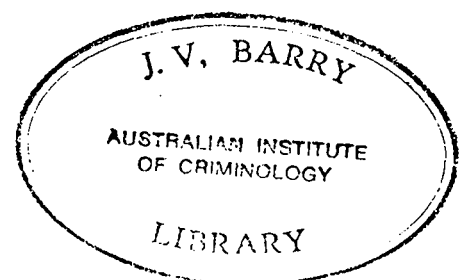


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PART A: RESEARCH PROJECT OVERVIEW

2. PROJECT OUTLINE

The overall research project, of which this report is an important part, is entitled 'Young People and the Criminal Economy'. This working title was chosen for two reasons: first, to highlight the role of crime in providing a livelihood for some young people (whether as victims of exploitation or as perpetrators in their own right); and second, to highlight the deficiencies of the present economic system and social policy in meeting the basic needs of the young in Australian society. The study does not see young people in exclusive 'victim' or 'offender' terms. Rather, fundamentally, it strives to locate young people within their wider community contexts, and to analyse their plights and their strengths in the light of their immediate social relationships and networks.

The study is premised upon the idea that changing economic circumstances, especially high rates and long durations of unemployment, will have a significant impact on the life options and lifestyles of many young Australians (see Senate Standing Committee, 1992). The specific aim of the project is to examine the relative importance of the informal economy in the lives of young people (e.g., petty crime through to employer exploitation of young people) from the point of view of economic, cultural and neighbourhood factors (e.g., financial survival, peer group pressures, local resources). The objectives of the project include to provide information on the nature of activity associated with the criminal economy, and to provide some indication of the extent and place of these kinds of activities in the lives of young people.

The theoretical impetus for the research arises out of previous work by the author in the areas of economic factors affecting youth offending, and the impact of low income on youth lifestyle and livelihood (White, 1989, 1990). This work provided a basic framework of analysis (e.g., a four-sector division of the economy), and initial speculations regarding the financial dilemmas, and choices, facing many young people in a period when previous social supports have been curtailed or removed altogether. The current project builds upon and will make reference to this and other contemporary Australian studies which examine the relationship between recession and criminal activity, particularly involving the young (Presdee, 1990; Wilson & Lincoln, 1992).

A key focus of the study is on the dynamics of the so-called 'informal' economy, and particularly the criminal economy. Very little has been written about illegal and criminal activities of this nature in the Australian context, although there has been some investigation in recent years in the United States and the United Kingdom (see Auld, Dorn & South, 1986; Henry, 1978; Mattera, 1985; Social Justice, 1988). Broad discussions have occurred regarding the impact of unemployment on young people (Polk & Tait, 1990; White, 1989; Senate Standing Committee, 1992), the difficulties experienced by young people in terms of incomes and living costs (Hartley, 1990; O'Connor, 1990; State Youth Affairs Councils and Networks, 1992), and the restructuring of work generally in modern society (Pahl, 1988; Horne, 1987; Sweet, 1987; Pixley, 1993). The question which this project addresses has to do with the nature of and changes in the relationship between different economic sectors (formal

and informal) and activities (legal and illegal) as a consequence of declining economic fortunes and job opportunities.

In practical terms, the basic contribution of the study is to clarify the different sorts of activities occurring as part of the 'illegal' and 'criminal' sectors of the economy. It attempts to identify those factors which lead to the victimisation of young people (e.g., shop assistants paid 'off the books' at a lower rate and receiving fewer occupational benefits or job security), and to the engagement of young people in various types of crime (e.g., from prostitution to organised stealing rings). In particular, it seeks to identify aspects of local community life which foster or preclude such types of activities. By identifying the causes and circumstances of such activities, it is hoped that preventive measures - of a social policy and criminal justice nature - can be designed which best suit the needs of young people in our community.

The project thus explores the social context within which young people are situated in terms of unemployment, neighbourhood resources, government policies and youth crime trends. Young people are analysed in relation to their position in and status as members of particular communities. 'Community' is here defined in both geographical terms (i.e., physical location and attributes of a local municipality) and social terms (i.e., income background, gender, ethnicity). The central questions raised in the study include:

- * **what are the types of 'income' to which young people have access?;**
- * **what are the formal and informal means by which young people augment or supplement their incomes and general material resources?; and**
- * **what are the nature and extent of crimes by and against young people (e.g., drug use, drug dealing, prostitution, theft, arson, car theft, employer scams)?**

The source material for the project consists of policy documents (e.g., level of youth benefits, social programmes); compilation of statistics (e.g., unemployment, income levels, housing, crime); descriptive profiles of selected neighbourhoods (e.g., histories, work opportunities, schools, public transport); interviews with community and youth workers; and interviews with young people from a wide variety of social backgrounds.

3. THE STUDY

There are four main components to the study. These include 'community profiles', interviews with youth and community workers, and interviews with two sets or categories of young people.

- a. Extended social, economic and crime profiles of selected Melbourne municipalities. These include information on social services, crime rates, population characteristics, and the physical lay-out and residential/business zones of the particular area. The targetted localities include Footscray, Dandenong, Knox, St.Kilda, Collingwood and Coburg - all of which have experienced significant economic and/or demographic changes in recent years, and which cover a number of different geographical points in the metropolitan area.

*** To date, the six community profiles have been completed and information collected in booklet form. Each community (via local council workers and other youth and community workers) has received copies of the relevant report.**

- b. Interviews with community and youth workers in each of these localities. In particular, it was hoped to discuss local economic and social factors affecting youth livelihood and youth lifestyles with workers in the non-government sector (e.g., welfare agencies, and community legal centres) and those working for local councils, state government and federal departments. The targetted workers, for example, include about 50 people from agencies such as the Brotherhood of St.Laurence, Salvation Army, Health and Community Services, and various legal and community development offices.

*** To date, 50 youth and community workers have been formally interviewed about service provision issues and changing social environments in their locality. The findings from these interviews constitute the main substance of the present report.**

- c. In-depth interviews with approximately 400 young people, between the ages of 14 and 17, and from a range of social and ethnic backgrounds. This translates into roughly 65-70 young people from each of the six local areas. Here it is hoped to gain information about the patterns of criminal and economic activity pertaining to specific groups of young people, in specific localities within the metropolitan area. Particular attention will be paid to examining the situation affecting young people from non-English speaking backgrounds and migrant young people, and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. Special arrangements (e.g., Vietnamese interviewer in Footscray, Aboriginal interviewer in Dandenong) will be organised for this purpose. In addition, equal numbers of young women and young men will be interviewed for the purposes of the study.

*** To date, contact has been made with youth and community workers as a means to gain access to the young people for the purposes of the study. The processes of the youth and community work interviews have been used as a 'pilot' for the subsequent youth interviews - in terms of appropriate community contacts, types of questions, clarification of issues and language, coding of interview schedules, transcription processes, and interviewer technique. A youth-specific pilot study involving around 10 young people has been delivered and is presently being analysed in order to assist in setting the framework for the larger study.**

- d. A second round of interviews with approximately 400 young people, between the ages of 18 and 22, is scheduled to commence in the first part of 1995. It is hoped to compare the life prospects of the two different age cohorts, and to analyse patterns of movement as young people move beyond the high school years.

For the purposes of the present report, interviews were carried out with 50 youth and community workers across the six local council areas previously identified. In each case the project was explained fully to the worker, and a consent form signed by the participants (see Appendix, section 10). Interviews were tape-recorded, were undertaken on a one-to-one basis, and ranged in length from half an hour to almost two hours. A standard interview schedule was used to guide each discussion, and to provide continuity in the information provision (see Appendix, section 11; for an example of the interviewing process, see Case Studies, Appendix, section 12). For the sake of confidentiality, anonymity and protection of geographical reputation, the names of community workers are not used, and identification of specific local areas has been omitted depending upon the type of information gained through the interviews. Copies of the overall findings will be conveyed to the participants via distribution of this report to each person and/or their agency as appropriate.

4. COMMUNITY PROFILES

Comprehensive 'Community Profiles' were prepared for each of the six local government areas. The separate reports include information on such things as demographic characteristics (e.g., ethnicity, age profile), economic indicators (e.g., employment, income, occupations), welfare and legal services (e.g., social security recipients, legal services), community services (e.g., number of schools and parks, public transport) and police statistics and crime prevention programmes (e.g., offences committed). Methodologically there were difficulties collating information given the different geographical boundaries used by different agencies for the purposes of data collection. Nevertheless, each report provides a reasonably accurate picture of community life and local resources in each particular area.

For present purposes we wish to convey selected background information on the communities, mainly to indicate the broad social and economic characteristics of the localities and neighbourhoods within which the youth and community workers undertake their work. We were requested by some youth and community workers to not present the information in a way which could perhaps in some way be seen as undermining the reputation of their local area. Hence, information has been provided on the different communities in a manner which ensures anonymity, while nevertheless providing a general sense of the dynamics and composition of the local areas.

An important aspect of the general study is exploring the relationship between ethnicity and community resources. Table 4.1 shows the percentage of the population in each community who were born overseas. The number of people born overseas in each area increased between 1986 and 1991, although these increases varied from a low of .3 per cent in Area 1 to 5.8 per cent in Area 3. Area 1 in fact has the greatest number of people born overseas, and Area 2 has the greatest number born in a non-English speaking country. Area 6 has the fewest of each. After 'Australia', Department of Social Security recipients are most likely to have been born in 'Europe' except in Area 4 and Area 2 where, after Australia, the recipients were mostly from 'Asia'. Area 5 has a significant number of recipients born in the Middle East.

Table 4.1

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BORN OVERSEAS/NON-ENGLISH
SPEAKING (NES) COUNTRY, BY AREA, 1991

	<u>% Born Overseas</u>	<u>% Born NES Country</u>
Area 1.	45.6	27
Area 2.	44.3	39.3
Area 3.	43.8	34.2
Area 4.	37.4	35.3
Area 5.	34.6	30.8
Area 6.	25.6	14

Unemployment is a major issue in each of the communities and as indicated in Table 4.2 has increased in each of the areas over the period 1986 to 1991.

Table 4.2

UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS, BY AREA, 1986 AND 1991

	<u>% Unemployed</u> <u>1986</u>	<u>% Unemployed</u> <u>1991</u>
Area 1.	12.4	17.0
Area 2.	7.5	12.7
Area 3.	5.0	11.0
Area 4.	9.3	11.7
Area 5.	4.2	8.3
Area 6.	2.9	6.4

Data was also collected on the number of people in each area receiving Newstart and Job Search Allowance payments. These data showed that men were at least twice as likely to be in receipt of unemployment payments than women in all areas. Recipients seemed to be either on benefits for a short time (1-13 weeks) or a very long time (more than 18 months). All areas saw big clusters of people at both ends of this spectrum. The age group of most of the recipients was 25-34, although this was nearly matched by the 21-24 year old age group in Area 5 and Area 6, and 18-20 year olds in Area 3 (according to statistics on Newstart recipients in 1992). Jobsearch statistics showed the same trend in that most recipients were 21-24, except for Area 3 where the significant age group was the 18-20 year olds. Unemployment increased everywhere between 1986 and 1991, but the rate of change is particularly acute in Area 3 where unemployment had been relatively low in 1986 but had doubled by 1991.

An indication of the annual household income of each area is provided in Table 4.3. As can be seen, with the exception of Area 6, each of the areas tends to have a proportionately lower household income average than the Melbourne statistical average.

Table 4.3

**PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS ,WITHIN SELECTED ANNUAL
INCOME CATEGORIES, BY AREA, 1991**

	Areas						Melbourne
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	Statistical Average
\$0-\$12,000	19.9%	18.1%	10.8%	15.4%	13.8%	8.7%	11.1%
\$12,001-\$30,000	32.4%	33.5%	30.1%	28.2%	32%	26.8%	26.5%
\$30,001-\$60,000	26.3%	24.5%	28.7%	27.6%	27.2%	44.7%	30.3%
\$60,001 plus	10.4%	6.6%	8%	13.4%	8.4%	19.8%	14.2%
Not Stated	11%	N/A	22.4%	15.4%	18.6%	N/A	17.8%

Given that the aim of the research was to explore the nature of illegal activity and the dimensions of the 'underground' economy as these affect young people, we were interested in existing patterns of official offending rates. Table 4.4 shows the extent and nature of offences committed in each region as recorded officially by the police. The data show that total major crime has decreased everywhere except Area 3 where it has increased significantly. Area 3 shows an increase in all offences except for car theft and licensing, whereas the other areas have some significant decreases.

A closer look at the data reveals some interesting and significant patterns. For example, the figures for burglary are down everywhere (except Area 3), but theft figures have increased everywhere. Fraud figures show a decline everywhere except Area 1 and Area 5, but drug offences figures have increased in all areas except Area 4. Prostitution figures show a reduction in all areas except Area 5 and Area 6. Good Order offences increased in Area 3 and Area 5 and decreased everywhere else. The most prevalent offence is **theft**, and it is the one most increasing, with **drug offences** running a close second.

Table 4.4

NUMBER OF SELECTED OFFENCES COMMITTED IN EACH AREA, 1990-1991 AND 1991-1992

Year	<u>Area 1</u>		<u>Area 2</u>		<u>Area 3</u>	
	1990-91	1991-92	1990-91	1991-2	1990-91	1991-92
Burglary	4578	4051	2520	2322	2166	2245
Theft	6104	6303	2929	3312	2504	2955
Fraud	1878	1996	877	511	594	852
Drug-Related	994	1181	626	838	393	567
Prostitution	542	531	2	1	0	0
Good Order	1318	1176	764	714	545	568

Year	<u>Area 4</u>		<u>Area 5</u>		<u>Area 6</u>	
	1990-91	1991-92	1990-91	1991-92	1990-91	1991-92
Burglary	7155	6081	2415	2157	1972	1732
Theft	13916	15418	2426	2507	2110	2297
Fraud	8886	5494	658	690	484	351
Drug-Related	1699	1608	434	600	305	444
Prostitution	58	22	2	3	1	2
Good Order	3839	2902	516	687	394	384

Generally, the community profiles reveal that significant proportions of the local populations are suffering great economic hardship. This is manifest in figures on unemployment and Department of Social Security payments, and average household income. Furthermore, the continued rise in figures relating to theft and drug offences appear to indicate a substantial element of subsistence level crime and the adoption of illegal substance use which is often associated with low income and job insecurity. How such trends and indicators impinge upon youth lifestyle and livelihood is a major concern of this research project.

PART B: YOUTH & COMMUNITY WORKER PERCEPTIONS

5. THE PARTICIPANTS

For the purposes of the study, 50 youth and community workers were interviewed. The sample included 9 workers in each of the local areas of Collingwood, Dandenong and Footscray, 8 workers in Coburg and Knox, and 7 workers in St.Kilda. The majority of the youth and community workers were located in agencies broadly defined as government (local, state, federal) institutions, with the remainder being in community-based non-government agencies.

Youth Service

A majority (56%) of the workers had spent less than 2 years as a worker in the organisation, although 26 per cent had been involved with their agency for 6 years or more. Most of the workers had had previous employment working with young people, thus indicating a high degree of experience overall in the provision of youth services.

The agencies tended to have a multi-dimensional focus with approximately half of the workers involved in both welfare provision, and education provision; about a third involved in areas such as employment, housing and recreation; a smaller number engaged in some type of health service; and relatively few workers were involved in legal service provision, street work and drop-in services.

Age

The age of the workers varied from 24 to 50 years. One-third of the workers were 29 years of age or younger; one-third between 30 and 37 years of age; and one-third between 38 and 50 years of age.

Nearly all of the youth and community workers were involved with young people 15 to 17 years of age. Most (70%) also dealt with children under the age of 15, and most (78%) with young people between 18 and 20 years of age. A smaller, but significant number (58%), of the workers dealt with young people over 20 years of age as well.

Ethnicity

The majority (approximately half) of the youth and community workers had at least one parent whose country of origin was Australia, with a sizeable number also having a father (18%) or mother (14%) born in the United Kingdom. The next largest category in terms of country of origin of mother (5%) and father (7%) was 'Other European' and which includes countries such as Greece and Italy. Only two workers had parents from 'South East Asia'.

Eighty per cent of the workers were themselves born in Australia, with a further 4 (8%) being born in the United Kingdom, and 3 (6%) in South East Asia.

In terms of the ethnicity of the young people with whom they worked, 66 per cent of the community workers indicated that they dealt with 'Anglo-Australian', 52 per cent with young people from 'South East Asian' backgrounds, 22 per cent 'Other Asian', 30

per cent 'Eastern European', and 42 per cent 'Other European'. Far fewer of the youth and community workers engaged in service provision involving 'African' (16%), 'Pacific' (8%), 'British Isles' (10%), and 'Koori' (8%) young people.

Sex

The respondents included 18 male youth and community workers and 32 female workers. In all but one of the areas (Area 1) the majority of community and youth workers interviewed were women. Most of the respondents worked with equal numbers of male and female young people, and of those who did not, there was an equivalent number who worked with mostly male and those who worked mostly with female young people.

6. YOUNG PEOPLE AND LOCAL ECONOMIC RESOURCES

In order to assess the nature of the 'underground' economy we were interested in exploring the existing income sources available to the young people and local employment opportunities. This section of the report describes the responses of the community and youth workers to a series of questions relating to primary and alternative income sources, the nature of local job opportunities and work-related experiences of the young people.

i. Primary Income Sources

Table 6.1 shows the perceptions of workers regarding the main sources of income for adults in the community. As indicated in the previous section there is a relatively high proportion of the population dependent upon social security benefits of various kinds. This is reflected in the extraordinarily high percentage of workers who cited 'income support' as a main source of adult income.

Please note that questions were designed so that respondents could give multiple responses to each question. The results in each table represent the frequency of each type of positive response to the question asked.

Table 6.1

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE MAIN SOURCES OF INCOME FOR ADULTS IN THE AREA

	<u>No. of responses to each category</u>	<u>% of responses</u>
Income Support	37	42
Work (formal)	32	36
Work (informal)	9	10
Illegal Activity	2	2
No Income	0	0
Other	4	5
Don't know	4	5
Total	88	100

Not surprisingly, given the above responses, the workers perceived the main source of income for young people as lying predominantly in four areas :income support', 'educational support', 'work' (formal and informal) and 'family' (see Table 6.2). Relatively few workers considered 'illegal activity' as a main source of income for young people.

Table 6.2

**YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE
MAIN SOURCES OF INCOME FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE AREA**

	<u>No. of responses to each category</u>	<u>% of responses</u>
Income Support	46	38
Educational Support	25	21
Family	13	11
Work (formal)	17	14
Work (informal)	9	8
Illegal activity	5	4
No Income	4	3
Other	1	1
Total	120	100

In addition to the options listed above, workers also said that some young people gain income support through such means as emergency relief systems, agency funds, trading in fashion items, basketball card dealing, begging and living together to pool incomes.

Worker Comments on Income Issues

F.

"A job is the answer to everything...for me it's very surprising how conservative young people are these days. They want to get a nine to five job because ultimately they want to get married and have kids and have a mortgage and a nice car and a mobile phone."

H.

"The flavour's changed just a little bit but what concerns me is at the moment the needs for housing and financial support, material support and all those sorts of things are still there, but the layers have increased. Now we've got kids coming in that because of their experiences have had severely disrupted schooling and are finding it hard to get through VCE and get on to further studies, we've got some kids getting into heavier crime, we've got some kids now getting so involved with drugs that they've just lost it and they don't know where to go".

"It's becoming more complex, I think, as we go."

ii. Local Job Opportunities

When asked about local job opportunities the workers indicated that the majority of paid work opportunities were of a part-time nature (see Table 6.3). The informal cash-in-hand labour market was perceived to be more extensive, and more readily available to young people, than full-time paid work.

Table 6.3

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE MAIN SOURCES OF PAID WORK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE AREA

	<u>No. of responses to each category</u>	<u>% of responses</u>
Full time	8	11
Part time	37	51
Informal (cash in hand)	15	21
Illegal Activity	1	1
None	4	5
Other	8	11
Total	73	100

By far, the businesses and employers perceived as most likely to employ young people were in the 'service industry' and 'retail industry' (see Table 6.4). Another important source of paid work was the 'industry/manufacturing' area. As will be seen, the specific businesses most inclined to employ young people in the formal labour market are associated with various informal work arrangements as well.

Table 6.4

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE TYPES OF BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYERS INVOLVED IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

	<u>No. of responses to each category</u>	<u>% of responses</u>
Service Industry	32	33
Industry / Manufacturing	16	17
Retail Industry	22	23
Finance Industry	0	0
Clerical	4	4
Trade	6	6
Gov't Programs	5	5
Other	12	12
Total	97	100

Worker Comments on Employment Opportunities

B.

"We deal with young people who are long-term unemployed and sometimes it's difficult to even get them to apply for a job because they've had so many knockbacks and they've got no self confidence

and no self value, and they just don't want to go through it again to fail. And I don't think that they're actually the ones who are the most liable to become the victims, mostly it's the ones who are desperate to get into a job because all their friends are working ... and they've got to do something otherwise they're not seen to be worthwhile."

G.

"Unemployment in the region from the Youth Access Centre figures were at about 34 - 35%. Speaking to Youth Access Centre workers and others and youth workers who work with young people put it as high as 60% -- it's amazing -- the focus on education and training of young people."

G.

"All the economic indicators were saying that [Area 3] almost are an underclass. A lot of people are living in an underclass structure and are competing with educated people and other factors."

H.

"Initially when people came into Australia there was work but you had engineers and architects and other qualified people not being able to practise so they were picking up factory fodder jobs, unskilled, semi-skilled work. But that was OK, they were willing to do that to a certain degree because they needed to stabilise their lives, support their family, get a house and all the rest of it. But as those factory jobs have gone even those people with previous skills and talents can't even get the simplest form of employment and that meant that for the young people, if they just found school too hard and they weren't coping once upon a time they would've dropped out, gone off to the factory and got a job -- that's blocked now, they can't do that."

K.

[re: occasional work] "Not much in the past couple of years. Most of the young people I'm working with now, they want ... what everyone else has got, and they want the opportunity to be who they want to be, and I think young people are really pissed off with ... the presentation out there that you'll be alright, and they get towards the end of their schooling and they realise the reality is they're not going to be alright, and they're not going to have a career that they choose, and they're going to have to do shitty jobs they probably don't want to do, and I think they're sick of it. ... They show this by becoming disinterested in looking for work, by giving up, by not worrying so much about presentation, by not trying ... I don't blame them."

M.

"The kids who are actually unemployed are not the ones who get the casual jobs ... they might want to but most of them would want to get something that's a bit better and that they see as more permanent because I don't think young people see check-out jobs and McDonalds jobs as permanent jobs, they only see them as casual jobs."

O.

"The manufacturing industry isn't picking up young people as it is employing more skilled workers due to the recession. It's the same in the retail industry, young people are eliminated through transport requirements. This affects the underachievers with low literacy, inarticulate and no self esteem."

L.

"I think it's more competitive. Employers can be more demanding in terms of training than they would have been before. ... Whereas say twenty years ago you might have left school after doing Year 11 or 10 and still go on to build your career in a firm or you could go and work in a bank or something like that. I think that because the general level of education is rising and school retention rates are so much higher, employers are demanding a greater level of training or schooling or education than there was before. So it just puts these people who don't fit into the school system, or who don't get anything out of the school system at quite a disadvantage."

iii. Work-Related Experiences

The importance attached to education, training and work experience in official government policy and employer expectations necessarily has an impact on the concrete experiences of young people in the labour market. Table 6.5 shows the workers' responses to a question regarding the type of work young people do in return for a training allowance or job search allowance. The general tendency is for such work to be either low level in terms of skill development, or to focus on the personal attributes of the young person, especially their appearance (rather than actual capacities for different kinds of work).

Table 6.5

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE TYPE OF WORK YOUNG PEOPLE DO FOR TRAINING ALLOWANCE/JOB SEARCH

	<u>No. of responses to each category</u>	<u>% of responses</u>
Administration work	13	23
Computer work	6	11
Presentation skills	10	18
Gardening/Outdoor work	6	11
Community work	7	12
Other	14	25
Total	56	100

The competition for limited job opportunities, combined with pressures to demonstrate some kind of previous experience when applying for what there is on offer, generates pressure on young people to gain job training however they can. According to the workers, there were significant instances of unpaid job training, mainly concentrated in the service industry (see Table 6.6). Other forms of unpaid job training included a number of community based organisations, including youth service agencies themselves, as well as commercial enterprises such as a travel agent and farm.

Table 6.6

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE PLACES IN WHICH YOUNG PEOPLE DO UNPAID JOB TRAINING

	<u>No. of responses to each category</u>	<u>% of responses</u>
Service Industry	9	24
industry / Manufacturing	3	8
Retail Industry	2	5
Finance Industry	1	3
Clerical Work	4	12
Trades	3	8
Family Business	2	5
Other	13	35
Total	37	100

There was evidence that a sizeable number of young people also perform unpaid work on an informal basis. As indicated in Table 6.7 the bulk of this kind of work was associated with domestic labour such as housecleaning, and with childcare. The majority of 'Other' responses involved instances where the young people would work in enterprises unpaid in order to get experience, and in return would receive movie passes, food vouchers, reduced accommodation charges and the like.

Table 6.7

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE TYPES OF UNPAID WORK YOUNG PEOPLE DO ON AN INFORMAL BASIS

	<u>No. of responses to each category</u>	<u>% of responses</u>
Child care	9	26
Domestic Labour	11	32
Commercial cleaning	1	3
Family Business	5	15
Other	8	24
Total	34	100

The workers were conscious of a number of different ways in which young people were exploited in the workplace (see Table 6.8). The underpayment of young people on an hourly basis, and the number of hours worked in total (many of which were unpaid), were problems which especially stood out. In addition, the community and youth workers were aware of instances where no WorkCover had been provided, where young people were forced to carry huge responsibilities in the workplace, where employers used the young person only as long as a wage subsidy was available and then sacked them, and where young women in particular were subjected to sexual assault.

Table 6.8

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF FORMS OF YOUTH EXPLOITATION IN THE WORKPLACE

	<u>No. of responses to each category</u>	<u>% of responses</u>
Hours worked	24	29
Under paid	34	41
Unpaid	5	6
Harassment	3	4
Early / Unfair Dismissal	12	14
Other	5	6
Total	83	100

As indicated in Table 6.9, the biggest industry area where young people were perceived to be exploited by employers was the 'service industry'.

Table 6.9

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE TYPES OF WORKPLACE IN WHICH YOUTH ARE EXPLOITED

	<u>No. of responses to each category</u>	<u>% of responses</u>
Service Industry	24	40
industry / Manufacturing	8	14
Retail Industry	11	18
Finance Industry	1	2
Clerical Work	1	2
Trades	4	7
Family Business	4	7
Other	6	10
Total	59	100

Worker Comments on Exploitation in the Workplace

F.

"They [employers] are aware that the market out there is ... they can take their pick from the market so they have no obligation to the people that they're employing because if they don't work out there's ten thousand more that are going to come into their spot, so 'like it or lump it' really, and yeah it's exploiting the economic situation as it is, the labour market as it is."

A.

"Young people are open to exploitation because jobs are so few and far between."

"All young people are very aware that their jobs are often of a very unstable nature and it's better to have one that stinks than to not have anything at all."

K.

"I think businessmen are out there to exploit every person they possibly can, and make as many dollars as they can, and I think if young people are in the market to be exploited, then they'll do that." [re: unpaid job training]

K.

"Some employers would keep people on, but most of the employers - especially the Big Mackers and people like that - just rip the young people off. I suppose some young people would say, though, that even that amount of experience is better than nothing. So some young people would agree to be exploited to get the experience, and I think it stinks, I don't think it's the answer."

L.

"I think that often young people in circumstances - like say they're working in a business like a small restaurant or something like that, they can be in quite powerless positions 'cause they depend on the income, so they'll perhaps feel like they have to accept a low grade level of sexual harassment ... that relies on the fact that the employer has the power over the employee."

N.

"Young people need job descriptions as they end up doing shit work like making coffee etc and then there is no job at the end." [- work for training allowances]

T.

"If I object there is 100 other people who will take the job. I need the money." [reasons given for accepting 8-5 shift without break]

Q.

"Young people are very vulnerable as they don't have the skills, the information.....they haven't been there long enough to know that it's unacceptable to be paid under-award wages and (they're) very vulnerable until they find someone in that industry who says, 'you are only been paid \$5 per hour, we're been paid \$10 per hour, something is amiss.'"

When asked about the contact which young people had with unions, particularly in the light of widespread evidence of various kinds of workplace exploitation, the majority of the youth and community workers said that young people had had no contact with a union. As we shall see, the cash-in-hand economy is an important source of alternative income for many young people. However, the idea of protecting young people's industrial rights via a union may come into conflict with their immediate perceived

income needs. This is captured in the following observation made by one of the workers:

I.

"I think it's a vicious cycle, if unions were to campaign for instance to stop cash-in-hand for young people, a lot of young kids would lose their work, similarly with the fast food chains, if things were tightened up there and conditions and all improved it would also reduce the employment options for young people."

iv. Alternative Income Sources

The two largest sources of supplementary income available to young people were seen to be work on an informal basis, or cash-in-hand work, and activity of an illegal nature (see Table 6.10). The majority of cash-in-hand work occurred in the service industry with the retail industry being the second largest employer. Other types of cash-in-hand work included such things as piece work done at home, family businesses, babysitting, hairdressing, door-to-door sales, mowing lawns, nannying and low level drug dealing. An indication of the nature of illegal activity in which the young people engaged is provided in Table 6.11.

Table 6.10

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE WAYS IN WHICH YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPLEMENT THEIR INCOME IF INADEQUATE

	<u>No. of responses to each category</u>	<u>% of responses</u>
Income Support	2	2
Other Support (vouchers etc)	4	5
Family	7	8
Work (formal)	5	6
Work (informal)	24	29
Illegal activity	27	33
Personal/private loan	4	5
No supplement	4	5
Other	6	7
Total	83	100

Worker Comments on Informal Cash-in-Hand Work

C.

"When the CES says to an employer 'we're not going to take your vacancy', or 'you're not going to have Jobstart', that just basically sends them underground ... and the market is still a buyer's market, and they can pick and choose..."

F.

"They're not able to count their work experience and have that part of their work history in their resume."

"Because they don't have any rights as employees they can be sacked and they've got no come back 'cause they didn't exist, so they can be exploited, they can be sacked, they can be paid under an award wage or under what is a reasonable wage, and in the long run they don't get any acknowledgment of what they've done in terms of work so there are a whole heap of draw backs."

I.

"I think cash-in-hand in one way is an exploitation anyway, because the reason it's cash-in-hand anyway is basically to benefit the employer and not the employee - yes it does take away tax so the kids get more money but I would say the employer probably saves a lot more money through his own tax and things in the cash-in-hand."

"Also cash-in-hand doesn't offer or enable them to come away with a reference and proof that they've actually had employment."

"By its very nature the fact that it's illegal it's sort of devaluing them anyway -- 'well you'll work for us but you'll work for us under the counter or out the back', and it's sort of degrading a little bit because what he's saying is that you're not a full employee."

I

"Your part time work becomes often more important than if you had that outside support so you can't afford to take a day off because if you lose that job you may -- that job might be the difference between surviving in your accommodation and being back on the streets."

"It takes on far more importance in that young person's life than a part time job should and it becomes a necessity."

M.

"Suits kids because they don't pay tax, but mainly suits employers because kids don't earn enough to pay tax anyway and then the employer doesn't have to do things required of him if it's illegal."

The types of illegal activity that were seen by community and youth workers as being most prevalent among young people are presented in Table 6.11. The biggest proportion of this activity lies in three main areas: theft, shopstealing, and drug dealing. It is important to note as well, that workers commented on the ways in which young people were drawn into, and/or directly victimised, by existing groups engaged in illegal activity of some sort.

Table 6.11
YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE TYPES OF ILLEGAL ACTIVITY IN WHICH YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGE

	<u>No. of responses to each category</u>	<u>% of responses</u>
Shoplifting / Sale of stolen shop goods	31	24%
Theft (other than shoplifting)	20	15%
Burglary	14	11%
Mugging	5	4%
Drug Dealing	35	26%
Drug Running	2	2%
Prostitution	11	9%
Other	11	9%
Total	129	100%

Worker Comments on Illegal Activity

M.

"We had the situation where these paedophiles who had places down in St. Kilda actually came to [Area 4] and picked up young people on the basis that they were offering them a job down at St. Kilda and then the young people went down there and it was a whole set-up like they really were offering them jobs, and then those kids were subjected to who knows what ... I see that as preying on young people's vulnerability in terms of income and stuff like that."

L.

"Some young people have to be very resourceful. They come from extremely large families ... and I think that at a young age they become integrated into an adult illegal economy which can be around drugs, or it can be - I would think gambling would be a very interesting thing to look at in this community."

M.

"I think that some of the drug stuff and thefts ... it becomes something they do because there's nothing else to do or that's a way to get attention, or, it becomes more than just money."

7. SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Young people are involved in a number of relationships and interact with a wide range of people and institutions at the local community level. We were interested in how the young people spent their time, and what kind of contact they had with various institutions such as schools, police services and leisure and recreation services. This section of the report describes the responses of the youth and community workers to questions relating to the nature of local services, schooling, the activities in which young people are engaged, youth identity, and the place of authority figures in the lives of the young.

i. Local Services

Community and youth worker feedback on the extent and quality of local services for young people, and the public generally, was mixed. The majority of workers felt that recreational facilities were somewhat inadequate or very inadequate.

On the positive side, a majority of workers thought that transport facilities in their local area were very adequate or somewhat adequate. A sizeable proportion of the workers also mentioned that young people do move readily in and out of the local area for employment purposes or job seeking. Likewise, the majority of workers said that young people move readily in and out of the area for recreational purposes.

School featured prominently in the discussions, and thus warrants a separate discussion.

ii. Education

In response to a general question on how young people perceive school, the workers were fairly evenly split. Of those who responded to this question (44 in total), almost 48 per cent said that young people were generally positive toward school. However, 52 per cent felt that the young people had a generally negative attitude toward school.

The workers commented on a wide variety of problems, experiences and possibilities relating to the role of the school in young people's lives.

Worker Comments on Education and Schooling

A.

"I think that all young people value education and even though they may have dropped out and aren't going anymore - even those young people who didn't see school as being terribly relevant - all give me the feeling that they would like to be at school learning and that school was relevant to them."

F.

"They're not prepared to do training because they want to get on and get a job with money and training doesn't pay so it's seen as stalling them to get them where they want to be."

H.

"Boring. Technical age has meant that instant gratification is a large part of young people's lives - school doesn't provide that so it's boring. ... Schools operate differently. There doesn't seem to be the same identity to a school. Once upon a time the school was very much in its local community, it was zoned so only kids in that area came into your school. Kids by and large had parents at home so there was some parent involvement at times. It was easy to get to school, sometimes teachers at that school lived in the area. Now zones are gone we get kids travelling here from Hoppers Crossing, Altona, Keilor, Brunswick, sometimes we've had them coming in from South Melbourne, Richmond,

Broadmeadows --- therefore I don't think kids are identifying as strongly as they used to with the school because it's not offering them other things to make them want to identify."

K.

"If you don't fit in, moreso today than ever before, they'll kick you out. If you are not an average student, are struggling or have many issues in your life, the school system gets really ... more dollars have been taken out of the special types of courses, and I think that stinks. The most disadvantaged are being disadvantaged yet again, and almost told like they're not valuable."

I.

"In a lot of ways it pays to be unemployed and on the dole than go back to school. Now I think that disparity needs to be improved."

"Until the first of January if you're on homeless Austudy you still do not get a rental subsidy which in effect means that if you go back to school, having been unemployed, then you're choosing to be a student rather than be unemployed, you're \$62 a fortnight less off."

I.

"If you're unemployed and do a job training program then you will get a travel allowance, you will get allowances that will cover the cost of your training -- if you're a homeless student, you don't get any assistance for school books."

"School also is seen far more in a social sense now, because young people aren't sort of fired up to come to school to learn, they come to school to meet their friends ... sometimes the school might be the only place they mix."

"There are kids here who come here because they need the Austudy to survive."

R.

"Certainly the effects have been incredible in the schools; overcrowding in classrooms, teachers really stressed out as far as them being able to deliver in the classrooms, which means we're getting young people dropping out not because they really wanted to but have a learning difficulty or just a slow learner or had some sort of literacy problem -- they just didn't get the support in the classroom and just weren't surviving and drop out. Another thing is more violence that we're getting through here. Parents of kids that've dropped out because they've been horribly bashed or something ---"

"There's divisions within the schools -- it may be that there's in one school yard three divisions and three different campuses amalgamated just not mixing, and ownership battles and then we've got schools around here that've just got incredible gender imbalance which is detrimental in the long term effect."

J.

"The expectation of the school is, and I believe this is right, that you mightn't be able to change kids' family environments, you mightn't be able to change their friendships, but the one thing you can do is educate them as a school, and that's the best favour you can do for them."

iii. Activities

The visibility of young people, and the public nature of their activities, is understandable when one considers that they spend most of their time outside of the parental home. Table 7.1 shows the places where workers perceive young people to hang out in the local area.

Table 7.1

**YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF WHERE
YOUNG PEOPLE HANG OUT IN THE AREA**

	<u>No. of responses to each category</u>	<u>% of responses</u>
Parks / Public Places	20	11
The Street	22	12
Shopping Centres	27	15
Hamburger / Food Outlets	9	6
Amusement Parlours	36	20
Youth Centres	8	4
Recreation / Sporting Facilities	19	10
Home	10	5
Friends' places	10	5
Other	22	12
Total	183	100

Two other locations of particular note which were mentioned under the category 'Other' were hanging around outside train stations, for example Flinders Street station in the heart of Melbourne's Central Business District, and spending time outside schools (even though they were either not attending or the school was not open).

Table 7.2 shows the main types of day-time activities engaged in by young people as perceived by the youth and community workers. To 'Hang out with friends' was seen as the major and most significant category, followed by going to school, and sleeping. In the 'Other' category, a number of workers said that the young people watch television and videos, play video games, play sport, or go to pool parlours. Several mentioned young people managing households, looking after children, shopping and performing various 'family functions'.

When asked a general question about activities differing by gender, two-thirds of the workers said that they did differ according to whether the young person was a male or a female.

Table 7.2

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE DO DURING THE DAY

	<u>No. of responses to each category</u>	<u>% of responses</u>
Work	2	1
School	22	16
Seek Employment (incl DSS & CES)	9	7
Training Programs	6	4
Substance use	13	9
Hang out with friends	35	26
Sleep	15	11
Find food / shelter	4	3
Illegal Activity	7	5
Other	24	18
Total	137	100

Table 7.3 shows worker perceptions regarding the night-time activities of the young people with whom they have contact. Again, 'hang out with friends' tops the list. In the 'Other' category, responses included such things as going to the Central Business District, night clubs and pubs, looking after kids, hanging out on the street and in parks, and going to movies (if they had the money).

Table 7.3

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE DO DURING THE NIGHT

	<u>No. of responses to each category</u>	<u>% of responses</u>
Night work	0	0
Substance use	11	13
Hang out with friends	30	33
Parties	9	10
Illegal Activity	8	9
Find food/ shelter	2	2
Attend Youth Centres / Youth Programs	12	13
Other	18	20
Total	90	100

Worker Comments on How Young People Use Their Time

C.

"They want sex and drugs. They want to lie in a park with a needle in their arm and not be hassled by the jacks. It's what they want". How can you change that? Can you? "Given the current economic climate, given the ever diminishing funding dollar for programmes and for resources, given the fact that young people I work with at 15 are a squillion times more cynical than any person of my age or older ... no. It's very hard to say, 'Oh, you've got to get off the drugs; you've got to go back to school, you've got to take more care with your personal hygiene', when their answer is, well, 'Why? I'm going to be dead by the time I'm twenty five and that's just the way life's going to be ... why should I go to school when there are no jobs, why should I go to TAFE when there are no jobs, I don't want to work anyway.'"

C.

"At night they do drugs, and it's not just dope. A lot of them aren't doing serious stuff like smack ... the big thing is prescription tranqu's [tranquillisers] - the rohies [rohypnol], the tryptanol - I mean no-one out here can afford to do any of the designer drugs, you never find acid out here or ecstasy. A big racket [is] going in prescription tranqu's at the moment, and they all go around in groups and get them. They use one Medicare card, and they'll go to fifteen different twenty-four hour service providers - 'I'm at school, I'm studying, I'm really stressed out' - and they get it. Rohies are five bucks a tablet I think they were going for- ... even twenty, it's a hundred bucks, not bad for fifteen minutes work at the doctors."

iv. Identity

A series of questions were asked with respect to how the young people define themselves in terms of their self-identity and self-worth. The responses varied enormously, and precluded any set pattern of group affiliation or identity formation. School, employment and physical appearance were the most frequently referred to ways in which young people defined themselves. A substantial number of workers (9 in total) also said that the young people with whom they worked had very little self-esteem, with no self-worth or sense of future. Identity in these cases appeared to be defined in strictly negative terms.

Specific questions were asked about the notion of 'gangs' and whether these kinds of groups existed in the local communities. Of the workers who responded to this issue (34), 2 said they did not know, while 59 per cent said there were gangs in the area, and 35 per cent said they were not. As indicated in the following comments, much discussion took place over the word 'gang' as a useful or meaningful term.

Worker Comments on Youth Identity (General)

D.

[paraphrase] It depends on your definition of a gang, and also the young people's objectives themselves. Some young people don't have a criminal record and just want the company of their peers. ... Sometimes a group of boys from [Area 4] will link up with a group from Richmond and together they'll fight a group in some other locality, say Footscray.

E.

"If they've dropped out of school they're in much more danger of getting into drugs and petty crime. That's where I think it gets into what some people call the gangs, because their self worth comes from their position in that sort of hierarchy ... and that's when you can get violence and all sorts of things."

E.

"We tend not to work with young people as gangs; we work with them as individuals, even though we're aware that there are certain individuals who are involved in this or that activity."

K. [response to idea of gangs in the area]

"A load of crap. If thirty adults get together is that a gang? If they're all drunk and they're making noise out on the street after being out at dinner, are they a gang? I mean if thirty young people get together and have a good time, that's a gang? 'Gang' to me means bad, and they're just kids having a good time, and they've got a right to have a good time, it's their shopping centre, too."

When asked whether or not activities differ by ethnicity, the majority of workers (92%) who answered this question (42 in total) said that this was indeed the case.

Worker Comments on Youth Identity (Ethnicity)

E.

"A lot of them [Vietnamese young people] have come to Australia as refugees and are caught between two cultures, not in the same way that migrant children are caught between two cultures, but caught between two cultures in the sense that they didn't actually spend their childhood in their own culture, they often spent them in camps, and so they've not actually grown up in Vietnam, they've not grown up in Australia, they've grown up in camps. And I see this as a very new and definite problem for workers because we don't know how to deal with these kids, and we need to investigate what their situation is, what their circumstances are, their expectations, aspirations, so that we can know how to deal with them ... because they operate differently than a lot of other kids do. And I think that the perception would be around [Area 4] that it's those young people who are mostly involved in criminal stuff."

D.

"Young people who were born here, or who arrive here when they (are) under ten or twelve, they pick up English very quickly. But young people who did not go to school, or who finished their school earlier when they (were) in Vietnam, and arrived here at the age sixteen or seventeen, ... they pick up English slowly. So language is one thing which prevents them getting a job."

H.

"About 80% of my time is still directed towards Vietnamese young people. They seem to still have the greatest needs - and I think partly because when I think about say the South Americans who came in here for a long time, say kids from the former Yugoslavia, they've had contact with European-style culture and if they're worried or upset and need something they tend to have this ability to come and demand it or sing out about it or make a noise that attracts your attention, but the Vietnamese young people in general have a lower profile, haven't got a cultural tradition of yelling out if they need something and basically show a brave face to the world, so if you're crumbling inside you don't show it."

S.

"They're not accepting of difference, these kids, but that doesn't mean they won't accept different nationalities as long as they're the same in that they're [Area 5] kids, that they look pretty much the same, that they're socio-economic background's the same."

O.

"the Turkish community is very restrictive of young girls as are Vietnamese... although not as much....there is a big issue of homelessness with Vietnamese young people- boys are running away from home and now girls too."- activities and restrictions

L.

"Cultures like the Arabic community have quite traditional roles, but even the Greek and Italian communities have traditional roles. It's just that the Greek and Italians are a cycle ahead of Arabic and Lebanese communities, so that the kids who fought the battles to live a different way from the traditional lifestyle are now becoming parents, whereas you've still got, with say the Lebanese community, the kids still fighting the battles to be maybe more in line with the values of this society, whatever they may be."

O.

"Families are leaning on kids to miss school to work, especially migrants.....young people are being used to support the family so that they can maintain them."

O.

" (exploitation) .. links with the Vietnamese community in particular, for example a Vietnamese boy was lent money by a relative in Sydney when he first arrived in Australia. He paid this back over seven years by doing two weeks free work in his uncle's Sydney restaurant, each year."

P.

" the decrease in the availability of factory work in a competitive labour market environment means it is difficult for young people from NESB to compete. The language barrier is a very real limitation."

v. Authority

The diverse activities and varying degrees of involvement in both formal and informal aspects of the economy mean that young people will invariably be in contact with a wide variety of 'authority' figures. Table 7.4 shows worker perceptions of the types of authorities who might restrict young people's activities. The police are the most frequently referred to authority figures, followed by the family. Commercial or private security guards are another significant category. Other sources of restrictive authority included youth workers, social security officials, transport officials and religious bodies.

Table 7.4

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE TYPES OF AUTHORITIES RESTRICTING YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES

	<u>No. of responses to each category</u>	<u>% of responses</u>
Family	23	27
Police	36	42
Shop owners	4	5
Teachers/school	4	5
Refuges	1	1
Ministry of Housing/Residential Security	2	2
Commercial Security	8	9
Other	8	9
Total	86	100

Worker Comments on Authority Figures

POLICE (re: why police may hold young people in contempt):

C.

"They have no political identity, they have no union identity, they have no identity as a group of people that have any value, any validity, any employability; they're seen as school kids or street thugs - there's no in between -and I think it's indicative of part of young people's experience today in a place like [Area 3]."

K.

"I always find them competitive, that I'm actually having to compete with Mr. Policeman to see who's smarter, who can play different word games, and I have to bite my tongue because I have the young people's interest to consider. So I find it certainly always difficult. They may be co-operative, but there's still a game behind it, the co-operation." [- Youth worker relationship with police]

Q.

"The security guards are in the flats between 8 pm and 4 am, so they have to stay in the house or get out of the flats. For young people that is an invasion of their privacy as the security will be on them in a minute if they are outside." [- restrictive authorities]

8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This report has described the findings of a survey of youth and community workers from six local council areas in Melbourne. The workers were asked a series of questions regarding their perceptions of the economic and social resources available to the young people with whom they are in contact, and the types of everyday activities in which the young people engage.

Significant findings include:

Local Economic Resources

- * most young people relied upon welfare benefits and educational allowances as their main source of income
- * the majority of paid work opportunities were of a part-time nature
- * the informal cash-in-hand labour market is more extensive and more readily available to young people than full-time paid work in the formal economy
- * the businesses and employers most likely to employ young people were in the service industry and retail industry
- * these industries are also the most likely to employ young people via informal work arrangements such as cash-in-hand
- * work performed for a training allowance tends to be low level in terms of skill development and/or to focus on the personal attributes of the young person, especially their appearance
- * there are significant instances of unpaid job training, and the performing of unpaid work on an informal basis (particularly associated with domestic labour)
- * the underpayment of young people on an hourly basis and the number of hours worked in total (many of which were unpaid) were identified as big problems for young people in the workplace
- * the biggest industry area where young people are exploited by employers is the service industry
- * the two largest sources of supplementary income for young people are work on an informal basis (cash-in-hand), and activity of an illegal nature
- * the major proportion of illegal activity was concentrated in three areas: theft, shopstealing, and drug dealing

Youth Activities

- * recreational facilities were inadequate, but transport facilities were adequate
- * the workers were evenly divided in terms of whether young people had positive or negative experiences of schooling
- * there are a large number and wide range of issues relating to schooling and education which affect young people's participation and experiences
- * young people tend to hang out in public places such as amusement parlours, shopping centres, the street and parks
- * the major and most significant activity for young people during the day, and at night, was to hang out with friends
- * the activities of young people during the day differ according to gender
- * issues of youth self-identity and self-worth are complex and can not be reduced to a set pattern of group affiliation or identity formation
- * the presence of 'gangs' was identified in the majority of areas, but the term itself is seen as highly contentious and problematic
- * youth activities differ according to ethnicity
- * the police and parents are authority figures most likely to restrict young people's activities

The intention of this report has been to map out the main issues relating to youth livelihood and youth opportunities as identified by youth and community workers active at the local neighbourhood level. The results indicate that the nature and extent of, and involvement in, the 'underground economy' is contingent upon:

- (i) the availability of paid work in the formal economy;
- (ii) the opportunities open for cash-in-hand paid work of a more informal nature;
- (iii) the pressures placed on young people to perform unpaid work (usually associated with domestic labour tasks, in the family household); and
- (iv) the kinds of skills, knowledge, social connections and material resources accessible to young people in the pursuit of illegal means to gain additional income

Conditions of employment or training in the formal economy often do not provide useful skills or positive workplace experiences. Underpayment, overwork and disregard for standard employment practices was characteristic of both the formal and informal work arrangements. Illegal workplace practices and the types of illegal activities in which young people are engaged both point to the social and economic disadvantage and vulnerability of young people.

The social identity and self-identity of young people is shaped by their lack of economic resources, their alienation from institutional processes associated with the labour market, schooling and recreation facilities, their presence in groups in public spaces such as shopping centres and malls, and the response of authority figures to their activities and visibility at the local neighbourhood level.

A number of issues arise from the findings of this report which warrant further research and interpretation. For example, young people appear to have a complex relationship to school. It can be perceived as irrelevant because education no longer guarantees paid work. Paradoxically, it can be regarded as especially important for young people who may previously have left school early (due to more generous work opportunities). For these young people, 'school' replaces work as a significant source of identity and connection.

Another issue requiring investigation is the difference in social reaction to illegal activity such as cash-in-hand work arrangements (and the extent to which this is open to public scrutiny or police intervention), and illegal activity such as theft or drug dealing (and how these are treated by public authorities).

Further to this, each form of activity requires careful and detailed analysis of the political and economic structures which provide the context for their occurrence. For example, we could examine the pressures on small businesses to compete on the market by adjusting wages, conditions, training and hiring practices in particular ways (e.g., the economic position and labour requirements of certain types of businesses). In a similar vein, it is important to gain a sense of how the exchange, distribution and consumption of illegal goods and services involving young people is actually organised (e.g., irregular or regular activity, individual or group involvement, survival or professionalised activity). We need to explain why it is that the illegal acts of young people are centred on low level theft, shop stealing and drug dealing.

More generally, work is needed to theorise the economic and social basis for young people's income-generating activities. For instance, important distinctions have to be made between activity which is of a 'supplementary' nature to an existing income, and that which is of a 'survival' character vis-a-vis attainment of the immediate means of life. Consideration of the location of young people as potential workers, as having variable family support economically and socially, and as potential or actual members of an 'underclass' layer in society, is central to such a discussion.

The nature of identity formation can be explored by reference to both activities which are self-oriented (e.g., substance use) and those which are other-oriented (e.g., vandalism). In addition, given the fact that much time is spent by young people in

'consumer spaces' (e.g., shopping centres) and specific commercial venues (e.g., amusement arcades), the relationship between income needs and sources, the construction of identity in terms of consumption activities, and the social regulation of youth presence and activity requires further elaboration.

The next phase of the research - which involves extensive interviews with young people themselves - will provide further empirical indicators of how young people are creating and sustaining particular lifestyles and identities in a period of profound economic and social changes.

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PART C: APPENDICES

10. INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Community and Youth Workers

The intention of this project is to interview young people (aged 15-17) and community workers about the sources of youth incomes, the day-to-day activities of young people and the manner in which they spend their time. The project is intended to map out the nature and boundaries of the formal economy (work for wages), the informal economy of illegal trade and work practices (for cash-in-hand), and the criminal economy based upon crimes by and against young people (e.g., drug dealing, theft, prostitution). The aim of the study is to identify causes and circumstances whereby young people engage in activity in the illegal or criminal sectors of the economy - the dilemmas they find themselves in with regard to gaining a reasonable income - and to consider alternative ways in which young people's needs could best be met at the community level.

I agree to be interviewed in connection with the University of Melbourne Criminology Department research into the nature of the relationship between young people and the criminal economy.

I understand that this interview is mainly concerned with the general activities and ways in which young people spend their time, money and energy in my particular geographical area. I will not be asked any questions which would breach the confidentiality of my professional relationship with the young people with whom I work or with whom I have a trust relationship.

I understand the nature of the study, and understand that the interview will be tape recorded. I understand that I may refuse to answer any question, and that the tape recorder may be turned off if I so request.

I understand that the tape/s will be kept in a safe place; that no-one except myself and the three people in charge of the study will have access to the tape/s; and that they will be destroyed within 12 months of the interview taking place.

I understand that real names will not be used on the tapes, and that no identifying material will be used in any reports.

I understand that I may withdraw from this research at any time, and may choose to withdraw any information previously supplied.

Signed

(participant)

I agree to respect the above conditions

Signed

(researcher)

11. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Community and Youth Workers

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Location and type of organisation
2. Main focus of work
3. Profile of the young people with whom you mainly work
4. Length of time as community/youth worker in the organisation and previous employment in the field
5. Country of origin: self and parents
6. Age

THE YOUTH ECONOMY

A. Resources

1. Main sources of paid work for young people in the area
2. Main sources of income for young people in the area
3. How might young people supplement their income should it prove to be inadequate
4. Incidences of informal cash-in-hand arrangements
5. Incidences of illegal activity
6. Incidences of work for non-monetary payments
7. Incidences of seasonal and occasional work by young people
8. Business types and employers involved in the employment of young people
9. Contact with unions in developing employment prospects for young people
10. Amount and type of work performed in the home particularly by young women
11. Economic shifts that has effected the employment prospects of young people in the area

12. Main source of income for adults in the community
13. Type of work done for 'training allowance' and/or job search
14. Incidences of unpaid 'job training'
15. Incidences of other forms of youth exploitation in the work place

B. Activity

1. Where do young people 'hang out' in the area
2. How adequate are recreation facilities for young people in the area
3. How adequate are transport facilities for young people in the area
4. Do young people move readily in and out of the area for employment and recreation
5. What do young people do with their time during the day and night
6. How do young people keep busy in the area
7. How do young people define themselves in terms of self-worth
8. Different activities available according to ethnicity and gender
9. How is school perceived by young people
10. Periods of intense activity by young people in terms of criminal acts/gangs
11. Extent of the restrictions on time and space available to young people by various forms of authority
12. Extent and nature of your contact with the police
13. Main role models for young people
14. Adequacy and accessibility of local services for young people in the area

12. CASE STUDIES

INTERVIEW 1 [AREA 4]

OUTLINE FOR ME THE ORGANISATION THAT YOU WORK FOR AND YOUR ROLE IN IT.

... Mostly what I do is counselling casework with young people aged between twelve and twenty-five. That involves working on housing issues, domestic violence issues; a whole range of issues really with young people individually... mainly [young people] presenting with difficulties associated with independence; with coming to terms with their independence or unemployment. The general sort of struggle issues that young people have at that time in their life.

YES, IS THERE A PARTICULAR ETHNIC...BACKGROUND -

...it's not really clear. I think it's very, very diverse actually. I've had Turkish people, Greek people, Vietnamese. It hasn't been outweighed by any one group at this stage, but I don't think that's sort of any indication in particular...

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A COMMUNITY WORKER, IN THIS AREA?

*Since February '94. Before that I was working in residential youth work. I worked in **** for six months, and before that I worked in [rural area] for seven years in that area...I also worked in the corrections side of things at **** for four years, and before that I worked with probation and parole kind of work in the western suburbs... [Country of origin: Australia; age: 43].*

FROM YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE WHAT WOULD BE THEIR MAIN SOURCES OF INCOME?

Young Homeless Allowance, Austudy,... Jobsearch...would mainly be what they've been on.

ANY WORKING?

There've been the odd kind of part-time job, the McDonalds job...but very few and far between. It's, the last over fifteen years, the amount of casual work that young people generally are employed in I've seen diminish by enormous amounts.

GIVEN THAT, AND ASSUMING THAT THE INCOME WAS INADEQUATE, HOW WOULD THEY, MIGHT THEY SUPPLEMENT THEIR INCOME?

One of the obvious ones is steal it. Stealing is an interesting one because I've been involved with a lot of kids who steal and quite often it isn't to supplement their income; that, to me, that would be the exception...It's either for fun - like stealing cars is like the joy riding situation - or, it's part of playing out their frustrations, so that...they find themselves in a situation where they're not being fulfilled so they go for a short-term kind of reward situation...it's not really a reward it's just like "Go and get something"...and that's driven by anger and low self-esteem.

HAVE YOU SEEN THAT MORE RECENTLY, OR IS THAT SOMETHING YOU'VE SEEN THE WHOLE TIME YOU'VE BEEN WORKING IN THIS FIELD?

I've seen it the whole time...it's fairly obvious that there isn't as many opportunities to get kids into some kind of employment because a lot of my work in the early days, around the early 80's was actually just go to employers and find them a job. And no one does that anymore, because basically they've been running up against brick walls for a long time.

WHAT ABOUT CASH-IN-HAND JOBS THAT YOUNG PEOPLE MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO? ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY CASES, THE TYPES OF BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYERS THAT WOULD DO THAT?

I'm just not aware of those things at the moment in this area. I'm sure they're there; I just haven't had the experience with young people doing it... I'd imagine there'd be, 'go and do this for me'...and there always has been that, and I've always thought the cash economy was the basis, not just for young people, but for anybody who... found themselves in a long-term unemployment situation that it was a mainstay for survival and fairly essential in a lot of ways.

ANY CASES THAT YOU'RE AWARE OF OF YOUNG PEOPLE THAT YOU'VE SPOKEN TO OF NON-MONETARY PAYMENTS, LIKE, MOVIE TICKETS OR FOOD VOUCHERS OR SOMETHING ELSE THAT THEY MIGHT GET IN EXCHANGE FOR DOING SOME WORK BUT NOT NECESSARILY MONETARY?

I imagine it happens. Food vouchers...I'm involved with finding access to those sort of things and generally they're on the basis that if people need it they get it, rather than have to work for it...but payment in kind is part of an informal existence that people get into - I'm sure that happens.

DO YOU THINK THAT EVEN AT CHRISTMAS TIME OR AT HOLIDAY TIME, IS THERE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO EARN MONEY?

...What I'd imagine would be that, that in the warmer months the hospitality industries are busier so there's more unskilled work involved in kitchen-hand work and all those sorts of things, so I imagine that would be happening....and of course Christmas time because of the extra demand for production...

WHAT SORT OF BUSINESS TYPES AND EMPLOYERS MIGHT YOU HAVE CONTACT WITH? YOU WERE SAYING BEFORE IT'S LIKE BELTING YOUR HEAD AGAINST A BRICK WALL TRYING TO GET YOUNG PEOPLE PLACED BUT, IF YOU MIGHT EMPLOY YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS AREA, THAT YOU MIGHT APPROACH?

*I'd be looking at local small businesses, because there aren't many large industries in this area any more. **** was a traditionally a big one, especially as an employer of girls who were working with textiles, and that's always been there. I'm not sure how active they still are...they've been a big employer of young people. One of the trades, the local trades, the professional ones, one of the few that are left I suppose.*

...WHAT SORT OF BUSINESSES HAVE CLOSED THAT YOU'VE NOTICED THAT WOULD'VE AFFECTED THE PROSPECTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S EMPLOYMENT?

Well probably the boot trade was the big one...that's basically what [Area 4] was here for in the first place, and the TAFE was where you learned how to make boots and shoes, but now that's almost gone, so there's been a big re-structuring.

WHAT SORT OF SMALL BUSINESSES IS THERE?

*Small businesses, you know really now the big change would be the number of ****
**** that are around in this area, both in the Vietnamese strip in **** Street, ****
Street. There are a lot more, I'm not sure how many local young people are
employed. I imagine in the Vietnamese community they would have their own way of
doing that... at **** Street I tend to believe that there would be university students
and people like that picking up a lot of those jobs, so I guess the pressure has fallen
on Skillshare and those sort of organisations to create employment opportunities.*

HAVE YOU HAD ANY CONTACT WITH UNIONS?... IT'S INTERESTING TO NOTE, WHY AREN'T THESE SORT OF THINGS HAPPENING NOW, LIKE, BRINGING ** INTO THE BUSINESSES AND **** TOGETHER. WOULD YOU HAVE ANY THOUGHTS ON THAT?**

I think it's really important. I tend to think that young people have been the forgotten part of the equation in all that...What's fairly well known I guess is that with the large restructure that we've had in the economy over the last twenty years in the manufacturing sector in particular, a large number of unskilled jobs disappeared and young people were the main losers in that and that's something that's never been addressed. The main way of addressing it, particularly with the Federal Government that we've had for the last ten years or whatever, has been to increase school retention rates, and to create more training to basically try to hold people in education longer. And by and large that's been effective in the sense that the ones that could stay in there - or even if they couldn't sometimes, and there are different consequences to that of course; teachers hate teaching kids that don't want to be there, that's a really big problem because it destabilises school culture, but at the same time I think that school cultures are changing too and kids know too, kids know that they need to stay longer.

DO THEY GENERALLY HAVE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS SCHOOL, THE ONES THAT YOU WORK WITH IN PARTICULAR?

No, I wouldn't say that...It's a hard one...by and large I think in [Area 4] the school does a really good job...it's it actually is one of the more active schools I've ever come across in terms of being socially supportive towards the kids; they feel they've failed if they lose anybody, that's the general attitude which is very different from a lot of schools, and I've dealt with quite a lot of schools... generally when kids start to become dysfunctional they tend to want to say it's somebody else's job now whereas it's really the opposite here, and I'm finding referrals for counselling are slow in coming because they tend to want to hang in there and that's very positive. It's peculiar to [Area 4] really, from my experience.

SO YOU'D SAY IN GENERAL SCHOOLS AREN'T HELD IN PARTICULARLY HIGH REGARD?...

I think you need to be more specific about how you talk about it. I think the kids that are finding that they can succeed, in some way, even in some small measure and get something out of it, would want to hang in and have a better attitude. Kids that are really struggling, they tend to want to blame the school of course... the kids that are more disadvantaged are the kids whose families have broken down and are finding they're not supported in general to go to school. If they haven't found themselves in the child protection system or in some sort of residential care or some sort of youth accommodation programme, even that doesn't necessarily mean school support, with significant relationships with people that want to back them up, it's very difficult for them.

IS LANGUAGE A PROBLEM, GRASPING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE?

It's a major issue in that language is seen as being part of...the school work. In the playground I think you'll find that they basically revert to their native tongue. I don't have a judgment to make about that, but it does make service delivery and developing all those programmes naturally more difficult because you've got to do more work on it.

IN TERMS OF YOUNG WOMEN AND THE ROLE THEY PLAY IN THE HOME, DO YOU SEE MANY YOUNG WOMEN FORCED TO PERFORM DOMESTIC CHORES, MORE, PERHAPS THEY'RE MORE RESTRICTED THAN ** ** FOR EXAMPLE, OR, HOW MUCH WORK DO THEY DO IN THE HOME?**

... to the point of working outside the family to earn money for the family, I don't see too many young women doing that, but I've had some young women who've come to me overworked doing Year Eleven and holding down a job in a chemist shop, that kind of thing.

TO HELP SUPPORT THEIR FAMILY?

Yes, it's a bit of a shift in one way in that they're not directly involved in domestic production, but they're still seen as sort of part of the mainstay, stability for the family.

WHAT ABOUT THE SOURCES OF INCOME FOR THE ADULTS IN THE COMMUNITY; FOR THE PARENTS OF THESE YOUNG PEOPLE? ARE THEY WORKING...?

...there's pretty high rates of unemployment in this area...

ARE ANY YOUNG PEOPLE THAT YOU'RE WORKING WITH ON THE TRAINING ALLOWANCE AND WORKING FOR THEIR TRAINING ALLOWANCE, LIKE THEIR JOBSEARCH, AND WHAT SORT OF WORK ARE THEY DOING?

I haven't come across, this is sort of relatively new actually, it's only a few weeks old... it just generally hasn't happened that I've come across [that].

ANY OTHER INSTANCES WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN EXPLOITED BY PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS OR EMPLOYERS THAT YOU'VE COME ACROSS, OR, THAT YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE SAID...

Not in recent times. Of course I have come across it in the time I've been in youth work, there's been a lot of talk about McDonalds employ people on sort of young person's wage and when they are old enough sack them. That's been fairly well known for a long time. I'm not sure what their current policy is. But I do think that...a lot of policy moves have moved in the same direction really, and they've sort of offered incentives for employers to actually do that.

EMPLOYED FOR A FEW MONTHS AND THEN...

*Out you go...and that's seen as being, well, we've given them something. They forget that young people actually want to belong somewhere. One of the main things about employment is that they actually are a part of the community and not just somebody who can be treated like a ****.*

ARE YOU SURPRISED AT THE LACK OF EMPLOYERS WHO ARE WILLING TO PUT ON THESE YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THAT PERIOD OF TIME, THAT, THAT TRAINING CONSIDERING THEY GET SO HIGHLY SUBSIDISED?

It depends on the size of the organisation, how big the business actually is... if you're in a very small business like where you've only got three or four people working there, to spend the time actually training the person can be really hectic. That puts a lot of strain on people. But larger size businesses, it used to be part of employment culture to do that...And the old apprenticeship system had a lot to commend it. It was very tight, and it was very male oriented too I guess and I don't think young females were getting apprenticeships, they were getting unskilled jobs and they stayed that way. That sort of discriminatory part of the work force. But the apprenticeship system, and just looking back ...when there was relatively full employment, that's what young people were doing. And they got their skills along the way and generally got quite good skills.

IT SEEMS THAT THERE ARE A LOT OF FAMILY BUSINESSES THAT ARE RUN PARTICULARLY IN ** STREET AND DOWN ****STREET...ARE THE YOUNG PEOPLE EXPECTED TO WORK FOR THEIR FAMILIES, AND WOULD YOU CONSIDER THAT ALSO A FORM OF EXPLOITATION?**

Yeah it is. I think there's got a bit to do with family values, and you get into a difficult area here because you can be seen to be arch conservative when you start to talk about this kind of stuff, but, I think that families are undervalued enormously in their capacity to look after young people... Basically the structural problems that are affecting young people are also affecting their parents. I think that we do ourselves a disservice when we look at things in terms of sectors - actually I think that's part of the problem, that we've done that - we've kind of discriminated against groups, and helped to disconnect them from their social resources; employment is only one, work is a huge one, education and family, they're the three main sort of planks in anyone's existence. And families that I've worked with where they've been given the opportunity to have more say and learn more negotiation skills with their young people along the way, because culturally things have changed and young people are

more outspoken and families find that quite difficult now because they're not used to it...especially with different, people with different ethnic backgrounds have different family cultures as well. But even within Australian families that have been here for some generations there are huge differences in actually how families determine those kind of issues, like 'will you work?'...the families who have businesses really like to see themselves providing for their young people. You could think of that as being exploitative and in some cases it may well be. On the other hand, you could look at it the other way and think here's a young person working together with a really committed bunch of people who have other values besides business values that they're actually fulfilling by doing it...and getting very good skills in the commercial world as a result, and when they move on would find that they can work in a team really well...Wages is a different kind of story...if you're talking about the training wage these kids are getting a roof over their head, they're getting emotional support - it's a whole package...and with the kind of pressure that's going on in families, the school retention rates it puts on families, these are sort of fairly essential things that families actually generate. If it isn't their own business that generate a strategy to cope with the current stuff...then you'd have to say that if a family can succeed in doing that it's far preferable and the young person can still have a measure of independence and be able to develop...it's far preferable than that they be out on the street looking for services that by and large don't meet the need...Practically it can't happen...[when] families are under resourced as well, both emotionally and financial precisely because those things aren't acknowledged...the families are expected to provide more without a lot more being provided. I do think the Federal Government's gone some way towards, in recognition of it in terms of monetary stuff, but that isn't the ****. In working class families where the tradition has been that the young person left at 15 or 16, it's not just an untrue thing at all; it's a cultural expectation.

IN TERMS OF ACTIVITIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE, WHERE DO THEY HANG OUT IN THIS AREA?

...They hang out in the flats, under the flats; there's sort of a fairly large group of Vietnamese kids that hang out around there...They are seen as a threat.

WHAT SORT OF THINGS DO THEY DO?

I think they're into the general run of petty crime...Thefts, burgs, drugs, rock'n'roll.

(LAUGHTER) ANYWHERE ELSE THAT THEY LIKE TO HANG OUT?

I don't know the local spots too much because I don't do outreach work, not around here...but I would imagine some of the local pin-ball and pool halls... fish'n'chips shops that stay open late, there's always a group of young people out...over in **** there's a place opposite the flats that there were young people...

IS THERE ENOUGH RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND HERE, THINGS FOR THEM TO DO?

I think it's really difficult. Good things happen...there is the **** project and things like that, and ****, and they're pretty unique sort of things...Generally kids do that anyway. One group of Turkish people approached me the other day. They have this

*large Turkish soccer club - they only take Turkish kids - it's becoming larger and larger, and their problem is that because there's a large rate of unemployment amongst the parents and the kids aren't able to get odd jobs and all the rest of it the charge of membership is becoming almost impossible for a large section of the club...so it's becoming a crisis. And because so many of them want to identify with the club, they want to provide social activities as well. But finding funding for it is difficult, so they've asked me to find it, and I've been realistic and said "I'll do my best to talk to **** and whoever's around." But I would imagine that's an indication of the kind of pressure there is because they have to pay rent on wherever they practise, and there's competition for those spaces. So I guess there's a fair bit of pressure on facilities, it isn't like there's plenty and everyone can have something. It certainly isn't like that. And there's pressure on open space because we're in an inner suburban area.*

IS RECREATION BASED ON SPORT?...LIKE A LOT OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE IT SEEMS IN [AREA 4] ARE VERY SPORTS ORIENTED.

A lot of basketball...And music of course...fashion, the usual teenage preoccupations.

TRANSPORT FACILITIES, ARE THEY ADEQUATE FOR [AREA 4]?

I don't think you could really fault it, because it's part of the inner city and transport comes in like that so there's lots more in this area.

DO YOUNG PEOPLE IDENTIFY HEAVILY WITH BEING FROM [AREA 4]?

They do.

WOULD THAT BE A SOURCE OF CONTENTION FOR SOME YOUNG PEOPLE THOUGH?; LIKE WHEN THEY COME INTO CONTACT WITH PEOPLE FROM OTHER AREAS...

Like in gangs sort of sense?...I've always found young people territorial like that, and they love talking about it even if they don't exist, they imagine it...It's mostly young men; it's their kind of scene. The young women tend to identify with it more than participate in it, on the cutting edge I suppose.

SO IF THESE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE UNEMPLOYED, WHAT DO THEY DO WITH THEIR TIME DURING THE DAY AND AT NIGHT?

Well, the ones I see hanging around the school - they're the same group - they tend to play more sort of public basketball and hang out there. That seems to be one of the things they do. There aren't any sort of drop in centres or anything like that.

DO YOU THINK THAT'S SOMETHING THAT'S NEEDED?

*Drop in centres don't tend to work...you just wouldn't find you were servicing any more kids that were being serviced already because one group moves in and that's it they control it. It usually means a large group, a group of young men, to the exclusion of young women...this has been borne out by a number of drop-in-centres. The **** had one... before we amalgamated and got our services cut we had a drop-*

in type youth health service and that degenerated even to the point where there were older young men in their late twenties, early thirties who were still playing out those kind of territorial imperatives and really putting the programme to disadvantage.

HOW WOULD THEY DEFINE THEMSELVES IN TERMS OF SELF WORTH? DO THEY HAVE ANY?

It depends when you talk to them. Kids don't like to admit that they don't have self worth...they tend to put up a bit of a front...If they have been real skills they are really proud. Prowess in physical activity of any kind is...young men are particularly into it. Self image for young women is another issue really altogether; they have different priorities...their appearance...relationships, different set of things.

ARE THERE DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES THAT YOU'RE AWARE OF THAT ARE DIFFERENT IN TERMS OF ETHNICITY AND IN TERMS OF GENDER?

*There are some interesting things happening at the moment. There have been some young women's groups run by ****, a young women's club. I think that's been closed, because actually they experienced some of the sorts of things that I was talking about before about drop-in centres...that one group, and it was an ethnic group, that took over. So there are divisions along those sort of boundaries...****has large groups of Vietnamese kids and they tend to...stay in their groups whereas the Anglo Saxon kids tend to socialise in their groups, and language has a bit to do with it. At recreation time they don't tend to mix across much. I don't think there's a lot of tension in it, it doesn't seem to be an issue, it's just sort of gravitation in a way; people just tend to want to go to where the comfort zones are when they're in recreation times, not take social risks, and that's fair enough in a way.*

THE EXTENT OF THE RESTRICTIONS THAT ARE PLACED ON YOUNG WOMEN THAT MAY BE IN THE HOME AND FOR YOUNG MEN IN TERMS OF THEIR CONTACT WITH POLICE, ARE YOU AWARE OF THOSE SORTS OF THINGS?...

...above sixteen or seventeen I suppose there are varying degrees of independence that are allowed by parents and that's dependent on permanent culture as well. Young women, I imagine wouldn't get as much freedom as the young men get in that regard. I think it would be across the board in varying degrees regardless of background, and there are issues to do with safety as well involved in it, but parents are very aware of violence and things like that, they worry about their vulnerability in that sort of situation. And of course the young women get really angry about that for good reason, and women get angry about it anyway because even if they're older they can't just get out and go where they want to go.

WITH THE POLICE AND YOUNG MEN IN PARTICULAR, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE NATURE OF CONTACT BETWEEN THE TWO?

I don't have any direct evidence, I only have what I've heard. I've heard there's a bit to be learnt by the police in that regard - there've been incidences of police bashings and things like that...they tend to stick a lot of young policeman, police personnel into these areas to train them, and throw them in at the deep end.

WOULD YOU CONSIDER THAT TO BE ONE OF THE MAIN OBSTACLES THAT PEOPLE FACE IN THIS AREA - TRYING TO GET ALONG WITH THOSE IN AUTHORITY?

I think anywhere that you've got such a restriction on where people can go, because it is limited, where kids can go and be safe..., that there's going to be tension, because authority will be trying to regulate the small amount of resources that exist. So there will always be a sense of that in this kind of environment.

WHO WOULD BE THE MAIN ROLE MODELS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS AREA?

Each other...[there is]a major...peer culture... that's the lot of what being a young person is about... rejecting family models or at least putting them in a different place, and looking at the peers.

ARE LOCAL SERVICES LIKE HEALTH AND LEGAL **** ADEQUATE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE AREA, AND DO THEY ACCESS THEM?

*...Some of the local services have actually been developed because kids have ended up there anyway, like ****...They're likely to get into a lot less trouble down there; lot less pressure, it's a bit sheltered from all...the chaos that would be happening up everywhere else. It's a complex question because it's very hard to measure are we doing enough, and how do we know that we're not doing enough, now what are the actual consequences of not doing enough, those kind of things.*

END

INTERVIEW 2 [AREA 3]

*...I work with young people aged 11 to 25...the majority of the clients, the service histories that I have, come from a fairly marginalised background - they're what people call street kids. I access them in an outreach model... I work on Friday nights on the streets accessing young people, making appointments, getting them to come back here and stuff like that. The nature of outreach has changed over the last six months with the weather over winter..., so I do outreach in the schools - and that's what I'm concentrating on at the moment. People access me and my services by word-of-mouth more than anything else...mostly my work is one-on-one counselling... I do a lot of mediation between adolescents and their parents. I do some long-term stuff but most of it is short to medium diagnostics and then linking those people with other welfare agencies, whether it be housing or mediation or detox stuff... Here, I would be working with 95/5...young women to young men...simply because **** is seen as a gender specific organisation and it's not.*

SO HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING IN THIS ORGANISATION?

...August last year I started...Prior to that I ran my own service. I ran a survival support network for adult survivors of child sexual assault for nine years.

YOUR AGE?

I'm twenty-nine.

WHAT'S THE MAIN SOURCES OF WORK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS AREA? ARE THERE ANY?

No. Main sources of paid work in this area would be industrial... Full-time, you're looking at apprenticeships and stuff like that. A lot of kids go on to TAFE, but they're looking at linking in to an industrial base...you know vocational outcomes. I mean [Area 3] is a huge industrial setting...so they would be the greatest providers.

WHAT ABOUT THE RETAIL, I NOTICED IT'S EXPANDED A LOT?

*Not for young people, no. Some of the young people I work with may be employed somewhere like the supermarkets like check-out persons... you've got Woolies, Safeway, but if you look at most of the retail outlets they're staffed by people over the age of twenty-one...twenty, twenty-five, which is very, very **** **** for opportunities around for young people.*

WOULD THERE BE MANY CASES OF CASH-IN-HAND WORK?

Oh yes, I don't hear that much about that, because many people that I'm working with have an income through a benefit and supplement that in other less licit ways...But when I think of my less marginalised client group, baby sitting, cash-in-hand stuff, not a lot of it that I know of.

WHAT SORT OF ILLEGAL THINGS DO THEY GET UP TO TO SUPPLEMENT AN INCOME?

....pilfering, shoplifting - it's very expensive to be trendy these days. You look at the clothes that young people are wearing, you know the Homeboy look with the pants and the cross colour tops and the hats - very expensive. I don't know many street kids that can afford a \$250 cross colour...they nick it...from the shops... They often do the cash box. The poor box...I don't have anyone that I'm particularly working with who is currently up on charges of assault, although I have got people who have previously been up on that. I know a lot of...kids that I access on outreach who've got assault and robbery type situations in their background. Another big way of supplementing their income is prostitution. Quite a few young men that I know of solicit to make money; not a lot 'cause it's not good money fortunately.

MUCH DRUG DEALING GOING ON?

*Huge...I guess a lot of people I work with aren't actually dealing, they're using, so it's not actually a particularly good way of supplementing their income at all. A big thing on the streets at the moment is prescription tranquillisers - five bucks a ****, \$5 for a rohy [Rohypnol].*

WORKING NOT NECESSARILY FOR MONEY - YOU WERE SAYING THERE'S PEOPLE VOLUNTEERING - ARE THERE MANY YOUNG PEOPLE THAT YOU WORK WITH...

We have quite a few young people that volunteer here...we specifically take young people on here in this organisation with a vocational outcome in mind, so they might be our part-time receptionist here and they've got absolutely no experience whatsoever but they've decided they've left school and they want to be a secretary and we bring them in here. I mean we need their services as much as they require ours, and we give them on the job training.

IS THERE SEASONAL WORK AROUND?

*Not that I'm aware of. Not in [Area 3]. You might find it up in the next shire, into ****, you might get stuff in the orchards... I guess it's around but I certainly haven't heard - ...there's the market gardens and things like that down in ****, but I haven't heard of it being offered to anyone.*

WITH CONFLICT IN THE HOME, PARTICULARLY WITH YOUNG WOMEN, ARE THEY OFTEN EXPECTED TO DO UNREALISTIC AMOUNTS OF DOMESTIC LABOUR IN EXCHANGE FOR PERHAPS EVEN JUST BEING THERE? WHAT OTHER CONFLICTS ARE THERE?

That's a big conflict ...in my time at working here I've hundreds of young women who come in and go "Oh my mum's a bitch and she makes me do everything in the house"... A lot of the time you hear from young people that they are asked to do this that and the other thing, and look you never really know, I mean the problem with mediation is that you go out you speak to mum and you find that all mum has asked them to do it to keep their bedroom tidy, once a week to tidy up the kitchen and to do the bathroom on alternate weeks.

WHAT ETHNIC BACKGROUND ARE MOST OF YOUR CLIENT GROUP FROM, AS A BROAD CROSS SECTION?

Well [Area 3] has 129 ethnic communities within its borders or something. I certainly don't have a representative from each of those. It's very cyclical... I guess still the main focus here generally, I don't know why, is white Anglo Saxon, but I think that's because of the cultural nature of some of the communities; they just would not access a service like ours regardless. We had, earlier this year we had a big Croatian thing, everyone was working with Croatian people, and that we found very unusual when we talked about it amongst ourselves because it's very weird that women come outside, the Muslim Croatian enclave and access services like that.

SO SINCE YOU'VE BEEN WORKING HERE WHAT SORTS OF SHIFTS IN THE ECONOMY HAVE YOU SEEN, BUSINESSES OPENING AND CLOSING PRESUMABLY?

It's really bizarre because the turnover in retail premises, if you walk down the main street in [Area 3], it seems that every second shop is up for lease..I think most of them are going down the tubes, and at the same time you've got this huge big redevelopment right outside our window happening, and I mean they're going to increase the [shopping]centre by a million shops or something...

WILL THAT TRANSLATE INTO EMPLOYMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

I don't think so. What have you got moving in there? You've got your big places like Target and stuff so they will provide some employment for young people...and '147 speciality shops'...They're looking to access small business holders, and I certainly wouldn't imagine starting up in a new centre which I believe has very high rates of rent and lease hold, that they would be in a position to be employing anyone...

WHAT ABOUT FACTORIES THAT HAVE CLOSED OR PERHAPS EVEN OPENED THAT MAY HAVE AFFECTED THE EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

*****. I reckon 40% of people who walk through my door, their father or their mother or their older brother is currently out of work because of the **** closure... You've got your other sort of heavy dieseling machinery manufacturers - ...and they provide apprenticeships and stuff for young people, but again because of the nature of my particular client group employment isn't a really huge priority for them...*

IS THERE CASES WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ASKED TO DO A COUPLE OF DAYS WORK JUST TO SEE HOW THEY GO? THEY WON'T BE NECESSARILY PAID FOR IT

I had one young boy who was put on in the kitchen in a restaurant - cash-in-hand it was too,- and he was going to work there for six months and then when the guy that was working there as the apprentice chef finished up and move on he was going to go straight into the apprentice chef position. He worked there for close to four weeks, he got his first week's pay and then the guy was always putting him off ...and in the end he left and he had no legal recourse...because he hadn't signed any documents, he

*hadn't **** or nothing, and he'd actually dropped out of school to go into that position.*

WOULD YOU IMAGINE THAT HAPPENS QUITE OFTEN?

Oh all the time! All the time.

WHAT OTHER FORMS OF EXPLOITATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE YOU FOUND FROM EMPLOYERS?

*From employers...well, there's always the prostitution but I mean I don't know whether you'd call that exploitation by employers...I was working with a young woman,... and she was working in a retail store in [Area 3] and she got kicked out of home and we organised for her to move into the young people's refuge in ****, and when her employer found that out...sacked her, on the spot, for no given reason, and then re-employed her under the same terms that I was talking about before **** you come back for a couple of days next week to fill in for us and we'll see what happens. She never received payment, she never received termination payment...*

ARE YOU FINDING THAT YOUNG PEOPLE ARE UNAWARE OF THEIR RIGHTS AND JUST WILLING TO WORK?

***** **** are open for exploitation because jobs are so few and far between, but young people also know a lot about the system, I mean young people know what benefits they're entitled to... I guess all young people...are very aware that their jobs are often of a very unstable nature and it's better to have... a job, even if it stinks, than to not have anything at all... So they're aware of their options in terms of their employment benefits that are open to them or whatever it might be because they spend a lot of their time being on those employment benefits. And I mean you often hear when **** talk about unfair dismissals with people, it's like 'yeah but if I do that, does that mean that no one else will employ me, if they find out that I've had a claim for unfair dismissal who's going to employ me?...it's hard enough to get a job now anyway, I'm not going to shaft myself any further than I already am'...*

WHAT ABOUT THE ADULTS, THE PARENTS OF THESE YOUNG PEOPLE THAT YOU WORK WITH, WHAT SORTS OF JOBS DO THEY HAVE...DO THEY HAVE JOBS?

*It'd be fifty-fifty... Of the 50% of parents... that are currently unemployed, 50% would have become unemployed in the last two to three years...they're long-term unemployed and they became unemployed through large factory closures in their own regions...Of the other 50%, 50% of them have never been employed and have long-term behavioural **** ****, and the other 50% lost their job a couple of weeks ago and are pretty confident they're going to get something fairly soon. The 50% that are employed...80% of them would be in what would be termed blue collar jobs, and the other 20% would be...I have no clients whose parents are doctors, lawyers, private business, computer dweebs...a lot of the mums do **** and Amway, a lot of the dads work in large sort of factory based, industrial based services; a lot of cab drivers, bus drivers, that sort of stuff.*

SO WHERE DO YOUNG PEOPLE HANG OUT IN [AREA 3]?

*...when I first started doing outreach at the start of the year the big hang-outs were...down the station... from the time they all got off the buses if they were attending school till about five, five-thirty; then they were **** at the [shopping centre] and they'd hang out at the [shopping centre] in the food hall until they got kicked out, and that was usually up till nine o'clock at night; after nine o'clock they were back down the station or they were out at **** park. There's a place in [Area 3] which is a...coffee shop, a lot of them might hang out there getting a feed and a cup of coffee and playing some pool and playing some basketball and stuff, it's pretty good. Then all of this stuff happened...there are always police down the station directing traffic and doing stuff, ...everything's closed down at the [shopping centre], there's very little going on there. The Homies still hang out there... I heard for a while there they were actually all going in big groups into Myers and doing a lot of knocking off in there but I think Myers came down on that very heavily. Then McDonalds, there's probably about between fifty and sixty kids on a Friday night as a group hanging out at McDonalds...McDonalds certainly put an end to that very smartly... The latest I hear is that they're going in droves down to **** on the train on Friday night and spending the weekend coming back....And most of them are leaving [Area 3]... I always work out the number of contacts by the number of condoms I've handed out - and it'd be nothing to go through two or three hundred condoms in a night - now I'm hard pressed to find one young person in [Area 3]...*

SO THEY MOVE IN AND OUT OF [AREA 3] PRETTY READILY NOW?

Well it's a cyclic thing again too 'cause winter they will sort of quite literally go underground. A lot of them go into the city for winter, a lot of the street kids because they can access more accommodation options than they can out here. But as the weather gets better they'll come back, but it'll be interesting to see what happens this summer with all the changes in construction and stuff going on...

ARE THERE ENOUGH RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AROUND FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

Young people that I access don't want anything to do with recreational facilities, it's dicky, it's for dags... What do they want? They want sex and drugs. They want to lie in a park with a needle in their arm and not be hassled by the jacks, that's what they want.

HOW CAN YOU CHANGE THAT? CAN YOU?

Given the current economic climate; given the ever diminishing funding dollar for programmes and for resources; given the fact that young people I work with at fifteen are a squillion times more cynical than any person of my age or older - no. It's very hard to say "Oh you've got to get off the drugs", and "Oh you've got to go back to school", and "Oh you've got to like take more care with your personal hygiene", when their answer is "Why, I'm gonna be dead by the time I'm twenty-five and that's just the way that life's gonna be" - as I would say well I'm probably gonna be dead by the time I'm eighty - I mean they say, it's just as much finality as I deal with that. Why should I go to school when there are no jobs? Why should I go to TAFE when there are no jobs? I don't want to work anyway.

ARE TRANSPORT FACILITIES ADEQUATE?

Not bad, they're not bad. You've got your buses, you've got good trains - access on the trains to most points on the compass. And you can always steal a car.

SO WHAT DO THEY DO WITH THEMSELVES DURING THE DAY AND AT NIGHT?

*They steal things. So they don't need it they do it for the fun of it. They go rolling. They go specifically into Myers or into ****...they hang around the market and nick things from the market. And at night they do ****...and it's not just dope, and a lot of them aren't doing serious stuff like smack; there's a lot of speed around, huge quantities of speed around and the big thing is the prescription tranq's - the rohys [rohynols] the tryptanol... No one out here can afford to do any of the designer drugs; you never find acid out here or ecstasy of any of that here...[There's] a big whack of diet pills and prescription tranq's at the moment, and they all go around in groups and get them. There's one Medicare card might go to fifteen different twenty-four hour service providers...'I'm at school, I'm studying, I'm really stressed out' - and they get it. Rohys were selling...five bucks I think they were going for, and you get them in packs of eighty, a hundred in a script...even twenty, you know, it's a hundred bucks, not bad for fifteen minutes work at the doctors.*

SO DO THEY KEEP BUSY? ARE THEY ALWAYS BUSY OR ARE THEY BORED SHITLESS?

*They're bored shitless. They hang, do a lot of hanging; got the Homies outside the [shopping centre]. You've got your druggies doing the stuff up behind the old **** building... Doing it at the park, sitting around at The park getting stoned. A lot of them have managed to get themselves housing for winter, I mean there's lots of big drug parties going.*

DO THEY HAVE A SENSE OF SELF WORTH, SELF ESTEEM?

No, no.

DO THEY HAVE A SENSE OF FUTURE?

No.

[ARE THEY DOING] DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES ACCORDING TO THEIR GENDER - ARE THEY ALL DOING THE SAME SORTS OF THINGS ?...

The very entrenched street kids don't seem to have issues of gender specific stuff; they all band together and they do it. Homies: very male oriented sub-culture; Skegs: very male oriented sub-culture; I can't think of a female oriented youth sub-culture in [Area 3]...'cause we don't have a huge homosexual community, I mean maybe if it was in the city and there was a lesbian community, but there's certainly nothing like that that I'm aware of ...so I can't think of any specifically female stuff, and like I said the very entrenched ones - ...it's very egalitarian...I guess because survival is a very basic thing for them, basic survival transcends all of that other stuff.

HOW IS SCHOOL PERCEIVED, LIKE EDUCATION, IS IT A BIT OF A JOKE?

Waste of time.

WHAT ABOUT KIDS THAT ARE AT SCHOOL, DO THEY STILL THINK IT'S A WASTE OF TIME?

They're biding time. The majority of them that I work with are biding time till they're fifteen and they can leave, that's all they're doing.

WHAT DO THEY THINK THEY'RE GOING TO DO WHEN THEY LEAVE?

*Go on the dole. "I'm gonna go on the dole and I'm gonna go up the **** and they're gonna get me a house and I'm gonna live with all my mates in the house on the dole and do lots of drugs".*

A LOT OF CRAP IS IN THE PAPER ABOUT GANGS, IS THAT SORT OF STUFF JUSTIFIABLE DO YOU THINK?

It's not as bad as it used to be...it's divided into two fairly distinct things; you get youth specific gangs, which cross cultural boundaries - you might get a Koori guy, and Albanian guy, two white guys, two Vietnamese guys and they're all hanging out and the binding thing for them is that they're homeless or they're skegs or whatever, especially those American sub-cultures they're taking on and stuff like that; but you still get your classic Albanian gangs, Greek gangs, Turkish gangs, Italian gangs and there's a very definite hierarchy.

ARE THEY RESTRICTED IN TERMS OF THE SPACE THAT THEY'RE ALLOWED TO BE IN PUBLIC, LIKE ALWAYS CONSTANTLY TOLD TO MOVE ON?

Oh yes yes yes!

NOT JUST POLICE, BUT BY OTHER PEOPLE AS WELL?

Oh by the...what are they called, at the [shopping centre] because that's their sort of hang out, there...shop owners and security, yeah that's the word...and all they're doing is sitting there playing like really awful loud music.

SO WHERE WOULD THEY GO ONCE THEY'VE BEEN MOVED ON?

Most Homies are housed. You don't find homeless Homeboys. It's too expensive to be a Homey; they come from good Albanian families.

YOUNG WOMEN THAT YOU WORK WITH, ARE THEY RESTRICTED AS WELL, LIKE ARE THEY ALLOWED TO GO OUT AND DO THE THINGS THAT THEIR FRIENDS SEEM TO DO? I SUPPOSE IT'S DIFFERENT WITH YOUR KIND OF GROUP?

With a lot of the people in the Sri Lankan community I'm working with a lot of the problems arise because all of their friends are allowed to go out at night and it's a

very closed, well it's not a closed community it's a lot more open than some, but it's still very...traditional in its values - girls don't go out after dark, girls don't do this girls don't do that - and a lot of the conflict is "All my girlfriends go rollerskating on Saturday night and I'm not allowed to go". But you also get the people, the young women, by the time they've accessed a service like that are already living out of home and are homeless anyway, and they've been kicked out for whatever reason whether it's because they've left home because they can't cope with not going out when their friends **** or they've been repeatedly incestuously sexually abused. I mean you run the whole sort of gamut of experiences here. So a lot of them, by the time they come here... they're doing what they want anyway because they've left home.

CES AND DSS AND HEALTH SERVICES AND LEGAL SERVICES - ARE THEY ADEQUATE AND ACCESSIBLE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND HERE?

Most services for young people in [Area 3], yes are accessible, but no they're by no means adequate. What we're crying out for here is housing services, I mean there's a lot of stuff - there's youth specific services... there's a lot, but it's not enough... And emergency accommodation for young people.

JUST FINALLY WHAT'S THE NATURE OF YOUR CONTACT WITH THE POLICE?

It's pretty good. I don't have a very great, hugely open relationship with them; I probably know two or three people up there who I can call and know by name...

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COPS AND THE YOUNG PEOPLE?

They hate each other...you ask any young person, you go down and ask the Homies what they think about them - "Fuckin' jacks!" It's really not as bad as they make out but then again the young people aren't as bad....A group of young people seen standing on a corner for any more than five minutes the police are going to pull up and hassle. And now with the new name and address laws and stuff it'll be interesting to see what pans out.

DO YOU THINK IT'S CHANGED OR HAS, IT'S ALWAYS BEEN A CASE OF...

...there is certainly not that element of respectful fear that possibly my generation grew up with. There's no respect for police. And I believe there was a study done recently where they were talking to young women in this region and it was fairly much reported across the board that...what was it 98% of young women who'd been arrested had been sexually abused...

BY THE COPS?

By the cops...I don't know enough about the study, but I know that figure has been bantered around. And I think it's a fairly universal experience of young men who are picked...they do, as far as I can ascertain, and I'm not advocating on behalf of the police nor on behalf of the young people... - but it'd be an almost universal experience that they'd experience violence in a police station.

BUT GENERALLY DO YOU THINK THAT IT'S A MATTER OF THEM NOT UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER'S ROLES IN SOCIETY?

I have no idea why it is, I just think it's a lack of respect, I think it's another indicator, it's just something that's indicative of...young people's experience. They have no political identity, union identity, they have no identity as a group of people that have any value, any validity, any employability; they're seen as school kids or street thugs, there's no in between, and I think it's just indicative of part of young people's experience today in a place like [Area 3].

DO THEY HAVE ANY ROLE MODELS?

*I think the people who are taken on as role models are people like the American ****
****... These days they form their roles around music and all of that sort of thing... these role models are people that...are advocating violence and revolutionary change and I guess in America in black sub-cultures and stuff that may be appropriate, but for a white Anglo Saxon... lower class young boy in [Area 3] taking on those role models I find extremely frightening...because what those songs are advocating about isn't relevant to his life experience here.... there's a big danger when they take on those values... they're at a great risk of becoming very confused.*

END.