APPENDICES
# APPENDIX A

## WITNESSES TO THE INQUIRY

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<td>M. O'Neil</td>
<td>National Youth Coalition for Housing, Melbourne</td>
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<td>T. Smyth</td>
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<td>D. Annis-Brown</td>
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<td>V. Marquis</td>
<td>NSW Womens Co-ordination Unit (Girls in Care Project)</td>
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<td>J. Nicholaides</td>
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<td>N. Fabrier</td>
<td>Counsellor for Migrant Students, NSW Department of Education</td>
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<td>A. Wheldon</td>
<td>NSW Aboriginal Children's Service, Redfern</td>
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<td>Federation of Ethnic Community Care Associations</td>
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<td>J. Rome</td>
<td>Welfare Rights Centre</td>
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<td>M. O'Reagan</td>
<td>Brisbane Youth Service</td>
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<td>I. O’Connor</td>
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<td>North-West Boarding Inc.</td>
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<td>R. Kippax</td>
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<td>P. See</td>
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<td>J. Claude Boulenez</td>
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<td>G. Lougherey</td>
<td>Salvation Army Community Youth Outreach Service, Stones Corner</td>
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<td>J. Hunt</td>
<td>Hannah's House, Ipswich</td>
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<td>Extend-A-Family, Logan City</td>
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<td>P. Searle</td>
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<td>M. Wall</td>
<td>Bunji House, Gold Coast</td>
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<td>B. Enwright</td>
<td>Vital Youth Contacts, Garden City Christian Church</td>
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25.11.87 Lifeline Building Gold Coast
B. Adams
J. Wakely
Anonymous
J. Dowd
H. Polkinghome
P. Briant
G. King
G. Marsh
K. Hanavan
T. Boume
J. Blakey
B. Walker
M. Wall J. Warburton
Youth Affairs Contact Centre
Iota, Brisbane
Brisbane
Gold Coast Drug Council
Mirikai Drug Rehabilitation Centre
Blair Athol Hostel
Gold Coast Youth Service
Gold Coast Project for Homeless Youth
Harrison House
Lifeline, Gold Coast
Salvation Army Hostels, Southport
Bunji House
Bunji House
Cyprus Cottage Life Skills Centre

27.11.87 Four Seasons Motel, Cairns
D. Elliott
C. Morgan
G. King
G. Roberts & R. Passfield
T. Smith
C. Blank
D. De Busch
J. Trewern
S. Bayliss
L. Muller
Townsville Sharehouse
Youth Sector Training Project, Australian Social Welfare Union
Cairns Anglican Youth Services
North Queensland Youth Accommodation Coalition
Youth Care, Innisfail
Homeless youth
Yuddika Child Care Agency, Cairns
Womens Electoral Lobby, Cairns
Cairns Anglican Youth Services, St Margaret's House
Cairns Anglican Youth Services, St Margaret's House
Cairns Regional Community Council

9.12.87 Griffen Centre, Canberra City
C. Crowe
B. Feil
E. Lamb
M. Cockayne
M. Westhorpe
A. Williamson & H. Eastbum
M. Blowes
P. Wilson & R. Lincoln
J. Tomlinson & E. Lamb
Johnston J. Walker & I. Boyson
S. Mir
P. Dugdale
M. Anderson
D. Hatfield
L. Munday
J. Fryatt
B. Beaumont
ACT Youth Accommodation Group
Lasa Youth Centre
Havelock House Association
Anglican Parish Priest, Queanbeyan ACT
Workers with Youth Network Shortcuts Youth Information and Referral Service
Barnardos Australia
Australian Institute of Criminology
ACT Council for Social Service
National Shelter
Southside Youth Refuge
Welfare Rights and Legal Centre
ACT Health Authority
Rape Crisis Centre
Youth worker
Fair Share Coalition for Unemployed & Low Income Earners
Canberra
Teacher, Special Education

18.1.88 Princes Plaza Hotel, Perth
K. Dyson
J. Vitale
C. Tompkin
M. Rayner
J. Hopp
C. Keogh
P. Connors & P. Davies
I. Horrocks
H. Creed
M. Horsemann
M. Mack
S. Higham & S. Williams
Youth Accommodation Coalition of Western Australia
Home Sharers Program
Anglicare
Commissioner, Law Reform Commission of WA
Jesus People Inc., Perth
WA Council of Social Service Perth
Inner City Youth Service WA
Aboriginal Legal Service Victoria Park
Youth Accommodation Inc.
King Edward Memorial Hospital Adolescent Clinic Perth
Streetsyde Crisis Centre
19.1.88 Fremantle City Council Admin. Building
G. Kempin
L. Gregory
R. Lachowicz & S. Boyle
G. Davies
K. Posney
A. Dossinga
N. Irvine
S. Stain
C. Holdom
S. Gokhale

Fremantle Youth Accommodation Service
WA Council to Homeless Persons
WA Youth Legal Service
Uniting Church Community Youth Services
Fremantle City Council
Bunbury Youth Accommodation Project
Mandurah Youth Accommodation Service
Young House, Albany
YMCA, Perth

21.1.88 Port Hedland Civic Centre
T. Campbell
B. Jowle
R. Flanigan
E. Coates
G. Eichhom
G. Benn
M. Anderson
Anonymous
D. Bassford

Hedland Community Youth Services
Karratha Drop-In Centre
Youth Accommodation, Karratha
WA Department of Community Services, Port Hedland
Youth Involvement Committee, Port Hedland
Port Hedland
Hedland Community Youth Service
Homeless youth
Bloodwood Tree Association

22.1.88 Broome Civic Centre
D. Lange P. Mohen Sister Michael
E. Hunter
R. Walters
B. Cooper & M. Mason
M. McMahon

Broome Youth Accommodation Council
Nulungu College, Broome
Good Shepherd Sisters, Broome
NSW Institute of Psychiatry
Shiloh Family Church, Broome
Broome Youth Support Group
Parish Priest

29.2.88 St Kilda Town Hall
D. Otto
F. Maas & R. Hartley
D. Saltmarsh
C. Parfrey
C. Shevels
K. Gregory
J. Trociano
J. O'Brien
G. McLimont
P. Rotaham & M. Orus
A. Beaver
P. Andrews
K. Walker
K. Gardiner
J. Finlayson
I. Vett

Victorian Youth Accommodation Coalition
Australian Institute of Family Studies
Melbourne City Mission
Stopover Youth Refuge
Southport Project
Victorian Youth Accommodation Coalition
Whose Care and Protection Collective
Youth Accommodation Workers Network
Homeless Persons Council, Victoria
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
Indo-China Refugee Association
St Kilda Youth Housing Group
Victorian Department of Community Services, Street Work Project
Regional Youth Accommodation Service, North-West Melbourne
Youth Advocacy Network
Inner-East Youth Accommodation Support Service Project
Berry Street Child and Family Care
Young Womens Housing Collective
St Kilda Community Group
Victorian Legal Aid Commission
National Youth Coalition for Housing

1.3.88 Frankston City Library
M. O'Neil
H. Mahoney
Lee Mee Wun
E. Gray
Michelle
Hai dez
J. Perham

Western Port Regional Youth Housing Group
Springvale-Chelsea Youth Housing Project
Central Gippsland Youth Refuge
Homeless youth
Homeless youth Western
Port Youth Refuge

339
Brotherhood of St Laurence and Regional Emergency Relief Network
Regional Emergency Relief Network
Community Links and Regional Emergency Relief Network
Youth worker, Shire of Flinders
YWCA, Dandenong and Western Port
Youth worker, Shire of Hastings
Western Port Regional Youth Housing Group
Victorian Youth Advocacy Network
Fusion Australia, Mornington
Mornington-Frankston Youth Housing Groups
Western Port Regional Youth Housing Group - Dandenong/Berwick Youth Housing Projects
International Federation of Parents for Drug-Free Youth
Planning Services for Young Women in Western Port Region
Open Family Box Hill Inc.

Barwon Youth Accommodation Committee
Barwon Youth Support Unit
Barwon Youth Accommodation Committee
Homeless youth
Homeless youth
Homeless youth
Surrasia Youth Accommodation Project
Salvation Army, Cardinia
Barwon School Welfare Support Group
Bethany and Barwon Maltreatment Task Force and Barwon Children’s Welfare Association
Youth Employment Development Office
Central Highlands Youth Accommodation Coalition
Service to Youth Council
Emergency Housing Office, SA Housing Trust
Hindley Street Youth Project
Red Cross Society
Offenders Aid and Rehabilitation Services Organisation
Youth Initiatives Unit
Shop Front Health and Information Service
Street Link, Adelaide Central Mission
Festival of Light
Salvation Army, Ingle Farm
Second Story Adolescent Health Centre
Homeless youth
Homeless youth
Homeless youth
Bowden and Brompton Community School
Noarlunga Youth Accommodation Services
Indo-China Refugee Association, Mekong Youth Accommodation Service
Independent Therapeutic Residences for Adolescents Inc
Adelaide
16.3.88 Port Augusta Civic Centre
N. Scrimshaw
R. Van Wegen
D. Brown
M. McGregor
K. Hughes
M. McKenzie
W. Hansen
K. Wilkinson

28.4.88 CSLRO Marine Laboratories, Hobart
P. Beyers
S. Graham
Darren
Skye
R. Hughes
H. Lakin
M. Genge
J. Punch & B. Doran
T. Howe & J. Chisholm
L. Burgess
K. Robinson
K. Venn

29.4.88 Launceston Teachers Centre
K. Ferdinand & S. Walford
M. Youmard & K. Jaime
R. Eiszele
Theresa
Wendy
J. Munday
C. Bramich
T. Byrne
B. Johnson, L. Rundle & K. Geard
D. Cook
M. Campbell-Smith

14.6.88 Atrium Hotel, Darwin
H. Burguess
A. Buxton
P. Elsegood
D. Taylor
E. Vos
S. Healey
A. Davies
B. Ivinson
M. Hill
J. Bailey
D. Curtis
B. Carter
R. Murray
J. Pearse

16.6.88 YWCA - Service Lodge, Alice Springs
Stuart G. Bradford & J. Lewis
R. Fisher
G. Ross
H. Shearer & B. White
G. Costigan
C. Franks

House of the Rock Inc.
Australian Council for Outreach
Ranges Youth Centre
SA Dept for Community Welfare
Youth Project Centre, Dept for Community Welfare
Pikawiyi Health Service
Balyarta Youth Accommodation Centre
Whyalla Homeless Youth Project

Colony 47
Housing and Young Peoples Outreach
Homeless youth
Stepping Stone Street Work Inc.
Housing, Economy, Life and Young People Project
Housing Assistance Service
Youth Programmes Inc.
Anglicare Tasmania Inc, Youthcare Program
Hobart

Fusion Australia, Youth Housing Service
Uniting Church, Child and Family Service
Bond Rental Advance Subsidy Scheme
Homeless youth
Northern Youth Shelter
Devonport Crisis Youth Shelter
St Vincent De Paul Society
Karinya Young Women's Shelter

Special Youth Residential Facility Committee
YWCA, Darwin
Consultant, NT Dept of Health and Community Services
NT Police Department
NT Dept of Plans and Housing
Darwin
Salvation Army, Darwin
North Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service
NT Police Department
NT Education Department, Driver High School
Salvation Army, Katherine and Katherine Youth Action Group
NT Dept of Health and Community Services, Katherine
Ansti House
NT Dept of Health and Community Services

St Marys Child and Family Welfare
Tangentyere Council and Shelter, Alice Springs
St Vincent De Paul Society
Central Australian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
Anglican Parish Priest, Alice Springs
Healthy Aboriginal Life Team
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<td>I. Watson</td>
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<td>R. Gemmell &amp;</td>
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<td>J. Pearce</td>
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<td>A. Mayo</td>
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<td>Detached Family Counsellor Scheme, Hunter Area</td>
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<td>N. Roughan</td>
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<td>Muswellbrook Youth Service</td>
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## APPENDIX B

### WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

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<td>29 March 1988</td>
<td>Manly Municipal Council, NSW</td>
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<td>Salvation Army Outreach, Kings Cross, NSW</td>
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<td>Boys Town, Engadine, NSW</td>
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<td>29 March 1988</td>
<td>ACT Schools Authority</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>29 March 1988</td>
<td>Michelle South, NSW</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>29 March 1988</td>
<td>Bruce Lark, NSW</td>
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<td>A.R. Roux, QLD</td>
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<td>29 March 1988</td>
<td>Cootamundra Community Centre, NSW</td>
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<td>29 March 1988</td>
<td>Ian O'Connor, QLD</td>
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<td>Pat Nolan and Jessica Syme, Studio for the Advancement and Expression of Contextual Studies, QLD</td>
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<td>The Homeless Children Association, NSW</td>
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<td>29 March 1988</td>
<td>Apostolic Church (Australia), Southport, QLD</td>
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<td>Sharad Gokhale, WA</td>
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<td>Neil Springell, QLD</td>
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<td>Extend-A-Family, QLD</td>
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<td>29 March 1988</td>
<td>Bayside Adolescent Boarding Incorporated, QLD</td>
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<td>Peter Neilson, QLD</td>
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<td>29 March 1988</td>
<td>Department of Youth and Community Services, Riverina Region, NSW</td>
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<td>29 March 1988</td>
<td>Alternative Housing Committee and Bondi Youth Accommodation, NSW</td>
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<td>The Aboriginal Legal Service of WA (Inc)</td>
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<td>Youth Affairs Council of Tasmania</td>
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<td>Adrian de Graaf, WA</td>
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<td>Marcia Parrish, SA</td>
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<td>Youth Emergency Services Inc, QLD</td>
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<td>Youth Accommodation Association (NSW) Ltd</td>
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25 August 1988 Consultations at Mt Isa by Father Wally Dethlefs, QLD
14 April 1988 Bankstown Workers with Youth Network, NSW
18 April 1988 National Women's Housing Conference Action Network, ACT
5 May 1988 Child and Family Care Network, VIC
18 April 1988 Youth Advocacy Centre Inc., QLD
18 April 1988 Women's Electoral Lobby, Cairns, QLD
18 April 1988 Children's Action Network, ACT
18 April 1988 Rosemary Moyle, SA
18 April 1988 Shopfront, SA

State Government Submissions:
5 May 1988 Queensland Government
23 May 1988 Western Australian Government
13 April 1988 South Australian Government
7 April 1988 Northern Territory Government
22 February 1988 Tasmanian Government
28 August 1988 Victorian Government
23 August 1988 New South Wales Government
12 April 1988 ACT Administration, Youth Bureau

22 April 1988 Aboriginal Legal Service, Chippendale, NSW
22 April 1988 Ethnic Communities Council of NSW
27 April 1988 Law Institute of Victoria
5 May 1988 St Monica's Community Inc., TAS
5 May 1988 Stepping Stone Streetwork Inc., TAS
5 May 1988 Summerlea Youth Co-operative, TAS
5 May 1988 Bond and Rental Advance Subsidy Scheme, TAS
5 May 1988 North-West Youth Shelter Committee Inc., TAS
5 May 1988 Youth Project Centre, Port Augusta, SA
5 May 1988 Peter Turley, VIC
12 May 1988 Housing Assistance Service, TAS
6 June 1988 Community Hostels Association Inc., TAS
6 June 1988 Mrs D. Thompson, NSW
10 June 1988 Australian Labor Party, NT
7 June 1988 Salvation Army The Open House*, Katherine, NT
June 1988 Ms C. Franks, HALT (Healthy Aboriginal Life Team), NT
29 February 1988 Support Housing for Young People in Collingwood, Fitzroy and Carlton Inc, VIC
1 August 1988 Manning Youth Refuge Management Committee, Taree, NSW
1 August 1988 Alice Springs Town Council, NT
2 August 1988 Wollongong Youth Refuge, NSW
3 August 1988 Council for the City of Sydney, NSW
3 August 1988 NT Teacher's Federation
21 June 1988 National Youth Coalition for Housing, VIC
1 August 1988 Anyinginyi Congress Aboriginal Corporation, NT
3 August 1988 Southern Highlands Youth Refuge, NSW
24 August 1988 Coalition on Employment (Wollongong-Shellharbour-Kiama) Ltd, NSW
19 September 1988 Brotherhood of St Laurence, VIC
21 September 1988 Streetwork Project, Cabramatta Community Centre, NSW
28 October 1988 Anthony Miles, Preston, VIC
30 October 1988 Isabelle Cooke, Woodridge, QLD
September 1988 The Centre Education Programme, Logan City, QLD
August 1988 Television Station NBN 3 Newcastle, NSW
28 October 1988 Hope City Future Trust, Neutral Bay, NSW
## APPENDIX C
### AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS VISITED DURING INQUIRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>STATE AGENCY</th>
<th>PROGRAM TYPE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29 October 1987</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>Salvation Army Outreach Service, 356 Victoria St, Kings Cross.</td>
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<td>29 October 1987</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>Manly Municipal Council, Belgrave St, Manly.</td>
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<td>25 November 1987</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>Youth &amp; Family Services Inc., Logan City, 2 Rowan St, Kingston.</td>
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<td>QLD</td>
<td>Kedron Lodge Inc., 119 Nelson Road, Kalinga.</td>
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<td>26 November 1987</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>Kedron Lodge Youth Housing Project.</td>
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<td>QLD</td>
<td>Youth Emergency Shelter, 25 Thorne Street, Lutwyche.</td>
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<td>26 November 1987</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>Youth Advocacy Centre, Bowen Bridge Rd, Wilston.</td>
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<td>27 November 1987</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>Pastor Daniel De Busch, Gospel Outreach Centre, Cairns.</td>
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<td>19 January 1988</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>YWCA Drop-In Centre, 286 Hay St, Perth.</td>
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<td>20 January 1988</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Jesus People City Youth Centre, 129 Hill St, East Perth families.</td>
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<td>21 January 1988</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Trelour, Trelour Close, South Hedland.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 March 1988</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>Salvation Army St Kilda Crisis Centre, 31 Grey Street, St Kilda</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Youth outreach service providing streetwork, crisis counselling, material assistance and accommodation services.</td>
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<td>Local Council involved in research and establishment of programs for homeless youth.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Community-based agency offering a broad range of support and accommodation services for young people and families.</td>
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<td>Local church-based agency offering family-type care for abused and emotionally disturbed teenagers.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Medium-term accommodation facility.</td>
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<td>Units providing long-term housing with support from a youth housing worker.</td>
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<td>Short-term youth crisis accommodation facility.</td>
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<td>Community-based organisation providing legal representation, research and advocacy services for youth.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Community-based agency offering a wide range of support and accommodation services for young people and families.</td>
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<td>Visit to Aboriginal families camped near Cairns.</td>
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<td>Inner-city facility offering crisis services including short-term accommodation.</td>
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<td>Group home for Aboriginal school-age girls and young women.</td>
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<td>Youth refuge accommodating up to 26 young people. Broad program of support and counselling for young people and families.</td>
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<td>Community-operated neighbourhood centre providing a wide range of support services for residents of all ages.</td>
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<td>Church-based agency providing drop-in facilities and short-term accommodation.</td>
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<td>Long-term accommodation facility.</td>
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</table>
Community-based accommodation service providing advocacy as well as crisis and long-term accommodation.
Block of 10 one bedroom units leased by tenants from Ministry of Housing. All occupied by young people who receive support from a YAWN housing worker.
Non-government organisation providing a therapeutic community for emotionally disturbed adolescents.
A youth accommodation service providing information, referral and advocacy for homeless young people.
Church-based organisation providing a group home for young offenders under 15 years of age.
Community and religious-based organisation providing a wide range of youth support programs. Farm program provides long-term accommodation, employment and training.
New crisis shelter being developed in cooperation with the State Department of Housing.
Community-based organisation providing alcohol rehabilitation services for young people. Includes a hostel service, long-term housing project and employment program.
Short-term crisis accommodation program.
Aboriginal community organisation providing a wide range of housing, municipal support services for up to 3000 Aboriginal in town camps and reserves.
Visits to two town camps.
DEFINING 'YOUTH HOMELESSNESS'

Defining 'Homelessness'

1.1 The definition of a social issue is one of the factors which impinges on the planning and implementation of policies designed to address and, hopefully, alleviate the hardships experienced by individuals. This may sound axiomatic, but it is, nonetheless, significant in policy formulation and development. Moreover, definitions also have the potential to influence methods and instruments designed to determine the extent of the problems experienced by individuals. This is true in most issues and is, undoubtedly, relevant when endeavouring to calculate the number of homeless young people.

1.2 To some, 'homelessness' conjures up images of sleeping outdoors, 'roughing it' or, at best, squatting in dilapidated or condemned buildings. Attempting to estimate the number of young people who are homeless in the narrow sense of absence of shelter is fraught with obvious difficulties. Such young people are the 'hidden' homeless; some of their number, by definition, will elude attempts at identification and quantification. Two implications follow from this narrow definition of homelessness. Firstly, when this definition of homelessness is used the findings will be estimates. A second implication of adopting the narrow definition is that any estimate is unlikely to be the maximum figure by virtue of the fact that it is impossible to identify all those who are homeless. In other words, the estimates are likely to be under-estimates.

1.3 Most definitions over the past decade have not limited homelessness to those who literally have 'no fixed address'. Of the many published definitions, that of the National Youth Housing Coalition (NYCH) is representative. Modelled on the definition adopted by the South Australian Council of Social Service (Chappell 1980, at 4-5), NYCH defines 'youth homelessness':

\[\text{...as the absence of secure, adequate, and satisfactory shelter as perceived by the young person and, for homelessness to exist, at least one of the following conditions, or any combination of conditions, should be operative:}\]

(a) an absence of shelter;
(b) the threat of loss of shelter;
(c) very high mobility between places of abode;
(d) existing accommodation considered inadequate by the resident for such reasons as overcrowding, the physical state of the residence, lack of security of occupancy, or lack of emotional support and stability in the place of residence;
(e) unreasonable restrictions in terms of access to alternative forms of accommodation. (NYCH 1985, at 1).

The NYCH definition is much broader than the absence of shelter and 'sleeping rough', although it includes the hardship and indignity of this aspect of homelessness. In addition, the NYCH definition incorporates standards of living which some Australians can take for granted and to which all aspire.

1.4 Some may demur that the NYCH definition is too broad, unrealistic and will exaggerate the number who are homeless. The validity of the NYCH definition can easily be demonstrated to those who balk at its breadth by simply asking if they would willingly forego their standard of housing to become homeless in terms of the NYCH definition! Would they forfeit the security of existing housing for insecure housing, or exchange the personal privacy and relative comfort and stability for exposure and an imposed peripatetic lifestyle? This is not to intone against those who reject the NYCH definition. The
point is that most Australians would answer the above questions in the negative which, in turn, supports the validity of the NYCH definition.

1.5 • The implications of the broader NYCH definition for estimating the extent of youth homelessness are many and considerable. When the broader definition is used the issues are much more encompassing and include, inter alia, financial circumstances, source of income, employment status (part or full-time, employed or unemployed), access to public and private housing and available support networks.

Defining 'Young' People and 'Youth'

1.6 Another difficulty which emerges in estimating youth homelessness is the meaning of the term 'youth' (see Terms of Reference). In the following, the term 'young people' is used as a substitute for 'youth'. Those persons between the ages of 12 and 24 years are usually considered 'young'. When applied to housing issues, this age range is problematic in that the stated accommodation and housing needs of most 15-year-olds differs from the expressed housing needs of young adults. While variations in any age group are to be expected, the social expectations and accommodation needs of children 15 years and under will generally be different from those of adults (young people 18 years and over).

1.7 It is necessary to sub-divide 'young people' into specific age groups. The following classification is suggested:

- 12-15 years (under 16)
- children 16-17 years (under 18)
- young people 18+ (adult)

While this classification is useful it has the disadvantage of cutting across categories used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The ABS usually restricts classification to 15-19 years and 20-24 years. Thus, information about young people aged 12-15 years is sometimes not accessible and implications about those aged 16-17 years must be drawn from data on the 15-19 year age group. However, whatever the disadvantages, there can be little doubt that the above classification is most appropriate for analytical and policy purposes.

1.8 In the following discussion reference is made to specific ages (for example, 15 and under, 16-17 years etc). When the term 'young people' is mentioned it refers to young people 12-24 years unless otherwise stated.

HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE: METHODS, SURVEYS AND ESTIMATES

Introduction

2.1 In the last decade, a growing body of research has been undertaken regarding the number of homeless young people in Australia, particularly those aged 15-24. In the mid-1970s, studies of homeless people 'detected an increasing number of people in what was previously regarded as an older, predominantly male 'skid-row' population. For example, an estimate of the number of homeless men in Sydney in 1971-72 revealed that 6.9% of the homeless male population were between 18 and 24 years (Darcy and Jones 1975, at 214), although it was noted that there was 'a phenomenal rate of increase in those under 25 years of age' (Darcy and Jones 1975, at 212-213).

2.2 Later surveys indicate that this increase has not subsided. Surveys of homeless people conducted in Adelaide in 1976 (DSS 1978, Appendix 3, at xi) and Perth between August 1977 and March 1978 (Hart 1979, at 4) show that 17% and 23% (respectively) of the total number of respondents were young people (aged 16-25 and 15- 25 respectively). A national survey in February 1978 revealed that 16.8% were under 25 years of age. Of this 16.8%, 6.7% were under 20 years, and 10.1% between 20 and 24 (Jordan 1978, at 15). Far from waning, in the late 1970s the proportion of young people amongst the ranks of the homeless was increasing (See Fopp 1981, at 3541).
Initial Surveys of Homeless Young People

At about the same time as the previously mentioned surveys began to highlight an increasing number of young people amongst the homeless, several attempts to survey the needs and characteristics of homeless young people were undertaken (Carmody 1980; Cummins and Wilson 1977; Duffield, Elliot and Falls 1979; Ryan and Pronger 1978; Council of Social Service of Tasmania 1979; Callahan and O’Toole 1980). In addition, this period also saw the first attempts to quantify the number of homeless young people per se.

By the early 1980s press reports began to cite research which had endeavoured to establish the number of homeless young people. For example, a report in The Age (15 September 1980), entitled ‘Teenagers are the new down and outs’, claimed that ‘at least 15,000 jobless young people were roaming around Melbourne without a place to stay’. On 1 April 1980, the figure was used in a debate in the Federal Parliament (Chipp 1980, at 1284).

Methods of Estimating the Number of Homeless Young People

A 1983 review divided the measures or methods used to estimate the number of homeless young people in Australia into three broad categories. (Fopp 1983, at 25-27). The three methods are outlined below.

Survey Method I: The first method used regional surveys of agencies which provided accommodation services for young people. A questionnaire was used to seek information about the number of requests for accommodation and the number actually accommodated. The statistics for the survey period were then extrapolated to derive an annual figure of homelessness. Subsequent inquiry has revealed that the research of this type falls into two categories. One category attempts to survey the entire homeless population and then disaggregates by age. The second category focuses on young people exclusively.

Survey Method II: Surveying persons in programs funded by the Federal Government is the second method used to determine the number of homeless young people. This method has the advantage of canvassing the entire nation and, therefore, providing a figure which is not restricted to a capital or regional area.

Survey Method III: The third method of estimating the number of homeless young people is to use data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), particularly the Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families series (Catalogue 6224.0). Such data is useful because it shows the number of young people who are ‘non family members’ and who are unemployed. It can be reasonably expected that such young people face immense difficulty acquiring and sustaining adequate and appropriate accommodation. Rather than detecting young people in shelters or requesting accommodation, this method has the virtue of emanating from the ABS and possesses predictive value because it highlights those young people ‘at risk’ of homelessness. Subsequent investigation has discovered other relevant ABS data, including statistics from the 1986 Census. Such data is restricted to the census night and has other limitations (discussed at para 4.18).

While the various survey methods are distinct and the research results cannot be aggregated, some of the results yielded from one survey are relevant to another. For example, on the basis of the additional information derived from the first two methods it is possible to glean some of the explanations for the problems young people face regarding accommodation. Findings from surveys (Methods I and II) show that unemployment is a major explanation of homelessness which in turn adds credence to the use of ABS data on unemployment and family status (Hancock and Burke 1983, at 59-88; Sheridan 1983, at 66-71; Schwager 1988, at 2; VCCSD 1979, at 6).

Criteria for the Selection of Research Discussed

Most agencies keep records from which it is possible to estimate the number of homeless young people who are accommodated or who make requests for accommodation over a specific period. For example, the evidence to the Senate Standing Committee’s Inquiry into Homeless Youth contains many
accounts of agency records (see Walters 1982). Likewise, evidence presented to the current Inquiry into Homeless Children contains frequent references to the number of individual organisations in which young people have been accommodated or made requests for accommodation (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Homeless Children Inquiry, Transcripts 1987-88).

2.11 However, such raw data is limited to a particular region, usually a suburb or a Local Government Authority (LGA) and does not constitute research which has attempted to estimate the total number of homeless young people per se. It is only when the data from particular agencies are aggregated that it is possible to determine the extent of accommodation problems facing young people. Thus, for the purposes of the following attempt to identify and review the research on the numbers of homeless young people, it is essential to distinguish between surveys which purport to contribute to such an estimate, on the one hand, and those records of individual agencies, on the other. Undeniably, the broad surveys and agency records can be potentially related, but only when the records are collated by a survey which transcends local areas.

2.12 In the following, only those surveys which purport to provide an estimate of the number of homeless young people have been selected for review. This is not to deny the importance of individual agency records (which are, in fact, used in Section 7 which considers alternative methods of estimating the incidence of homelessness). However, for review purposes the distinction between local records and surveys is maintained and only those surveys which transcend local boundaries and therefore provide State or national data, are examined. The following review of research on the number of homeless young people begins by exploring the surveys which have adopted the three methods outlined above.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON THE NUMBER OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Method I: Regional and State Surveys

3.1 Category a. The following surveys attempted to estimate the number of homeless people of all ages in a particular region from which the number of young homeless people was then calculated. The following were reported in the Senate Standing Committee's Report entitled Homeless Youth (Walters 1982, at 27).

(i) A Survey into the Extent of the Need for Emergency Accommodation in Townsville (Duffield, Elliot and Falls 1978): This survey, undertaken between 17 April and 14 May 1979, found that 160 people in Townsville were accommodated in emergency facilities. The survey was divided into two sections: one part was directed at those agencies which provide accommodation and the second section at those agencies which did not provide accommodation but made referrals to other accommodation agencies or ‘have some contact with homeless people’ (Duffield, Elliot and Falls 1978, at 2). Of the 160 persons who were accommodated, 10.6% (n=17) and 18.1% (n=29) were between the ages of 15 and 19 years and 20 and 24 years, respectively. It appears that a further 83 young people requested accommodation from other agencies. Just over half of the requests from young people (n=42) came from those aged 15-19 years. In summary, the survey showed that of the 129 young people who were accommodated or requested accommodation, 59 were 15-19 year olds and 70 were between 20-24 years. The Senate Standing Committee stated that the findings of the Townsville study ‘represent[ed] about 600 [homeless] young people per year’ (Walters 1982, at 28-29).

(ii) A Survey of Homelessness in Brisbane (quoted in Walters 1982, at 27-29): In this Brisbane study 25 agencies of the 47 approached completed a questionnaire over the two week period 18-30 August 1980. Of the 182 persons who approached the agencies for accommodation, 75 were under 25 years of age. The Committee's report comments that if this figure is extrapolated it means that over about 2,000 young people per year are homeless in Brisbane’ (Walters 1982, at 29).

3.2 Category b. The following surveys were directed specifically at those aged 12-24 years and sought to derive an annual number of homeless young people.
Youth Accommodation Report, Melbourne (VCCSD 1979): During the three week period 13 November — 3 December 1978, 879 young people between the ages of 12 and 25 sought accommodation from 92 of the 123 (mainly metropolitan) agencies which were sent a questionnaire. According to the report, ‘this figure represents a total of 300 requests per week at least, equivalent to 15,000 homeless youth per year’ (VCCSD 1979, at 5).

(ii) Study of Youth Homelessness in Metropolitan Adelaide, December 1979, (Council to Homeless Persons, S.A. 1979): During the period 3-9 December 1979, 9 out of the 31 agencies sent a questionnaire received 110 requests for accommodation from young people between the ages of 12 and 25. After extrapolating the number of requests annually, the report concluded that ‘a minimum of between 5,500 and 6,000 young people are in need of housing assistance in metropolitan Adelaide’ (Council to Homeless Persons, S.A. 1979, at 3).

(iii) Youth Housing: Survey Report (Chappell 1980): In the two weeks 8-21 March 1980, 362 young people aged 12-25 years sought accommodation assistance in the Adelaide metropolitan area from 53 agencies. The report suggests that the ‘figure represents a total equivalent in excess of 9,000 young people seeking accommodation assistance each year’ (Chappell 1980, at 12).

(iv) Your Dream - Our Nightmare, (Youth Accommodation Association, New South Wales 1987): A survey conducted by the New South Wales Youth Accommodation Association in the first five months of 1987 found that 13,145 requests for accommodation were made by young people. The results of this survey of 49 metropolitan agencies and 43 organisations outside the Sydney metropolitan area reveal that only 3,159 requests for accommodation were met.

Method II: National Surveys

Whereas the methods used in Methods I and II are similar, the scope of the surveys is different. The surveys discussed in the previous section were surveys of local areas; those in the following examination are national surveys.

(i) A National Study: 'One Step Forward': Youth Homelessness and Emergency Accommodation Services (Sheridan 1983): The evaluation of the Youth Services Scheme from October 1980 to September 1981 provides the first national data on the number of young people requesting accommodation from the agencies funded under the program. In this sense, it differs from the above-mentioned regional or metropolitan surveys. During the year-long survey period the total number of young people requesting accommodation in all States and the two Territories was 12,382 (Sheridan 1983, Appendix 1, at 3).

(ii) Study into Homelessness and Inadequate Housing (Coopers and Lybrand W D Scott 1985): This national study was commissioned by the Federal Department of Housing and Construction and examined all aspects of homelessness and inadequate housing in Australia. The study concluded that ‘few observers were willing to give estimates of the number of homeless young people. Estimates vary but the order of magnitude appears to be between 15,000 and 50,000 young people at any one time’. (Coopers and Lybrand W D Scott 1985, at 59) This figure has been cited in the Annual Report of the Department of Housing and Construction (1987, at 9).

(iii) What are Nice Girls Like You Doing in a Place Like This? A Report on Young Women's Access to Youth Housing (Gardiner and O'Neil, National Youth Coalition for Housing 1987): This national survey of Youth Supported Accommodation Program (YSAP) services conducted by the National Youth Coalition for Housing (NYCH) found that, in the period July 1986-June 1987, 103 of the 280 agencies which were sent the questionnaire received 13,709 referrals and accommodated 9,245 young people. Put differently, 4,474 young people (or 32.6%) were unable to be accommodated.

(iv) National Client Data Collection: Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), published in Homes Away from Home (Chesterman 1988) and Youth Supported Accommodation Program, Working Paper, SAAP Review (Shwager 1988): A recent national survey was undertaken as part of the National Client Data Collection of those organisations funded under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). The results of the data collection conducted between April
and June 1987 are published in the Review report entitled, *Homes Away from Home* (Chesterman 1988) and a *Working Paper of the SAAP Review* (Schwager 1988). While the National Client Data Collection had the potential to reveal national data, the report advises that the YSAP data ‘excludes all Queensland, ACT and WA data and the Victorian information is incomplete’ (Chesterman 1988, at 51). Nevertheless, the SAAP National Client Data Collection found that 3,360 young people used YSAP services in the three months of the survey (Chesterman 1988, at 14) and 24% (n=2,473) of the 10,419 who used GSAP services were under 25 years (Chesterman 1988, at 18 and 54). In addition, a *Working Paper on the Women's Emergency Services Program* (WESP), a sub-program of SAAP, noted that ‘the majority of women using WESP services are under 29 years’ (Ford 1988, at 7). Although no further details are provided, it is clear that the number of young women in WESP services would increase the number of homeless young people using SAAP services. Thus, incomplete data indicate that 5,833 young people were accommodated in SAAP services in the three months from April to June 1987.

**Method III: ABS Data.**

While the previous survey methods estimate the number of young people who were accommodated or requested accommodation at the State or national level, the following estimates use ABS surveys of labour force status to calculate those who are likely to be homeless or ‘at risk’ of becoming homeless.

(i) *The Number of Young People who are Unemployed and 'Not a Member of a Family'* (ABS Catalogue 6224.0; Fopp 1982): Using Australian Bureau of Statistics data, an attempt was made to estimate the number of young people who were likely to be homeless or ‘at risk’ of facing severe difficulties gaining access to affordable and appropriate housing. The data available in *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families* (ABS Catalogue 6224.0) provides information on the number of unemployed (by age) and a strict definition of ‘not a member of a family’ (either ‘Living alone’ or ‘Not living alone’). A person is not a member of a family ‘if they are not related to any other member of the household in which they are living’ (ABS Catalogue 6224.0). It was calculated that at June 1980 and June 1981 there were (respectively) 40,800 and 36,300 young people 15-24 years who were not a member of a family and unemployed. On the basis that unemployment benefits were the sole or main source of income it was argued that the young unemployed who are not members of families could experience insurmountable difficulties acquiring adequate accommodation (Fopp 1982, at 309-314).

(ii) *An Update: A Submission to the 'Study into Homelessness and Inadequate Housing'* (ABS Catalogue 6224.0; Fopp 1984): In 1984 the above data were updated. It was reported that in June 1982 43,600 young people were unemployed and not a member of a family. For such young people, comprising 13,800 15-19-year-olds and 29,800 20-24-year-olds, accommodation ‘would be a continual and pressing problem’. (Fopp 1984, at 4) Also noteworthy is the finding that approximately 10% of all unemployed 15-19-year-olds and approximately 30% of all unemployed 20-24-year-olds, were not family members. Comparative data for July 1983 indicate that 49,900 young people aged 15-24 years were unemployed and not family members (ABS Catalogue 6224.0; Fopp 1987a, at 13). In March 1987, the corresponding figure was 44,292 (ABS Catalogue 6244.0; Fopp 1987b, at 7).

(iii) *Data from the 1986 Census* (ABS Table CX0095): Data of an entirely different variety were gained on Census night, 30 June 1986. The data shows persons in non-private dwellings (for example, ‘hotel, motel’, ‘staff quarters’, ‘childcare institution’) by age. Of particular relevance to this review is the category ‘Hostel for Homeless, Night Shelter, Refuge’. The data for this category and that of ‘Campers Out’ (persons sleeping in the open in truck cabins, caravans or tents but not in caravan parks) and ‘Migratory’ (persons on buses, air-craft or vessels) are shown in Table 1 below.
These figures suggest that, on the night of 30 June 1986, 1,767 young people were in shelters or refuges.

**AN ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH METHODS AND RESULTS**

4.1 The following discussion critically evaluates the reliability, scope and status of the above research.

**Method I: Local and Regional Surveys**

4.2 The problems with survey research of local areas are clustered around five problems or sets of problems. The first set of problems associated with regional surveys results from the fact that at least a portion of the respective respondents (namely, young homeless people) are outside the scope of exact quantification. Unless the research was successful in locating all young people who:

(a) have no fixed abode (and, perhaps, slept outdoors);
(b) request shelter accommodation;
(c) receive shelter accommodation;
(d) live in totally inadequate dwellings and squats;
and
(e) are experiencing great difficulties sustaining independent private or public dwelling and are likely to be evicted,

the total young homeless population has not been counted. Thus, the first difficulty with this first method of research is encountered because at least a segment of the population is ‘hidden’.

4.3 A second set of difficulties arises from the nature of the surveys per se and the methodologies used, and specifically the low organisational response rate. For example, the VCCSD report conceded that not all metropolitan and very few country agencies were contacted (VCCSD 1979, at 4). While limitations of this kind do not detract from the research results when they are used to ascertain the characteristics of homeless young people (age, employment status, sex, etc), low survey response rates clearly limit the accuracy of the survey results. However, the fact that the number accommodated and requests for accommodation are not always recorded accurately by agencies is significant when interpreting survey results. For example, the South Australian study (Chappell 1980) mentioned previously claimed that ‘considerable under-estimation will have occurred due to the agencies responses and the lack of coverage of informal networks’ (Chappell 1980, at 10). Thus, research which has taken the form of sample surveys over local or regional areas is likely to underestimate the number of homeless young people.

4.4 Third, seasonal factors may be another impediment to exact quantification. While the influence of seasonal variables is often mentioned in the survey results (Chappell 1980, at 10), it seems to be based

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**TABLE 1: TOTAL PERSONS IN NON-PRIVATE DWELLINGS BY AGE (15-24 YEARS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Non-Private Dwelling</th>
<th>0-14</th>
<th>15-19</th>
<th>20-24</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hostel for Homeless, Night Shelter</td>
<td>699</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>1,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campers Out</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>1,724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migratory</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>1,317</td>
<td>2,829</td>
<td>5,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,529</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,387</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,675</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,591</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ABS, 1986 Census of Population and Housing, Table CX0095)
on anecdotal evidence rather than hard data (VCCSD 1979, at 4). This is not to criticise the research, but simply to highlight the fact that the findings of short-term survey methods may underestimate the number of homeless young people. On the basis of 'comments from major agencies', a South Australian report concluded 'that the survey findings would tend to marginally understate annual demand'. (Chappell 1980, at 10) Similarly, a Victorian report observed that 'the warmer months are said to be related to a fall in requests for accommodation'. (VCCSD 1979, at 4) As the Victorian survey occurred in November and December it is possible that the surveys findings are conservative.

4.5 The possibility of a seasonal variation in the number of young people seeking accommodation in shelters is significant in the fourth difficulty with surveys. As indicated in the outline of research, some of the surveys extrapolate annual numbers of homeless young people from survey findings spanning a period of between two weeks and a month (Chappell 1980; VCCSD 1979). The basis of this extrapolation from a fortnightly or monthly figure to an annual 'guestimate' is rarely analysed or explained and the validity of dividing the results of (for example) a three week survey by three, then multiplying by 52, has been assumed rather than demonstrated.

4.6 Fifthly, and related to the above, is the possibility that other variables, including 'double counting', may cause the annual figure to be inflated, thus rendering the estimate of questionable value. (Coopers and Lybrand W D Scott 1985, at 8; Walters 1982, at 28) Such double counting occurs when a young person makes an unsuccessful request for accommodation. The same person is counted by one organisation only to be re-counted again when presenting to another organisation. Double, and perhaps multiple, counting may thus inflate the weekly and therefore the annual figure. Several points can be made about the suggestion that estimates of the number of homeless young people are exaggerated by multiple counting. It is possible that the 'hidden' number of homeless young people (that is, those who do not present at agencies) and the factors which tend to yield a conservative estimate (the agency response rate and seasonal fluctuations in demand) off-set, or more than compensate for, any double counting. However, there has been little, if any, consideration given to the weighting of the variables. Further analysis of these issues is attempted in the next section.

4.7 Some of those undertaking research have been aware of the possibility of, and have attempted to allow for, such 'double counting'. For example, the South Australian survey, which as far as the author can ascertain is the only report which contains a detailed analysis of the methodological issues involved, noted that no reliable data were available on the extent of double counting. Those responsible for the research sought to determine the 'worst possible levels of double-counting'. The report continued:

- Computations involved:
  1. numbers presenting to accommodation agencies where stay is possibly less than two weeks;
  2. number presenting to information/referral agencies;
  3. supplementary data from major agencies which identified referral only and accommodation "assisted cases."

Factors (1) and (2) were discounted by 10% to account for young people who would have moved away from any agency, i.e. a wastage rate. Fixing wastage rates at 10% is considered a highly conservative or absolute minimum level. This exercise resulted in a 28% double counting factor. This can be viewed as an absolute maximum (Chappell 1980, at 11).

The South Australian Report concluded that:

- seasonal factors err marginally towards under-counting;
- response rates and the lack of contact with informal networks substantially under-represents the survey population;
- a double counting factor of between 10% and 20% was present;
- as a result, it is concluded that the survey under-estimated the extent of the problem... (Chappell 1980, at 11).
This possibly explains why the 1980 South Australian report did not correct the 9,000 figure (Chappell 1980). However, the Report of the (South Australian) Working Party on Youth Housing 'presumed' an over-estimate of 50% due to double-counting and, accordingly, reduced the 9,000 figure to 4,500, adding that the figure was 'likely to be a highly conservative one' (Wagstaff 1980, at 20).

4.8 In summary, there may be some truth in the statement that surveys of young people approaching refuges and shelters are 'not good measures of need' (Coopers and Lybrand W D Scott 1985, at 8). However, the conclusion of the Senate Standing Committee on Social Welfare that, because of the methodological problems, the surveys are 'either invalid or unreliable' (Walters 1982, at 28), is an unwarranted and seemingly dismissive response to one main source of data. Some additional observations can be made about the surveys but that must await examination of the findings of national surveys.

Method II: National Surveys:

4.9 The evaluation of the Youth Services Scheme (YSS) remains one of the most 'comprehensive surveys of young people requesting accommodation to date (Sheridan 1983). With a research design incorporating three levels and involving, inter alia, a survey of requests for support, demand levels and patterns, a periodic count of bed capacity and occupancy and quantitative data regarding servicing, the survey results are justifiably included in the ABS publication Australia's Youth Population, 1984: A Statistical Profile (ABS Catalogue 111.0).

4.10 While finding that there were 12,382 requests for accommodation, the YSS evaluation report emphasized that this finding represented a. sample of the total number of homeless young people (Sheridan 1983, at 23) and estimated that the total number of requests in the 12 months of the survey was more likely to be 15,000 (Sheridan 1983, at 43). This estimate was justified on the basis that only 62 agencies out of 75 responded to the survey and that some organisations recorded the demand met rather than the demand requested (Sheridan 1983, at 3 and 43). Furthermore, the program was targeted at young people 18 years and under. Significantly, 13% of all the unmet demands for accommodation were for reasons of inappropriate age (Sheridan 1983, at 47). This finding underscores the evaluation's finding that the 12,382 figure is a sample, it does not constitute the total number of homeless young people, and that there was an acute need for accommodation services for adults 18 years and over. To summarise, the YSS evaluation is a sample of the number of young people who requested accommodation in agencies funded under the program. The figures probably understate the problem, although the possibility of multiple counting was not determined.

4.11 The spectre of double and multiple counting is raised again. However, one helpful observation can be made about this issue: the possibility of double or multiple counting is less likely in that group of young people whose requests for accommodation were met; it is more likely that they will remain in the agency. To dismiss the entire 12,382 figure as an exaggeration on the basis of multiple counting is to misunderstand the survey method. Any distortions because of the double or multiple counting are more likely in the 7,007 requests which were not met (Sheridan 1983, Appendix 1, at 3). Some of this group may seek accommodation elsewhere and, therefore, artificially augment the number of homeless young people revealed by this survey method.

4.12 It is, however, possible to proceed a little further regarding the extent of multiple counting in several large surveys by examining a Perth study which traced those whose demands for accommodation were not met. Such a comparison may provide some idea of the extent of unmet demand and double counting. The Perth study of homeless persons (Hart 1979) conducted three surveys in 1977-78 and 'labelled' those who presented with requests for accommodation. By using such 'recapture' survey techniques, those who requested accommodation on a second or third occasion could be identified. The Report of the Working Party on Youth Housing in South Australia noted that 'it was evident from the description of the survey methodology that inter-agency double counting was taken into consideration' (Wagstaff 1980, at 19). It was found that young people were less likely to remain in the homeless population and, therefore, less likely to present at another agency. The report stated that 'compared with the lower age groups, high proportions of the older age groups appear twice or three times in the survey. For example, 85% of the age 0-24 years appear once, compared with 34% of the 65-75 year age group'.
4.13 The above figures may be relevant because they show that young people are less likely to present at organisations providing accommodation a second or third time. If the 1979 study of homeless persons in Perth accurately reflects the behaviour of young people in the late 1970s and 1980s, the study suggests that double counting for young people is minimal and that the survey estimates are not totally discredited by multiple counting. The salient question is: do the factors which allegedly contribute to inflating the number of homeless young people offset those factors which act to minimise the estimates? The answer to the question is difficult to determine but it would seem from the Perth study mentioned above that the double and multiple counting which is alleged to inflate the survey findings may be less significant than those factors which serve to minimise the figures. If this is the case, the influence of multiple counting is exaggerated and any effect is more than compensated for by other factors which tend to deflate survey findings.

4.14 In this context it is interesting to note that recent data from the National Client Data Collection of the Supported Assistance Accommodation Program Evaluation reveals that 12% of referrals to YSAP services came from other SAAP services (Schwager 1988, at 18). This figure may give some indication of the extent of multiple counting. By way of explanation, imagine a survey of 10 YSAP agencies with 10 beds participating in a survey using Method II. During the survey it is found that 12% of all referrals came from other SAAP services. If there were 100 requests from young people, 12 would have been referred from other SAAP agencies. More particularly, the survey tally of requests would show that 100 young people requested accommodation. However, we know that only 88 of the 100 requests came from outside YSAP services which suggests a double counting figure of 12%. In this scenario the extent of double counting can be estimated. Further complicating any analysis is the possibility that some of the 12 young people made multiple requests. Since, in this instance, the referrals from other SAAP agencies is known, it is not unreasonable to predict double counting to the extent of 12%. Although the number of multiple requests is unknown, the potential for double and multiple counting would decrease as the number of young people are accommodated. The exception to this is the situation in which no vacancies exist, but this fact highlights the acute shortage of accommodation, the demand placed on organisations and, undeniably, the acute hardships homeless young people experience.

4.15 Another significant means of underestimating the number of homeless young people is that most national surveys are program specific. The two large surveys conducted by the New South Wales Youth Accommodation Association (1987) and NYCH (Gardiner and O'Neil 1987) were limited (in the main, in the case of the YAA survey) to organisations funded under the Youth Supported Accommodation Program (YSAP). If other agencies provide accommodation for young people but are not included in surveys because they are funded under different programs or not funded at all, the findings from program surveys will understate the numbers of homeless young people. It is interesting to note that 25% of General Supported Accommodation Program (GSAP) users were also aged under 25 years (Chesternman 1988, at 53). This figure represents 2,473 GSAP users who were excluded from the two surveys of YSAP services mentioned above (Youth Accommodation Association (NSW) 1987; Gardiner and O'Neil 1987). This age group, however, comes within the scope of YSAP and would be included in most broad definitions of 'young people'.

4.16 This information provides additional support for the contention that the New South Wales (Youth Accommodation Association (NSW) 1987) and the NYCH (Gardiner and O'Neil 1987) surveys may also understate the number of homeless young people accommodated in SAAP agencies. To identify young people omitted from the survey is not to undermine the significance of the surveys. It is to highlight the fact that program specific surveys may exclude a number of agencies not funded under the program. Such programs may be sub-programs of a general program (such as GSAP, WESP or YSAP are of SAAP), or provide a service without funding. In brief, the New South Wales survey and the NYCH survey neither surveyed all GSAP or VVESP services to discover those who were between 18 and 25 years, nor did they survey all non-SAAP funded services for young people. Consequently, the findings are most likely to be under-estimates.
4.17 The following summarises the preceding discussion regarding national surveys.

1. It is possible that surveys may overstate the number of homeless young people by double or multiple counting.

2. Surveys understate the number of homeless young people because not all agencies respond to the survey, some do not keep accurate records, and some young people are reluctant to seek accommodation in agencies. Surveys are usually program specific, thus understating the number of young people who may be accommodated or have made requests to alternative funded or non-funded organisations.

3. If young people generally behave as homeless people did in Perth in 1979 it may be that the double counting effect is minimal.

4. The evidence from the SAAP National Client Data Collection is that 12% of referrals come from other SAAP services. On the basis of this evidence it is reasonable to expect a double counting factor of at least 12% in the two most recent SAAP surveys, although as the number of young people successfully find accommodation the rate of further multiple counting will probably decline, unless, of course, all agencies have no vacancies, which in turn underscores the trauma some young people face and the enormous demand on agencies.

5. The New South Wales Youth Accommodation Association and NYCH surveys understate the number of young people requesting accommodation because they did not include all relevant GSAP, WESP or other, non-funded, agencies.

6. If the figures provided by the above surveys inflate the figures by double counting, the results, nevertheless, are significant in that they convey the demand for accommodation services; the survey results indicate the number of requests received by agencies.

7. A sensible and valid conclusion derived from such data emphasizes the number of requests YSAP services have received. This much is made crystal clear and demonstrates the demand on organisations.

8. If such surveys are used to represent the number of homeless young people, in my view, the factors inflating the figures (multiple countings) are off-set and, in all probability more than compensated for, by the factors which tend to under-estimate (see 2 above) the number of homeless young people.

Method III: ABS Data.

4.18 The ABS data consist of information gained from the June 1986 Census and the details of the number of young people by employment and family status and age. The Census data show that 8,591 young people 24 years and under were in the following three categories:

- in hostels for the homeless;
- campers out; or
- migratory.

As the Census data do not include those who were not counted on census night, its validity is restricted. Moreover, the Census figures do not include those but who are ‘at risk’ of homelessness who would have responded to the census in private dwellings.

4.19 The ABS series Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families (ABS Catalogue 6244.0) provides helpful information on a broader front consistent with the NYCH definition adopted. The ABS data show the number of young people who are unemployed and not members of families. The combination of:

1. a strict definition of ‘not a member of a family’;
2. knowledge about the rates of, and eligibility criteria for, unemployment benefits;
3. the cost of accommodation;
4. the disaggregation of the data by age (15-19; 20-24), and not a family member,
provide the data to calculate the number of young people who are homeless or, at the very least, 'at risk' of experiencing homelessness. Moreover, when the operational definition of homelessness includes difficulties maintaining rent along with attendant living costs, then many young people who are not family members and unemployed will be homeless. These data, the significance of which has been largely ignored, are one of the most reliable indicators of the number of young people who will experience acute difficulties acquiring and sustaining affordable and appropriate accommodation.

4.20 The following Table shows the June 1986, June 1987 and February 1988 data of family status by employment status and age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>15-19 years</th>
<th>20-24 years</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 1986</td>
<td>15,478</td>
<td>20,712</td>
<td>36,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1987</td>
<td>14,390</td>
<td>23,995</td>
<td>38,385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 1988</td>
<td>13,047</td>
<td>28,367</td>
<td>41,414</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ABS Catalogue 6224.0)

These figures are interesting for several reasons. Firstly, it is clear from the statistics that the number of young people aged 20-24 years who are 'not family members and unemployed' has increased over the past two and a half years. This trend is contrary to a general trend for the employed of this age group who are less likely to be in the category 'not a member of a family' (Kilmartin 1987). Secondly, despite some fluctuations in the intervening period the number of unemployed 15-19 years who are not family members has decreased over the last two and a half years. This notwithstanding, there are currently 41,414 young people who are unemployed and not family members who in all probability are homeless, or 'at risk' of becoming homeless in the sense of the NYCH definition stated previously. That the young unemployed who are not family members (either living alone or not alone) experience acute housing difficulties is a reasonable assumption since the unemployment benefit rates are known and many surveys attest to the difficulties in 'making ends meet' when the unemployment benefit is the main or sole source of income (see paras 4.26–4.30).

4.22 However, the above calculations do not represent the entire population of young people who are not family members and who may be struggling to juggle scarce resources, of which accommodation is one. For example, it should not be assumed that difficulties facing young people obtaining and maintaining adequate housing are exclusively the province of the unemployed. Some employed young people, for example, may be receiving inadequate incomes, particularly those who are employed part-time and those on low incomes (whether employed part-time or full-time). In February 1988 there were 28,830 young people who were employed part-time and who were not family members (ABS Catalogue 6224.0). There were 6,473 young people aged 15-19 years in this category, while the corresponding figure for 20-24 year olds was 22,357 (ABS Catalogue 6224.0).

4.22 Furthermore, some young people may be receiving wages and salaries which force them below the poverty line (see para 4.28).
The above table shows that 28,700 young people were receiving salaries of or below $120 per week for full-time work (over 35 hours work). If any were not family members this number would further swell the numbers of young people at risk of becoming homeless.

4.23 Another category in the Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families series is also relevant in this discussion of factors which underestimate the number of young people who are, or are 'at risk' of, experiencing problems obtaining adequate housing. These additional data refer to the number of young people aged 15-25 years who are not members of families but who are 'not in the labour force', that is, neither employed nor unemployed. The ABS defines 'persons not in the labour force' as:

those who, during the survey week, were not in the categories employed or unemployed. . . . They include persons who were keeping house (unpaid), attending an educational institution (school, university, etc), retired, voluntarily inactive, permanently unable to work, inmates of institutions (hospitals, gaols, sanatoria, etc.), trainee teachers, members of religious contemplative orders, and persons whose only activity during the week was jury service or unpaid voluntary work for a charitable organization. (ABS Catalogue 6224.0, at 2).

Some of the above are obviously accommodated, although should they leave that accommodation they may experience difficulties acquiring housing. However, it is likely that at least some of those in this category, whose source of income (if any) is unknown, are either homeless or 'at risk' of becoming homeless.

4.24 The table below reveals the number of young people who are not family members and not in the labour force.

It would seem that there are compelling reasons for adding at least some of this number to the 41,414 who are unemployed, between 15-24 years and not a member of a family. As we do not know the numbers of 15-24-year-olds in the irrelevant categories (those who have retired, inmates of institutions, and members of contemplative religious orders), it is difficult to enumerate the precise number which should be added to the corresponding unemployment figures (ie. those who are unemployed and not family members).

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However, it is reasonable to assume that very few young people are in the above 'irrelevant categories' and that some of the 25,511 young people who are neither members of families nor in the workforce are homeless or 'at risk' of homelessness. Table 5 shows the total number of young people who are not members of families and not in the labour force combined with those who are unemployed and not family members.

4.25 It must be emphasized that Table 5 does not purport to estimate the number of young homeless people per se, although it may represent the approximate number who could be expected to face acute accommodation difficulties (66,925 at February 1988). This estimate is based on ABS data coupled with certain assumptions about the unemployment benefit as the main or sole source of income, the fact that unemployment beneficiaries live in poverty, and the likelihood of those not in the labour force living below the poverty line.

### ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE: HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE

#### Young People: Housing and Poverty

**TABLE 5: NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE UNEMPLOYED, NOT IN LABOUR FORCE AND NOT FAMILY MEMBERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>15-19 years</th>
<th>20-24 years</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 1986</td>
<td>26,070</td>
<td>43,105</td>
<td>69,175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1987</td>
<td>30,347</td>
<td>47,573</td>
<td>77,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 1988</td>
<td>23,980</td>
<td>42,945</td>
<td>66,925</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ABS Catalogue 6224.0

4.26 Recent evidence demonstrates that poverty after paying for housing costs increased between the years 1972-73 and 1981-82. Whereas before-housing-cost poverty rose from 10.2% to 11.6%, afterhousing-cost poverty rose from 6.7% to 10.7% (Bradbury, Rossitter and Vipond 1986, at 4). Such evidence clearly shows the increasing contribution of housing costs to poverty over the period.

4.27 Moreover, when the data are disaggregated by age it is evident that young people are among the most affected by after-housing-cost poverty. Of the total number of income units (646,800) living below the poverty line before paying for housing, 15.7% were single young people aged 15-24 years (considerably greater than the average 11.8%). The corresponding figure for after-housing poverty was 20.6% (Bradbury, Rossitter and Vipond 1986, at 16). A more recent study estimates that 25.8% of all single person income units with head of household aged 15-24 years are living below the after-housingcost poverty line (King 1987, at 17). This means that, based on a total number of income units of 386,900 in the 15-24 age category, at least a staggering 99,800 (25.8%) of young people in this age group are living below the after-housing-cost poverty line.

4.28 The poverty line for single people in September 1987 was $151.80 for all costs including housing (Johnson 1987, at 3). Yet the unemployment benefit for those aged 18-20 years is currently $91.20 per week, and for those over 21 years, $108.40 per week (Cass 1988, at 81). Currently, young people 16-17 years of age receive a Job Search Allowance of $25 per week (or $50.00 if they meet parental means test criteria).

#### The Young Homeless Allowance

4.29 Another source of information about homeless young Australians comes from the number of young people receiving the Young Homeless Allowance (YHA). The benefit, which began in mid-1986,
was first administered by both the Department of Social Security and the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET). While the YHA is paid to eligible students (by DEET), prior to January 1988 special and unemployment beneficiaries, usually aged 16-17 years, were eligible to apply for the YHA. Currently, 16 and 17-year-olds who qualify for the YHA receive a total of $76.00.

There is almost universal recognition that the eligibility criteria for the YHA are stringent (Fopp 1986; Maas and Hartley 1987). Indicative of the strict guidelines is the fact that at 30 June 1987 only 2,170 young people were receiving the YHA from DEET, and at 3 July 1987 only 941 young people were receiving the allowance from the DSS. Thus, in mid-1987, 3,111 young people were receiving the allowance. Undeniably, YHA recipients are 'homeless'. However, that only just over 3,000 young people receive the allowance is testimony to the strict eligibility criteria and the deficiencies of the allowance in targeting those young people who are homeless. This point is highlighted when the number of YHA recipients administered by the DSS is compared with the number of 15,000 young people estimated to be homeless in the YSS Evaluation, particularly as the program was intended for young people 18 years and under (Sheridan 1983). Furthermore, the SAAP data collection found that 55% of persons accommodated in SAAP services were aged 16-18 years (Schwager 1988, at 16). By itself, this figure, which excludes 15-18-year-olds, represents 1,526 young people in the only sample (n=2,775) of total YSAP constituents which disaggregates by age. Yet, with all the deficiencies of these data, the YSAP data of homeless young people are considerably more than the number of 16 and 17-year-olds receiving YHA from the DSS.

ESTIMATING THE NUMBER OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

5.1 In the following, the preceding arguments and data will be used to provide 'the best possible estimate of the numbers of homeless children and young people in Australia' (Terms of Reference). For the purposes of this discussion 'children' refers to those aged 12 to 15 years and 'young people' refers to young people aged 16 and 17 years. As in the previous discussion, children and young people will be distinguished from young people more generally (12-24-year-olds) by the specific mention of age groups or by using 'children' or 'young people'.

Young People in Poverty

52 The number of income units below the poverty line is an appropriate starting point. It has been estimated that 22.3% of all income units in the age category 15-24 years are below the poverty line (King 1987). This represents 86,300 young people below the poverty line. When housing costs are taken into account the number of income units increases to 25.8% of the total number of income units below the poverty line or 98,800 income units. Thus:

In 1985-86 of the income units of 15-24 year olds, 258 in every 1,000 were living in after-housing-cost poverty.

Young People (aged 15-24 years) Likely to be Homeless or 'At Risk' of Homelessness

5.3 In February 1988 there were 41,400 young people aged 15-24 years who were unemployed and not family members. On the assumption that such young people have unemployment benefits as their main or sole source of income it is reasonable to suppose that such unemployed young people are experiencing, or are likely to experience, homelessness as defined. For example, such young people may be facing 'the threat of loss of shelter' or living in inadequate shelter. The incidence of homelessness and 'at risk' of homelessness has been calculated as follows. (The source of the data, unless otherwise stated, is the ABS series Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families: ABS 1984-88, Catalogue No. 6224.0.) In February 1988, 13,047 young people aged 15-19 were unemployed and not family members. Thus, with a total population of 174,521 in this age group unemployed:

75 in every 1,000 unemployed young people aged 15-19 years were likely to be homeless or ‘at risk’ of becoming homeless.
In February 1988, the corresponding figures for 20-24-year-olds were 28,367 unemployed and not family members out of a total of 124,143 unemployed. Thus:

229 in every 1,000 unemployed young people aged 20-24 years were likely to be homeless or ‘at risk’ of becoming homeless.

5.4 In February 1988, there were 41,414 15-24-year-olds who were unemployed and not family members out of a total of 298,664 unemployed. Thus:

139 in every 1,000 unemployed 15-24 year olds were homeless or ‘at risk’ of becoming homeless.

For 16 and 17-year-olds, the corresponding figures for February 1988 were 3,534 unemployed and not family members out of a total population of 75,799 unemployed. Thus:

47 in every 1,000 unemployed 16 and 17-year-olds were likely to be homeless or ‘at risk’ of becoming homeless.

In February 1988 there were 2,292 unemployed females aged 16-17 years who were not members of a family out of a total 34,836 unemployed. Thus:

66 in every 1,000 unemployed young women 16-17-years-olds are likely to be homeless or ‘at risk’ of becoming homeless.

Of the 40,963 unemployed males aged 16-17 years in February 1988, 1,242 were not family members. Thus:

30 males in every 1,000 unemployed males aged 16-17 years were homeless or ‘at risk’ of becoming homeless.

Comment

5.5 It must be emphasised that the figures in this section exclude the following:

- young people who are employed and earning low salaries and wages; young people who have low incomes as a consequence of part-time employment; and
- young people who are not in the labour force and whose family status is unknown.

The estimates of the number of 15-24 year olds who are homeless or ‘at risk’ of homelessness excludes the above data for the following reasons:

- the information on family status and earnings is not available; and
- the estimates derived rest on an increasing number of assumptions and surmises, which are likely to be increasingly unreliable.

In other words, the information required to make estimates in addition to the 41,400 figure, and of commensurate validity, is unavailable. Nevertheless, the 41,400 estimate retains its plausibility and validity. It is the most reliable estimate, is based on sound assumptions (unemployed young people receive unemployment benefits as their main or sole source of income), ABS data, and is not jeopardised or undermined by inflating it with data about which an increasing number of assumptions must be made and for which there is little corroborating data.

5.6 However, the excluded data may facilitate two further observations. Firstly, if the above data on labour force status, part or full-time employment are excluded from the estimate, it may provide an indication of the extent of the under-estimation. There were 28,700 young people 15-24 years of age in August 1987 who were in full-time employment and receiving less than $120 per week. As their family status is not known this number were excluded from the 41,400 estimate. In February 1988, a similar number (28,830) were working part-time and not family members. As the weekly earnings of this number is unknown, they were excluded from the calculations which lead to the 41,400 estimate. In February 1988, 25,511 young people were not in the labour force and not family members. As the earnings of this number is unknown, they were also excluded from the 41,400 estimate. Thus, there were 83,000 15-24 year olds an indeterminate number of whom may be homeless or ‘at risk’ of becoming homeless. It is impossible to even guess the extent of homelessness among this group and they are therefore excluded.
from the 41,400 estimate. However, that some of the 83,000 are homeless or ‘at risk’ of becoming homeless is beyond doubt. If this additional data cannot be used to estimate the number of young people, it provides convincing evidence that the 41,400 figure is an underestimate. To what extent, is impossible to determine.

5.7 Secondly, the 83,000 figure excluded from the minimum estimate may indicate the range of those who are homeless or ‘at risk’ of becoming homeless. It is likely that at least one quarter of the 83,000 excluded are homeless or ‘at risk’ of homelessness making an estimate of between about 40,000 and 60,000.

12-15 year olds who are Homeless

58 Estimating the number of 12-15 year olds who are homeless is extremely difficult, particularly as the most recent and reliable survey undertaken by NYCH (Gardiner and O’Neil 1987) provides little or no specific information about age. This notwithstanding, perhaps the most accurate method of estimation is to use the NYCH survey of YSAP services. The percentage of the 12-15 age group found in the SAAP National Client Data Collection is then used to estimate the number of 12-15-year-olds in the NYCH survey. (The SAAP National Client Data Collection is rejected as the source of estimation because the results gained are not as extensive as the NYCH survey; the age breakdown in the SAAP National Client Data Collection is used because it contains the only breakdown by age with a large sample: 3,360.)

59 The NYCH survey found that YSAP agencies received 13,709 referrals or inquiries in the period July 1986-June 1987. If the SAAP National Client Data Collection figure that 23% of people in YSAP services are 12-15-year-olds is representative, then 3,153 young people in the NYCH study could be reasonably expected to be aged 12-15 years. As the response rate to the NYCH survey was only 37% (103 out of 280), it is likely that this is a serious under-estimate, despite the possible multiple counting in the survey. If it is assumed that there was a 100% response rate, the numbers of referrals to YSAP agencies would have been approximately 37,051. 23% of this figure is 8,522. (23% is the proportion of 12-15-year-olds in the SAAP National Client Data Collection.) This estimate of 9,000 (to the nearest thousand) is likely to be a minimum figure and represents the number of 12-15-year-olds who are homeless (because they requested accommodation) and excludes an ‘at risk’ component. In June 1987, the latest data available, there were 1,074,489 12-15-year-olds in Australia (ABS Catalogue 3201.0). Thus:

approximately 1 in every 1,000 Australian 12-15-year-olds is homeless.

The Estimated Number of Homeless Young People in Australia

5.10 The previous estimations allow the following conclusion:

There are approximately 50,000 homeless young people aged 12-25 in Australia, consisting of 8,500 young people aged 12-15 who are homeless and 41,400 aged 15-24 who are homeless or ‘at risk’ of becoming homeless. It is emphasized that this estimate understates the extent of the housing problems young people experience. It should be regarded as an absolute minimum figure.

5.11 If the estimate of additional figures of young people who might be homeless or ‘at risk’ of becoming homeless is added to the 50,000 estimate above, then the extent or range of homelessness among young people in Australia is probably in the vicinity of between 50,000 and 70,000. This range is less reliable than the 50,000 estimate, although it is not a totally unsubstantiated claim and its inclusion means that the range is well under the 100,000 15-24-year-olds who live in after-housing-cost poverty.

5.12 It may appear that the above estimates are inflated because 15 years is used in both age categories. (See section 5.10). However, in February 1988 there were no data recorded for 15-year-olds (either male or female) who were unemployed and not a member of a family.
6.1 The following consideration of alternative methods of estimation is formulated in terms of a brief research proposal in which utilization of regional data on incidence is incorporated. In order to overcome some of the problems with survey methods, three requirements must be fulfilled. Firstly, it is imperative that all agencies respond and complete individual forms and questionnaires accurately. Secondly, as surveys of YSAP agencies will not provide a full picture of those who have requested accommodation, organisations which are not funded by YSAP (such as GSAP and WESP) and other, non-funded, services must be included in the survey. Thirdly, it is necessary to calculate the extent of double or multiple counting in order to attain an accurate picture of the extent of homelessness and, if necessary, to pre empt any attempt to discredit the surveys. Should some agencies not respond to the survey a follow-up survey must be undertaken.

6.2 It is desirable that the length of the survey be a minimum of three months and a maximum of 12 months. There exist several disadvantages in both options. For example, in a three month period extrapolations are required to acquire annual data; in a twelve month period the chances of multiple counting increase. Arguments for both are delicately balanced, and the resources which the non-government sector would be required to devote to such a survey is acknowledged. This notwithstanding, if the co-operation of the agencies could be secured, the balance weighs in favour of surveying over a longer period, preferably over 12 months. Such a survey would be regarded as the first tier in a three level research program. It is therefore recommended:

That a national survey of all agencies providing various forms of shelter and accommodation be conducted over a 12 month period in order to calculate the number of young people who request such services. In addition to a survey of organisations funded under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (YSAP, and GSAP and WESP where appropriate), the co-operation of other relevant services, both government and non-government, should be sought.

6.3 Simultaneously, and as the second tier of the research program, a regular census of the young people who are accommodated and the requests for accommodation (perhaps once every three months) should be undertaken. A pilot project may be necessary to establish the nature and scope of a valid census. Previous attempts to 'locate' the homeless using survey 'recapture' techniques, the number of times they present to agencies, and thus the extent of multiple counting, may provide a useful precedent (Darcy and Jones 1975; Hart 1979).

6.4 An integral part and third tier of the proposed research program envisages a comprehensive examination of the regions in which services are based. During the survey period data from Local Government Authorities (LGAs) regarding the regional population of young people could be collected. A comparison of the number of young people who have requested or are accommodated by various organisations in a specific LGA could then be compared with the number of young people resident in an LGA. Further information may be gained by asking young people the suburb of their last place of residence. If questions locating the agency were included in the agency survey, useful comparisons might be possible. A survey of this variety may enable a calculation of the incidence of homelessness in a particular region. One problem with such a scheme is that the results may depend on the number of services in a given LGA. A related question is: does demand for accommodation reflect the number of agencies in a LGA or are the agencies located in the area because of the demand? While such a question may be interesting, it does not detract from the overriding importance of a national survey.

6.5 As the above research proposal requires the co-operation of the non-government sector, it is imperative that an organisation acceptable to, and representative of, the field co-ordinate and undertake any future research. The peak body representing the youth housing field is the National Youth Coalition for Housing. It is therefore recommended:

That any future survey research on the extent of homelessness among young people be co-ordinated and undertaken by the National Youth Coalition for Housing.
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INTRODUCTION

The responsibilities of persons other than parents and guardians have received little analysis in the legal literature. The question is, however, of some importance in connection with homeless children, who might frequently find themselves in the company, or care, of persons other than their parents or guardians, for example when they are staying at youth refuges. For convenience, such adults will be referred to here as ‘stranger-caregivers’. In this advice an attempt will be made to draw together the main areas of law relevant to this topic.

NO GENERAL DUTY TOWARDS CHILDREN AS SUCH

There appears to be no legally identifiable duty towards children as such in our legal system. The relation between strangers (this term will be used here to mean persons having no status as parents or guardians) and children is, in the first instance, governed by the ordinary rules of tort and crime.

Thus, negligent behaviour that injures a child may attract tortious liability whether or not the wrongdoer was a parent or guardian. For some duties of care, the age of the victim may be irrelevant. For example, the occupier of premises would owe a duty to children and adults alike to take reasonable measures to avoid risks of fire or structural collapse. The age of the victim can be relevant, however, notably where it is such that, in the circumstances, reasonable care involves measures that take account of a child’s youthful vulnerabilities. Thus, it may be negligent to hand a child a loaded gun, but not negligent to hand the same gun to an adult; and it may be negligent to leave a toddler in a yard with an open gate to a busy road. The difference will diminish in the case of older children, and in many respects older homeless children may be treated as adults. It may be, however, that some degree of supervision or care is required in the case of older children. For example, it may, in particular circumstances, be negligent to leave a disturbed child alone with younger children in a room containing alcohol and things that could be used as weapons. As always in the case of tortious liability, the whole of the circumstances will be taken into account, and it is difficult to do more than state the basic principle, that the stranger-caregiver would owe to the child a duty to take care that is reasonable in all the circumstances. In the case of a youth refuge or similar place, evidence could be led on such matters as the usual practice, the resources available to those in charge, the common behaviour of the residents, and similar matters.

The main point is that parenthood, and legal guardianship and custody, have little if any relevance to tortious liability. The duty in tort arises from the circumstances, not from the status of the stranger-caregiver as a parent or guardian. In a recent case, a two-year-old was injured when her father left her in a car with her four-year-old brother who started a fire with matches left in the car. The father was found to be in breach of a duty of care. It is submitted that the position would be the same if the driver of the car had been, not the father, but a person having temporary care of homeless children. Thus, cases on the liability of occupiers, and on the liability of schools for injuries to children, provide guidance on the circumstances in which liability will be established. In the same way, criminal liability for offences against children is generally indifferent to the legal relationship between the offender and the child. An important exception to this general proposition is the justification of lawful authority, under which a parent or person in loco parentis may be entitled to slap a child while a stranger would, by the same action, commit assault. Most of the cases involve corporal punishment, but the same analysis would appear to apply to other disciplinary measures. For example, to confine a child to a room would constitute the tort of false imprisonment unless it was justified; for a parent or person in loco parentis to do so by way of reasonable punishment would fall within the defence of lawful authority. This defence is considered further below.
NO SPECIFIC RULES RELATING TO STRANGER-CAREGIVERS

There is no legislation that specifically governs the relationship between children and stranger-caregivers. Nor does there appear to be a body of case law on the topic. This is perhaps not surprising. When children run away from home, or otherwise find themselves with stranger-caregivers, the legal questions that are most likely to arise relate to the future care of the children. This question is governed either by the child welfare system or, if there are competing claims relating to custody or access, by custody law, which is based on the principle that the court should make whatever order it considers will best promote the welfare of the child. In such proceedings, therefore, the question will be determined by reference to the child's future welfare and there will be no need for the court to rule on the responsibilities of the stranger-caregivers. Other legal questions that might arise include issues of criminal or civil neglect of the child by the stranger-caregivers. As will be seen, such issues appear to turn on the ordinary laws of crime and tort and would not be likely to lead to determinations of the legal responsibilities of the stranger-caregivers.

CRIMINAL LIABILITY OF STRANGER-CAREGIVERS

The ordinary criminal law governs the relationship between children and stranger-caregivers. This body of law includes, as well as the range of offences against the person (from assault to murder), the offences of abusing children in one's care, culpably failing to provide the child with necessary food, clothing, and the like.

Broadly speaking, the criminal law traditionally dealt with actions, not with the failure to take action: it protected against interpersonal violence, not against interpersonal indifference. This bias, which no doubt reflects the traditional concern of the criminal law with keeping the peace, left young children unprotected, for they are uniquely vulnerable to neglect: their lives depend on their needs being attended to by those having their care. Not surprisingly, therefore, there are statutory provisions criminalising the culpable neglect of children in one's care in all Australian jurisdictions.4

There are differences in the terms of these provisions, especially on the question whether the offence is committed only where some identifiable harm is done to the child. In all jurisdictions, however, there are provisions which apply to any person having the care of children, rather than solely to parents or guardians. It is clear, therefore, that stranger-caregivers may be criminally liable if they assault or commit other offences against children, or if they commit criminal neglect.

It is not entirely clear whether stranger-caregivers have the right to control and administer discipline to the children in their care. Discipline here includes corporal punishment, but also includes, for example, confining a child to a room, something that, if not legally authorised, would constitute the tort of false imprisonment. By 'control' I have in mind the exercise of physical restraint that would, if not legally authorised, constitute assault. An example would be holding back a toddler who was determined to stagger into a busy road. More difficult cases include the restraint of older children whose behaviour disrupts, say, a youth refuge. In such cases, of course, the stranger-caregiver might be more likely to exclude the troublesome child than to attempt discipline. Such exclusion would appear to be perfectly lawful if it was in all the circumstances reasonable. If exclusion seemed likely to expose the child to harm, however, the stranger-caregiver might well be under a duty to give advance notice to the police or the child welfare department. The authorities suggest that the right to control and discipline children exists not only in persons having parental responsibilities but those who are 'in loco parentis'. In general, this phrase refers to persons such as schoolteachers who temporarily have care of children and whose care derives from legal authority, either based on the consent of the parent or a statutory scheme such as the legislation on education. It is less clear whether authority to discipline children is possessed by persons who have the physical care of children but do not have legal authority over them. No such case appears to have been reported.

It is submitted that the better view is that stranger-caregivers do have a right to administer moderate and reasonable punishment. The argument is that the right arises not from delegated parental rights but from the necessities of caring for children. It may be, of course, that the lack of general legal authority in the stranger-caregivers is relevant to what, in a particular case, constitutes 'reasonable' control and discipline. It may well be that a schoolteacher or other person having proper authority over the child would be acting
'reasonably' in exercising discipline aimed at improving the child, while a stranger-caregiver, often having quite a short period of care for the child, might be justified only in doing what is necessary for the child's short term safety and welfare. A schoolteacher might be justified in punishing a child for rudeness with a view to improving the child's general behaviour, while a worker in a children's refuge might not be justified in punishing the same behaviour. It may be that in the context of a refuge some form of punishment would be justifiable on a different ground, namely the need to maintain order in the refuge.

**DUTIES OF CARE OWED TO CHILDREN**

There is no doubt that the ordinary principles of negligence law apply in the case of stranger-caregivers. The relationship between stranger-caregivers and children would undoubtedly have the relationship of 'proximity' which gives rise to a duty to take reasonable care.' It would be a question of fact in each case what care was 'reasonable'. Those in charge of a youth refuge would, as indicated above, be liable to children injured by their negligence on exactly the same principles as those in charge of schools or children's homes, although the precise behaviour required by the standard of 'reasonable care' would depend on all the circumstances, including conditions at the refuge. It may well be, for example, that the degree of control of the stranger-caregiver over the children in the circumstances of a refuge or similar place might be considerably less than that of a schoolteacher.

A more difficult question is whether the duty of care owed to the child might include, in particular circumstances, a duty to notify the parents of his or her whereabouts. The question turns on the nature of the duty of care. The case law on negligence suggests that the duty is a duty to take reasonable care for the physical safety and health of the child, as distinct from a more general duty to promote the child's welfare. If this is so, then there would be a duty to notify parents only if failure to do so could be shown to increase the risk to the child. Normally, this would be difficult to prove. A stranger-caregiver who stopped a child from staggering onto a busy road, or ensured that the premises were safe, would have done all that the law of negligence requires. The only situation I can think of where it would be different would be a case where the child needed medical attention, and notifying the parents was necessary to make this possible. This would have limited application, since it is clear law that in emergencies lifesaving medical procedures may be carried out without parental consent.

A different result would be reached if the courts were to consider that the duty owed to a child was wider than this, and comprised a general duty to attend to the child's welfare in a wider sense than ensuring the child's physical security. On such a view, it might be negligent to fail to notify parents of the child's situation. However, even if this view were taken, liability would be complete only on proof of damage, and in the absence of physical harm this would normally seem difficult.

To sum up, in my view stranger-caregivers owe to children in their care the duty to take reasonable care to ensure their continued health and physical safety. It is possible that the law might be extended by judicial decision to include a wider duty to attend to the welfare of the child, but even on this assumption stranger-caregivers would be liable only if their breach of this duty could be shown to have caused some damage or harm to the child.

**A GENERAL DUTY TO NOTIFY PARENTS?**

A question of some practical importance is whether stranger-caregivers have a general legal duty to notify the parents or guardians of the whereabouts of the child, or of other information (other than by reference to the arguments based on negligence law considered above). To my knowledge there is no legislation or judicial authority creating such a general duty.'

Another argument for the same conclusion derives from the House of Lords decision in Gillick's Case. In that case, the House considered the correctness of advice given to doctors by the Department of Health to the effect that in certain circumstances they would be entitled to administer contraceptive treatment or advice to minors without informing the parents. Their Lordships concluded that the advice was not wrong in law. It is not necessary to discuss in any detail the reasoning that led to that much-discussed conclusion. The present point is only that none of the extensively-researched speeches indicated that there was any positive rule on a person having contact with or care of a child to inform the parent of the child's whereabouts or of other information relating to the child. Such a rule would have been highly relevant to
the decision and, if there were any authority for it, one would expect it to have been discussed. The holding in the case, that in some circumstances medical practitioners are entitled to treat minors in confidence without their parents' knowledge, is inconsistent with a rule of the kind now under consideration. In my opinion, therefore, there is no positive duty under the general law requiring stranger-caregivers to notify parents or guardians of the whereabouts of their children or of any other information relating to the child.

PARENTS' RIGHTS TO THEIR CHILDREN'S SERVICES
There is old authority for the proposition that parents have a right to their children's services. This right was enforceable only indirectly. It was the theoretical basis for action against third parties who took children away, or injured them: the parent had an action against the wrongdoing third party for the loss of the parent's right to the child's services. However, the parent, it seemed, could not enforce this right directly against the child.

The status of this principle in modern law is far from clear. In theory, it seems possible that it could provide a basis for an action by a parent against a stranger-caregiver. However, in practice such an action seems unlikely, if only for the reason that in general children are an economic liability rather than an economic asset to the parents, so that in most cases the parent would find it difficult to establish financial loss resulting from the wrongful act.

HARBOURING OR CONCEALING AN ABSCONDING WARD
In all jurisdictions, the legislation contains provisions making it an offence to harbour or conceal a State ward who has absconded. There are also offences relating to interfering in the lives of children who are in children's homes. There are of course provisions for the return of wards who run away. It is also an offence to hinder or obstruct a person in the exercise of duties under the child welfare legislation. In the A.C.T. the offence is to remove or procure the removal of a child from the care of a person into whose care the child has been placed under the Children's Services Ordinance.

CONCLUSION
This summary indicates that there is no established set of rules governing the relationship between children and stranger-caregivers. Instead, ordinary rules of law apply, with some modification, notably in the possible right of the stranger-caregiver to administer reasonable punishment or exercise physical control of the child in limited circumstances. The absence of recent reported case law in this area may indicate that whatever problems arise in such relationships are usually resolved without recourse to the courts.
Notes


3. See, Family Law Act 1975 (Cwlth), s.60D.

4. Children (Care and Protection) Act 1987 (NSW), ss.25, 26; Community Welfare Services Act 1970 (Vic), s.81, and cf Children and Young Persons Bill 1987 (Vic), cl.261; Children’s Services Act 1965 (Qld), s.69; Community Welfare Act 1972 (SA), s.92; Child Welfare Act 1947 (WA), ss.31A; Child Welfare Act 1960 (Tas), s.66; Children’s Services Ordinance 1986 (ACT), s.139; Criminal Code Act 1983 (NT), ss.183, 184.

5. There are however some additional offences concerning failure to maintain children, which apply only to parents or guardians or other persons with pre-existing legal duties to maintain children.


The Children (Care and Protection) Amendment Act 1988 (NSW) includes provisions (Schedule 1, amending ss.14, 16) requiring the Director-General to keep parents informed of the whereabouts of a child in the Director-General’s care, but does not impose such a duty on other persons.


11. See, eg, Community Welfare Services Act 1970 (Vic), s.83.

12. Eg, Community Welfare Services Act 1970 (Vic), s.84.

13. See, eg, Children’s Services Ordinance 1986 (ACT), s.113.

14. See, eg, Children’s Services Ordinance 1986 (ACT), s.154.

15. Children’s Services Ordinance 1986 (ACT), s.140.
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