35 hours or more, may be eligible for a wage cost subsidy of D.Fl.650.00 a month, provided the young employees have been registered as unemployed for more than six months. The subsidy may be granted for a maximum period of 12 months.

Temporary scheme to provide jobs for unemployed apprentices

Objective: To maintain levels of vocational training of unemployed young people up to the age of 23.

Provisions: A company or body set up under the apprenticeship system, which enters into an agreement with an unemployed youth to follow a practical training course, may be granted a subsidy towards the training costs of D.Fl.100.00 per person per week.

Training schemes organised by government and industry

Objective: To help job-seekers unable to find jobs without additional schooling.

Provisions: Firms engaging and training job-seekers may receive a subsidy towards the cost of their training up to a maximum of D.Fl.40 for each trainee for each day of effective training, plus a subsidy towards the labour costs amounting to D.F.70 for each trainee aged 23 or more for each day of effective training. Where training takes place at an adult vocational training centre subsidised by the Government, no subsidy towards the cost of training is granted.

Temporary jobs scheme

Objective: To provide temporary jobs for hard-core registered unemployed.

Provisions: Government institutions and similar subsidised institutions which employ people in this category may be eligible for a subsidy towards the labour costs amounting to 100 per cent, provided the labour costs do not exceed D.Fl.35 000 per annum. For persons under 45 (who have had to be unemployed for 6 months or more) the subsidy is granted for a maximum of 6 months. The proportion of participants under the age of 25 was 23 per cent.

Thirty per cent wage subsidy scheme

Objective: To promote active participation in the labour force of registered unemployed who have difficulties because of prolonged unemployment or age.

Provisions: Employers engaging certain long-term unemployed for an indefinite length of time, may be eligible for a subsidy towards the labour cost amounting to a maximum of 30 per cent. For persons under 45 (who have been unemployed for six months or more) the subsidy is granted for a maximum period of 6 months.

New Zealand

Income support for the unemployed in New Zealand is provided through a system very similar to Australia's. Benefits are paid at flat rates out of general revenue. Rates vary with the marital status and age of the beneficiary (in the case of single persons aged 16 to 20 years, it is about

three-quarters of the rate payable to a single person aged 20 or more). Rates are increased for dependent children.

After six weeks on benefit, a beneficiary may become entitled to 'additional benefit' if he or she is experiencing hardship, has only limited income and assets and is paying accommodation costs in excess of a given figure.

Emergency benefit may be granted on the grounds of hardship to persons who are not qualified to receive any other pension or benefit but who by reason of age, physical or mental limitation or any other reason are not able to earn a sufficient livelihood for themselves and their dependants. Emergency benefit may also be granted in lieu of other cash support when it is considered that a course of medical treatment or occupational training would be beneficial. As far as possible, emergency benefit is related to the type of payment for which recipients most nearly qualify.

Special measures

Training programs for the unemployed

Objective: To provide training for the younger unemployed.

Provisions: Special training programs are provided at technical institutes and schools. The courses are either pre-employment courses in a range of skills, or training for specific skilled or semi-skilled occupations. Unemployed people in these courses are paid an unemployment benefit for courses of up to 20 weeks and are paid the standard tertiary bursary for any longer-term courses offered.

Farm employment scheme

Objective: To encourage farmers to engage unemployed people (including young people).

Provisions: The scheme provides a subsidy to all farmers who engage a skilled or unskilled unemployed person. The subsidy is one-third the ruling rate for farm workers in the region concerned, with a maximum of \$NZ50 a week. The subsidy is available only in respect of additional jobs created.

Private sector subsidy scheme

Objective: To encourage permanent employment for the unemployed (particularly younger persons and school leavers) in the private sector in times of economic recession.

Provisions: The scheme is open to those unemployed for more than four weeks and receiving unemployment benefit. Employers obtain a wage subsidy of one-third of the appropriate basic occupational rate subject up to \$NZ45 per week maximum.

Special government work

Objective: To provide temporary employment opportunities in the public sector, and in subsidised employment with local authorities and community organisations, for people enrolled for employment with the Department of Labour.

Provisions: The unemployed are placed on special works by the Employment Service. Employment is created by government departments and on a subsidy basis with local authorities and non-profit making organisations. Unemployed people of all ages can be placed on special works if considered suitable and willing to undertake the work offered. Students (at tertiary institutions) are eligible for placement on the scheme, if they cannot be placed in a regular job within their local Employment District.

Training incentive scheme

Objective: To promote the development of skills and training.

Provisions: Government subsidies are offered for various forms of training.

Apprenticeship trade training incentives

Objective: To provide employers with an incentive scheme of wage subsidies for off-the-job training of apprentices.

Sweden

Sweden operates a dual system of subsidised voluntary insurance and unemployment assistance. A union-related program covers employees belonging to approved unemployment funds established by trade unions on their initiative. This program is funded by employers and employees and subsidised by the Government. A qualifying period of employment is required before benefit, which is earnings-related, becomes payable. The young unemployed (16 and 17 year olds) would not normally qualify under this system.

The complementary labour market support program covers employees and prospective employees aged 16 years or more who are ineligible to join the union-related program because of lack of previous work experience.

The young unemployed are also assisted by various job-creation and employment related special measures. Very few would need to apply for social assistance but it is available to those who cannot obtain assistance from any other source.

Social security system

Cash labour market assistance

The scheme took effect in 1974. It was designed mainly to protect various categories entering or returning to the labour market (such as young persons). Assistance is payable to persons over the age of 16 who are not insured against unemployment or who do not yet satisfy the unemployment insurance conditions.

Generally an unemployed person must have worked for at least 5 months during the past 12 month period in order to qualify for cash labour market assistance. Gainful employment is in certain cases equated with care of the aged or handicapped. The 12 month qualifying period does not include time during which the applicant has been unable to work owing e.g. to illness, military service or adult education. A person who has undergone a particular type of advanced training and has been unemployed for five months immediately after, is entitled to labour market assistance. No employment conditions are imposed in this case.

Cash labour market assistance was in 1974 payable for up to 150 days to persons under 55 (such assistance is taxable).

People are entitled to social assistance if they lack the means to support themselves. Assistance is given when other aid cannot be obtained (either from insurance or elsewhere) or is insufficient. It is usually granted in the form of a cash grant. The extent and conditions of assistance are largely a local responsibility.

Special measures

Temporary recruitment subsidy

Objective: To provide unemployed youth with job experience and facilitate the provision of permanent employment.

Provision: Private firms and organisations will be able to obtain a State grant of up to 75 per cent of wage costs if, in addition to their normal recruitment, they engage unemployed people referred to them by the Employment Service. They are paid at the rate provided in current collective agreements. The type of work is relief work of at least 3 months duration.

Employment measures

Objective: To facilitate the entry of young people into employment.

Provisions: A series of measures were introduced including:

- improved information services for young people at employment exchanges;
- increased state unemployment benefits;
- increased number of places at Vocational Training Centres for unemployed youth under 20 years of age;
- local government emergency work — the subsidy consists of 75 per cent of the payroll costs. Local authorities which train an employee and also hire a jobless person can get a State subsidy of 75 per cent of the payroll cost for the replacement. Applies where unemployed youth are under 25;

- 6000 new trainee posts created in the public service and State enterprises.

Relief work

Objective: To provide employment for the young unemployed.

Provisions: Central government relief works since 1972 have been organised in government agencies and authorities especially for young people under 20. Payment is according to a special agreement. For local authority relief works the government grants 75 per cent of the wage costs up to a certain level. Government grants may be paid for private relief work organised by firms or organisations for young people under 20. The grant covers 75 per cent of the wage costs.

Provisions: Wage subsidies paid to employers while apprentices attend off-the-job courses at technical institutes.

Student community service program

Objective: To provide jobs for tertiary students over the summer vacation.

Provisions: The program provides summer jobs for tertiary students. Students are employed by voluntary agencies, government and local authorities in community work.

Education and work preparation

In order to counteract youth unemployment various labour market policy measures were introduced in Sweden via the Employment Service, and since the late 1970's the Employment Service and the school have had a joint responsibility for youth. An Act of Parliament in May 1980 made the school responsible for ensuring that all 16 and 17-year-olds are in education or employment.

A new curriculum, which places great importance on the pupils acquiring a knowledge of working life, will come into full affect in 1982. During the nine years of schooling the pupils, it is planned, will have six-ten weeks of practical orientation on working life.

The upper secondary school is divided into so-called lines and special courses. There are both three-year and four-year theoretical lines and two-year vocational lines. The number of students entering these courses is determined by national and employer needs. In this way vocational education is offered on the basis of predicted needs. This planning is kept short-term in an effort to maintain greater precision. At present, an average of 80 per cent of 16 year olds go on to upper secondary school straight after nine years in the comprehensive school. Consequently the majority of young people attend school until 17 or 18 years of age.

Since 1977, all local authorities have had a council for co-operation between school and working life attached to the local education authority. The councils consist of representatives of the local employers, the trade unions and the local employment office. The school is represented by the school board, staff, pupils and parents. The councils work for increased contacts with working life for young people while they are still at school.

Young people under 18 years of age who are or run the risk of becoming unemployed and who cannot be placed in education are offered an individual vocational introduction of a maximum of 40 weeks. This is arranged jointly by the upper secondary school and companies/institutions. This introduction should contain elements of training for the occupation in question.

Switzerland

General

Income support for the unemployed in Switzerland is provided through a social insurance system financed by employer and employee contributions. Where contributions to and accumulated reserves in the insurance fund are not enough to meet expenditures the Federal Government and the Cantons provide low-interest loans. Benefits are related to past earnings and the number of dependants, subject to an upper limit of 85 per cent of past earnings.

Among the qualifications for benefits is the condition that a person must generally have been employed for 150 of the 365 days preceding the onset of unemployment. Benefits are payable after a one-day waiting period for up to 150 days in a calendar year (180 days in some cases) or 315 days in four consecutive years. Some Cantons provide special assistance where benefit entitlement is exhausted.

Young unemployed

Persons aged not less than 15 years of age who, on completion of their vocational training, can find no suitable employment are entitled to unemployment benefit for up to one year after they leave school or cease training. At times of persistent unemployment this period may be extended to two years.

Special measures

Other provisions to assist the young unemployed in Switzerland focus on improving information and training facilities.

Information services attempt to keep young people informed of the training and employment opportunities available and to provide guidance on career choices. The training measures aim to increase the number of apprenticeships made available and to facilitate the placement of young people on completion of their apprenticeship.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has two avenues of assistance for the unemployed under its social security system—unemployment insurance and supplementary benefit. The compulsory unemployment insurance system applies to all employed persons earning above a certain limit and is financed by contributions from employers and employees; deficits are met by government. Benefits consist of a flat rate payment plus an earnings-related supplement.

An unemployed person has to have a certain minimum period of contributions to the fund to qualify for benefits. Most unemployed 16 and 17 year olds would not receive benefits under this system because their period of contribution would not be sufficient.

The supplementary benefits scheme provides income support for, among others, those aged 16 and over who are unemployed and are unable to support themselves. It is financed from general revenue. Details are outlined in the attachment together with information on special measures available to assist the young unemployed.

The Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) was established in 1978. Most participants are provided with work experience while some attend work preparation courses. YOP provides an alternative means to further education through which young people can gain a step up into the labour market. The programme aims to enhance the skills and personal development of unemployed young people and to compensate for any deficiencies in their education by offering them remedial training in basic and social skills. The programme is an innovation, and represents the intervention of a new agency, the Manpower Services Commission, and new interests into an area of policy (the vocational preparation of young workers) which has formerly been dominated by a network of educationally defined interests.

Supplementary Benefits (SB) scheme

The SB scheme provides mean-tested cash benefits. It provides income to persons aged 16 or over who are not in full-time work and whose resources fall below certain officially established 'requirements'. Supplementary beneficiaries receive the difference between their resources and their requirements. The unemployed are treated in the same way as other claimants where their resources, including any unemployment benefit and any other income, fall below the officially established requirements. An unemployed person (below pension age) will normally be required to register for employment as a condition of receiving the allowance if he or she is able to work. Unlike other beneficiaries, however, the unemployed are not eligible for the (higher) long-term rate after receiving benefit continuously for one year.

School-leavers

As from November 1980 the entitlement of school leavers (aged between 16 and 19) to supplementary benefits will be deferred until the end of the holiday following their last term at school (prior to November 1980 school leavers could claim SB on leaving school, or reaching age

16 if that was later). Their parents' entitlement to child benefit and increases for dependants in supplementary benefit and other social security benefits will be extended correspondingly. Young people who live apart from their parents will not have their benefit entitlement deferred.

Special measures

Work experience program

Objective: To provide unemployed young people under 19 with an introduction to working life and career possibilities.

Provisions: Participating employing organisations provide facilities to enable young people to learn about different types of work at first hand. Day release for further education or other training is incorporated into the work experience. Schemes last for at least six months and the young people involved are paid a maintenance allowance of 18 pounds per week (higher than unemployment or supplementary benefit).

Community Industry Scheme

Objective: To prepare unemployed young people for regular employment in as short a time as practicable. Special emphasis is placed on those who are personally and socially disadvantaged.

Provisions: The scheme provides paid employment to young people aged 16-19. They work under the supervision of a skilled tradesman on work projects of social value, especially community work which would not otherwise be done. They are released for further education courses where appropriate.

Strengthening the Careers Service

Objective: To enable the Careers Service to play a greater role in the promotion of special employment measures for young people.

Provisions: The scheme provides additional resources to enable the Careers Service to canvass employers for additional job opportunities; to conduct placement interviews with unemployed young people; advise employers about special measures etc.

Employment induction courses

Objective: Courses designed to improve clients' employability by helping them assess the type of work they are most suited for.

Provisions: The courses are designed to lead unemployed young people into employment, vocational training, further education or work experience. Clients attending the courses will receive a flat rate allowance.

Counter-cyclical support for training with industry

Objective: To help maintain the level of apprentice and other forms of long-term training undertaken by industry.

Provision: Three main forms of assistance are provided:

- **Premium grants** —per capita grants, representing a substantial contribution to first-year training costs are offered to employers to recruit young people for apprenticeships and other training in excess of a 'normal' level of intake.
- **Training awards:** per capita payments covering the full cost of initial apprentice training, plus a weekly allowance to the trainee.
- **'Sandwich' (bridging) course grants:** Per capita weekly payments to employers who make good a shortfall in opportunities for college-based 'sandwich' course students to obtain industrial experience.

Short industrial courses

Objective: To develop skills necessary for employment at a semi-skilled level.

Provisions: These courses form the bulk of the training provided by the Training Services Agency for young people under 19, who are unemployed with little prospect of early employment. On average the courses last for 10 to 13 weeks.

United States

Income maintenance for the unemployed in the United States is provided through a compulsory unemployment insurance system operated jointly by the States and the Federal government

and financed by a Federal payroll tax levied on employers. The Federal law contains some standard requirements for State unemployment insurance laws and State laws specify the terms and conditions under which benefits are paid. Benefits are earnings related and the rate of payment varies between States.

A qualifying period of covered employment is required before benefits become payable. Consequently young unemployed people with little or no workforce experience would not normally be entitled to unemployment insurance payments. (It is estimated that less than 10 per cent of unemployed workers aged 15 to 17 years apply for benefits.) Neither would they qualify for Federal-State public assistance programmes, which are directed primarily at families.

Often the only aid available to the unemployed who do not qualify for unemployment insurance or public assistance is general assistance or general relief which is paid by the individual States either in cash or in kind. However, not all States have these provisions and where it is provided the rates are often quite low.

It would appear that the principal forms of assistance to the young unemployed in the United States are employment and education measures rather than income maintenance or poverty alleviation.

Employment and Training Act (CETA) of 1973

Comprehensive manpower services

Objective: To provide a range of employment development services for unemployed and under-employed persons. Both youths and adults are eligible.

Provisions: Subsidised temporary work experience, primarily in public and non-profit organisations, is provided to youths. State and local governments administer the program under broad Federal guidelines. Enrollees receive allowances during training. Persons under 25 constitute about sixty per cent of enrolment.

Public Service employment

Objective: To reduce unemployment by providing transitional public service jobs for unemployed workers.

Provisions: In one part of the program jobs are oriented towards the disadvantaged unemployed and are intended to provide job experience for persons with unemployment problems.

Job Corps

Objective: To train severely disadvantaged persons between ages 16-21 who are out of school and unemployed, and place them in gainful employment.

Provisions: The Job Corps provide remedial education, vocational training and social rehabilitation in residential training centres. These centres provide remedial education with job training.

Summer program for economically disadvantaged youths

Objective: To provide employment and other related services to economically disadvantaged youths 14 to 21 during the summer months.

Provisions: Placement for youth in community service organisations, private non-profit agencies etc. The program also provides an introduction to the 'world of work', some training, and income to help the enrollees return to school.

National young adult conservation corps

Objective: To provide work experience for youths, particularly from high unemployment areas, by providing them with outdoor jobs in work camps.

Provisions: For unemployed youths 16-23, with preference to youths from high unemployment areas.

APPENDIX 5

LIST OF WITNESSES

- Abraham, Mr A., Assistant Secretary, Youth Programs Branch, Commonwealth Department of Employment and Youth Affairs, Australian Capital Territory
- Appleyard, Mr G.P., Special Projects Officer, Treasury, Hobart, Tasmania
- Arnold, Mr M.G., Research Worker, Care Force, Ashfield, New South Wales
- Ashley, Mr J.A.B., North East Region Youth Housing Officer, Youth Accommodation Services, Victorian Youth Accommodation Coalition, Melbourne, Victoria
- Ashmore, Mr R., Chairman, Darwin Community Youth Support Scheme, Darwin, Northern Territory
- Bail, Ms M., Consultant, Youth Accommodation Community Liaison Bureau, Department of Youth and Community Services, Sydney, New South Wales
- Baitieri, Mr T., Resident Welfare Officer, DIGS — Dignity, Integrity, Growth and Security, Stanmore, New South Wales
- Barber, Mr J.P., Member of Management Committee, Youth Refuge Association, North Parramatta, New South Wales
- Barrett, Mr G., Member, Youth Accommodation Services North Eastern Region Committee, Preston, Victoria
- Bath, Mr R.R., Chairman, Committee of Management, Little Para House Association Incorporated, Salisbury, South Australia
- Bell, Mr N.R., Shadow Spokesman on Community Development, for the Australian Labor Party, Lands and Housing, Alice Springs, Northern Territory
- Benham, Mrs L.D., Member, Management Committee, Youth Needs Group, Outer Eastern Region, Ringwood, Victoria
- Berghan, Ms E.K., CYSS Project Officer, Sunshine Coast Professional Welfare Workers Committee, Maroochydore, Queensland
- Bethune, Dr G.C., Manager, Corporate Development, South Australian Housing Trust, Adelaide, South Australia
- Bisset, Mr W.T.H., Member, Youth Needs Group, Outer Eastern Region, Ringwood, Victoria, and Representative of Supportive Housing Accommodation organisation
- Black, Mr G.J., Administrator, Emergency Housing Office, South Australian Housing Trust, Adelaide, South Australia
- Bolas, Ms K., Part-time Co-ordinator, Canberra Youth Refuge, Australian Capital Territory
- Booker, Mr R.W., Superintendent, Social Service Department, Presbyterian Church in New South Wales, Sydney, New South Wales
- Bowden, Ms L., Social Work Student, Young People's Refuge, Lilyfield, New South Wales
- Bowman, Ms M.V., Youth Worker, Aquarius Youth Service, Darlinghurst, New South Wales
- Boyer, Ms K.C., Policy Adviser, Premier's Department, Hobart, Tasmania
- Campbell-Smith, Mrs M., Launceston, Tasmania
- Cargill, Mr J., Secretary, Central Gippsland Emergency Youth Accommodation Co-operative, Moe, Victoria
- Carmody, Ms S.M., Worker for the Youth Accommodation Coalition of Western Australia, Perth, Western Australia
- Carter, Ms E., Staff Development Officer, Aboriginal Congress, Alice Springs, Northern Territory
- Chappell, Mr C., Executive Officer, Tasmanian Council of Social Service, Hobart, Tasmania

Clancy, Mr R., Co-ordinator, OPAL Youth Care Project, Brisbane, Queensland

Clark, Mrs J.E., President, Parents Anonymous, Melbourne, Victoria

Clark, Ms R., worker and collective member, Annie Kenney Young Women's Refuge, North Hobart, Tasmania

Clarke, Mr R.C., Company Secretary, Aboriginal Hostels Ltd., Australian Capital Territory

Coates, Mr J.R., Farrer, Australian Capital Territory

Coleman, Mrs M.Y., Director, Office of Child Care, Department of Social Security, Australian Capital Territory

Colville, Rev. J.C., Executive Officer, Tasyouth (Research), Department of Social Welfare, Hobart, Tasmania, and Past Director, Colony, Hobart, Tasmania

Connell, Ms L.J., Northwestern Regional Housing Officer, Northwestern Regional Housing Committee, West Brunswick, Victoria

Cooke, Mr J.W., Member of the Executive, Victorian Youth Accommodation Coalition, and Co-ordinator, Iramoo Youth Refuge, Footscray, Victoria

Corser, Mr P., Member, Central Gippsland Emergency Youth Accommodation Co-operative, Moe, Victoria

Court, Ms A., Youth Worker, Darwin Youth Refuge, Darwin, Northern Territory

Crews, Mr W.D., Director of Crisis Centre at the Wayside Chapel, Potts Point, New South Wales

Cronin, Mrs C., Co-ordinator, Office of Youth Affairs, Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation, Melbourne, Victoria

Cross, Ms A., Committee of Management Member, Youth Emergency Shelter (Windsor), Lutwyche, Queensland

Darcy, Miss C., Project Officer, Malvern CYSS, Malvern, Victoria

Derrington, Mr A., Shelter (SA) Youth Housing Network, Adelaide, South Australia

Doherty, Ms C., Volunteer Worker and Management Committee representative, Canberra Youth Refuge, Australian Capital Territory

Duff, Mr D.R., Surrey Downs, South Australia

Dwight, Ms M.A., Co-ordinator, Kings Cross Youth Refuge Ltd., Potts Point, New South Wales

Eastwood, Ms S., Collective Member, Latrobe Valley Housing Action Group, Churchill, Victoria

Eliith, Mr N.H., Director, Youth Services, St Hilarys Church, Kew, and Committee Member, Inner Eastern Region, Youth Accommodation and Support Services Project, Burwood, Victoria

Emzin, Mr G.W., Regional Manager, Aboriginal Hostels Ltd., Fortitude Valley, Queensland

Falk, Ms C., Collective Member, Latrobe Valley Housing Action Group, Churchill, Victoria

Fallon, Ms B., Shelter (SA) Youth Housing Network, Adelaide, South Australia

Fatchen, Mr L.C., Churchill, Victoria

Fisher, Mr D.G., Shelter (SA) Youth Housing Network, Adelaide, South Australia

Fitzgibbon, Ms P., Member, Tasmanian Council of Churches, Hobart, Tasmania

Flood, Mr G.J., Co-ordinator, Youth Needs Group, Outer Eastern Region, Victoria

Foley, Mr M.B., Observer for Gateway, Colony 47, Hobart, Tasmania

Folland, Mr G.C., Blackwood, South Australia

Fopp, Mr R.J., Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Hartley College of Advanced Education, Magill, South Australia

Foster, Mrs V.E., Co-ordinator of the Shepherd of the Streets Program at the Wayside Chapel, Potts Point, New South Wales

Francis, Mr B.J., Collective Member, Latrobe Valley Housing Action Group, Churchill, Victoria

Fraser, Ms L., Community Services Consultant, Women's Refuges, Community Liaison Bureau, Department of Youth and Community Services, Sydney, New South Wales

Fuzzard, Ms R., Full-time Co-ordinator, Canberra Youth Refuge, Australian Capital Territory

Galbally, Ms R.L., Policy Officer, Victorian Council of Social Service, Collingwood, Victoria

Gartlan, Mrs P., Member, Pregnancy Support Service (Tasmania) Inc., Battery Point, Tasmania

Gibson, Mr A.W., Co-ordinator, Youth Emergency Shelter (Windsor), Lutwyche, Queensland

Gilbert, Mrs D.W., Representative, Latrobe Valley Housing Action Group, also Secretary, Morwell Youth Support Scheme and an officer of the Department of Community Welfare Services, Victoria

Gleed, Ms S., 'Open House' Adolescent Accommodation Service, Springwood, New South Wales

Goldsmith, Mr P.W., Chairman, North West Shelter Committee, Ulverstone, Tasmania

Gow, Ms H.M. Project Officer, Victorian Council of Social Service, Collingwood, Victoria

Grieve, Ms M.P., voluntary worker and collective member, Annie Keeney Young Women's Refuge, North Hobart, Tasmania

Griffiths, Rev. G.R., Member, Queensland Homeless Persons Council, Brisbane, Queensland

Griggs, Mr R.J., Chairperson, Eastern Suburbs Community Youth Association Ltd., and Community Youth Worker, Waverley Municipal Council, Bondi Junction, New South Wales

Hall, Mr J.D., First Assistant Director-General, Rehabilitation and Subsidies Division, Commonwealth Department of Social Security, Australian Capital Territory

Halley, Ms S., Senior Executive Officer, Community Liaison Bureau, Department of Youth and Community Services, Sydney, New South Wales

Hansen, Mr O.E., Aboriginal Family Welfare Liaison Officer, Centrecare Children's Cottages, Beverley, Western Australia

Harrington, Mr I.D., Regional Housing Officer, Housing Division, Glenorchy, Tasmania

Heap, Ms K.J., Administrative Director, Haymarket Foundation Clinic, East Sydney, New South Wales

Hedditch, Ms B., Vice-President, Council to Homeless Persons, Carlton, Victoria

Henley, Mr M. C., Shelter (SA) Youth Housing Network, Adelaide, South Australia

Herd, Ms L., Social Worker/Training Officer, The NSW Association of Child Caring Agencies, North Parramatta, New South Wales

Hogan, Mr K. J., Weetangera, Australian Capital Territory

Howard, Ms K., Youth Refuge Worker, Hope Street Shelter, West Brunswick, Victoria

Huddleston, Mr R., Research Officer, Aboriginal Hostels Ltd., Australian Capital Territory

Huey, Mr R., Assistant Secretary, General Branch, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Australian Capital Territory

Hughes, Ms A., Vice-President, Council of Social Service of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania

Hull, Mr D., Detached Youth Worker, Waverley Detached Youth Work Committee, Bondi Junction, New South Wales

Hurcomb, Mrs M., Associate Executive Director, Sydney City Mission, Sydney, New South Wales

Hutchinson, Mr N. B., Welfare Director, Jesus People Welfare Service Inc., Perth, Western Australia

Issell, Mr V. J. Youth Housing Officer, Inner Eastern Region, Youth Accommodation and Support Services Project, Burwood, Victoria

Kean, Mrs C. E., Youth Worker, Fusion Australia, Hornsby, New South Wales

Keating, Mr T. P., Co-ordinator, Youth Accommodation Services Program in Victoria, Department of Community Welfare Services, Melbourne, Victoria

Keefe, Ms S. D., Alderman, Townsville City Council and Chairperson, Townsville Welfare Council, Townsville, Queensland

Kemp, Mr B. G., Day Time Program Co-ordinator, McIntyre House Youth Shelter, Chigwell, Tasmania

Kirkegard, Ms S., Co-ordinator, Victorian Youth Accommodation Coalition, Melbourne, Victoria

Knill, Mr G. J., Secretary, Residential Child Care Advisory Committee, Department for Community Welfare, Adelaide, South Australia

Lambert, Mr I., Commanding Officer, The Salvation Army, Mordialloc, Victoria

Lamont, Rev. J. R., Minister, Alice Springs Uniting Church Parish, Alice Springs, Northern Territory

Large, Ms J. S., Youth Housing Officer for the Iramoo Youth Refuge, and Member of the Western Region Council for Social Development, Footscray, Victoria

Lee, Mr G. Y., Youth Development Worker for Refugees, Ethnic Communities Council of New South Wales, Sydney, New South Wales

Leonard, Mr B., General Manager, Estate Management and Teacher Housing Division, Ministry of Housing, Melbourne, Victoria

Levis, Mrs M. A., ex-Chairperson, State Homeless Persons Advisory Committee, Tasmania, and Chairperson, Homeless Youth Funding Committee, Taroona, Tasmania

Liddle, Mrs M., Senior Welfare Worker, Aboriginal Congress, Alice Springs, Northern Territory

Lincoln, Ms C. B., Collective Member, Latrobe Valley Housing Action Group, Churchill, Victoria

Linossier, Mr P. G. H., Director, Harrison House Youth Hostel of the Uniting Church, and Committee Member, Inner Eastern Region, Youth Accommodation and Support Services Project, Burwood, Victoria

Livock, Ms F. M., Placement Officer, Ace/Fusion, Murrumbena, Victoria

Lourey, Mr E., Acting Co-ordinator of Services, Community Liaison Bureau, Department of Youth and Community Services, Sydney, New South Wales

Lowenstern, Miss S. J., Senior Youth Worker, Maroochydore Apex Youth Service, Maroochydore, Queensland

Lynagh, Mr N., Secretary, Department of Community Development, Darwin, Northern Territory

McAllister, Mr D. C., Administrator, Centrecare Children's Cottages, Perth, Western Australia

McClimont, Lieutenant G., Salvation Army Representative, Council to Homeless Persons, Carlton, Victoria

McDermott, Mr J. J., Member of the Executive, Victorian Youth Accommodation Coalition, Melbourne, Victoria

McKenzie, Ms C. L., Executive Officer, Youth Refuge Association, North Parramatta, New South Wales

McKenzie, Ms R. A., Community Projects Consultant, Service to Youth Council Inc, South Australian Council of Social Services, Parkside, South Australia

McLoghlin, Mr S., Youth Worker, Box Hill City Council, Box Hill, Victoria

Macpherson, Mr W.N., Mitcham, South Australia

Maine, Mr K.A., Director, Department for Community Welfare, Perth, Western Australia

Martin, Mrs K.L., Social Worker, Rosemount Good Shepherd Services to Youth, Dulwich Hill, New South Wales

Mitchell, Ms M.L., Collective Member, Latrobe Valley Housing Action Group, Churchill, Victoria

Monie, Mr P.M., Manager, Special Services Branch, Department of Employment and Youth Affairs, Melbourne, Victoria

Montz, Mr J., Program Supervisor, Community Welfare Division, Department of Community Development, Darwin, Northern Territory

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