

PART II

THE DIMENSIONS OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

CHAPTER 5

THE EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

What do I most hope for? That I die pretty quick.'

I wanted to be loved. I wanted someone to care for me, and for a place to stay. Because you just can't, like I said, you can't survive on \$50.²

INTRODUCTION

5.1 The Inquiry's definition of homelessness refers to lack of shelter that is permanent, adequate and secure and a vulnerability, as a result both of this lack of shelter and of the lifestyle it imposes, to exploitation and abuse. This chapter examines, in some detail, the reality of life for homeless children and young people. Other chapters detail particular aspects of this reality: the lack of affordable and accessible, secure and adequate permanent accommodation in either the public or the private sector; the over-extension of existing supported accommodation options and resultant high turn-away rates; the unsuitability of many services when access is gained; the difficulty of securing income support and the inadequacy of that support once secured; and the lack of health and legal services and job training and employment programs.

5.2 In this chapter, these matters are considered from the point of view of young homeless people themselves. The survival aspects of the lifestyle — the options and actions resorted to, including criminal behaviour and prostitution — are also described. We consider the issues of drug and alcohol abuse along with other self-destructive behaviour. Our sources are evidence presented to the Inquiry by homeless young people themselves and by youth workers and interviews with 100 homeless children and young people commissioned by the Inquiry from Dr Ian O'Connor' and conducted during 1988 in Brisbane, Kings Cross, the Gold Coast and Canberra/Queanbeyan.⁴

DURATION OF HOMELESSNESS

5.3 As discussed above, homeless children and young people do not fit a single mould. Their reasons for becoming homeless vary considerably. Their skills and maturity also vary, including within the under-18 age group the Inquiry was particularly concerned with. Their needs will therefore also vary. It is clear, although proportions cannot be allocated, that homeless children and young people fall into at least three categories, based on duration of homelessness.

5.4 A proportion leave home for quite short periods, but are able to return after 'cooling-off'. Evidence submitted to the Inquiry, however, indicates that these episodes are repeated for some and lead eventually to a premature break with the family. For example, a 15-year-old witness stated:

I have been in and out of home for about 12 months and I have not lived at home for the last five months. I have lived in places including squats, on the streets, St Vincent De Paul, and in shelters with mates and at the refuge...'

5.5 A second group are permanently detached from their families but need only a minimum of support, and perhaps some luck, in order to move into independent living situations. Homelessness for them is, potentially at least, a temporary crisis. A small-scale study of self-identifying 'streetkids' conducted in Perth in 1986 revealed that, in that city, most children move beyond homelessness within six months.' Unfortunately, again, evidence shows that more recently many of these young people are hindered in their progress towards independence by the low levels of Federal income support payments and the lack of public and private sector housing options.

5.6 A third group are the chronically homeless. They are young people who, for whatever reason, are unable to move on to independent living situations. The reasons may include age, intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, poor education, inadequate living skills, and extreme poverty. In particular, there is little in the way of support services for adolescents. 15-year-olds especially seem to fall through the net, such as it is, extended by State welfare departments to children in need of care and by the Federal Department of Social Security to young people approaching adulthood. One recent study has suggested that, 'Although the chronically homeless are a disparate group, they share a profound alienation from society.'

5.7 In Melbourne the Inquiry was told:

we have. ..got a very high population of young people who are experts on the system. They have been going through it for so many years now that they are finding it very difficult to stay in any one period of accommodation. They come to us for a period of time but because their lives up to now have been so transient they do not have the skills to be able to settle down in any one place. They are not coping in the support programs. They are not coping in the hostels. They certainly do not have the skills to be able to find the employment and the money to get private board.

What we are finding is that some of these young people were at [the refuge] when they were 13 or 14. They are now coming back at 18 and 19•'

Concern was expressed to the Inquiry that agencies participating in 'that shuffle around of people are actually participating in creating chronic homelessness'. We address this particular issue further in Chapter 15, Youth Supported Accommodation Program.

IN THE BEGINNING

5.8 In Ian O'Connor's study, over one-half (54) of the young people interviewed reported that they had had their first experience of homelessness while 14 or younger.⁶ One of O'Connor's female respondents described her initial experience of homelessness:

I was on the streets for about a week. With nowhere to go. [I slept] just in the gutter or anywhere. Or in the snooker rooms in the Cross. Anywhere really."

Finding somewhere safe to sleep is necessary but extremely difficult.

Weil I just used to travel around on trains during the night until we got busted for not having tickets., .Then we just sleep in the parks or walk round up there in the Cross.'

A young Hobart witness told the Inquiry:

You do not think, right, I'll go to bed at 10.30. I'll go and sleep under a bridge at 10.30. When you are on the streets you basically sleep where you drop, because you can almost guarantee that, if you have any money on you whatsoever when you go to sleep, you won't wake up with it. You'll wake up with a lot of cuts and bruises too. So you are very worried about going to sleep."

Sean was 'kicked out of home' at 13 and, after a short period staying in a friend's home, moved onto the streets:

I would sleep in abandoned buildings."

5.9 Some of O'Connor's respondents expressed fear of approaching youth refuges.

I thought of just going to a refuge, stay at a refuge. But I thought to myself, if I go on and do that, they're going to call the police and lock me up. So I just slept on the street."

Others simply lacked all knowledge of refuges and other accommodation options. Some went to the police for help. At least three respondents had directly approached the police seeking to be accommodated in a police station or watchhouse.'

5.10 Evidence to the Inquiry indicates that many young people, particularly those under 15 or 16, first find shelter with other relatives or with friends and their parents when they leave home. One of O'Connor's respondents, for example, was thrown out of home at 13 and stayed with the parents of a

school friend. Eventually, however, they asked him to leave as they could no longer support him. He went to the home of another friend but the pattern repeated itself. Eventually he had to leave school and find employment." Another respondent, also evicted by his mother (at nine years of age), lived at first with his grandmother, then was returned home only to be rejected again.'

5.11 For many, however, the support of friends and relatives does not last and homelessness at its • worst may follow.

[It] provides a partial solution in that shelter is provided, but the shelter is experienced by the young person as temporary. They are not there as of right nor are they paying their way."

A young homeless witness in Adelaide told the Inquiry:

I want to talk about how we survive on the streets. To start off with, being a girl, you have to beg, rob, fight or turn to prostitution...from the age of 12, I used to eat out of rubbish bins, sleep in clothing bins or I used to go to the Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul, Daughters of Charity and Second Story to get something to eat!

ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

5.12 As described in Part IV of this Report, homeless children and young people have few accommodation options available to them. Barriers to accommodation that is secure, affordable and adequate include cost, low incomes, housing shortages, discrimination by landlords and agents, assumed legal barriers, public housing authority exclusionary policies and long waiting times. Even refuge accommodation is difficult to obtain for many, as described in greater detail in Chapter 15, Youth Supported Accommodation Program. As a result of these barriers, young people can spend years in very unstable and risky living situations.

5.13 Of 58 'homeless' high school students in Palmerston, Northern Territory, about one-quarter (24%) found alternative accommodation with relatives, 17% (10) stayed with friends, 19% (11) were accommodated by the welfare authorities, and one was found foster accommodation. Some 20%, however, had no alternative accommodation.

Some were doing things like just sleeping out in the open. Others were doing things like at about ten or eleven at night one of their friends would open a back window and they would crawl in or the friend would organise for them to sleep down in the garden shed or something like that...¹

5.14 O'Connor reported that:

The lack of stable, permanent and adequate accommodation was central to one group of young people's definition of homelessness."

One respondent stated that homelessness meant:

When you haven't got anywhere to live or you have got somewhere to live but it's not a place of your own. You get chucked around every week from one place to another and you're totally relying on other people. You've got no money of your own. You probably haven't got your own room and you're just travelling round all the time looking for somewhere more permanent."

Other respondents also raised the issues of instability, dependence, lack of privacy, lack of support and vulnerability.

5.15 O'Connor found that a number of the young people in his sample lived on the streets for substantial periods, involved in 'an ongoing struggle to meet basic material needs'.²⁴ A witness from the Brotherhood of St Laurence in Melbourne stated:

One of the things that concerns me greatly is the number of young people coming in who actually only have the clothing that they stand up in. They would have slept out probably for the last seven nights in all sorts of outdoor accommodation that they had been able to locate — it is not structured — and they are looking for a change of clothes, something to eat and somewhere to stay."

5.16 A Salvation Army representative in Newcastle told the Inquiry of a 15-year-old girl who had, when he met her, already spent two years living in women's toilets in Lake Macquarie and Newcastle. She had spent some nights like this in the company of girls of 12 and 13.²⁶

5.17 The risks involved in this lifestyle for such young women are enormous. Tracey, aged 15 and now working as a prostitute in Kings Cross, stated:

I have had a lot a bad times living on the street getting raped all the time and the police do not care either."

5.18 Squatting is often necessary and would appear to be on the increase with the shortage of other options. In Melbourne the Inquiry was told:

The Squatters Union in Victoria reports a substantial increase in the number of calls from young people, many with a view to mass squatting; that is, a large group of young people squatting together, pooling their money and supporting each other."

5.19 Squatting too holds its dangers, particularly for young women. Liza, aged 17, now sleeps out in Kings Cross:

otherwise you have to go down to squats, which is a danger. It's just a bit stupid." A Newcastle youth worker told the Inquiry:

I do not know of any girl that has come through our centre that has not been some way sexually affected away from home in the squat situation — whether that has been an occurrence of violence in rape or just a promiscuous way of life.'

5.20 A young Geelong witness told the Inquiry of the types of accommodation he had used since leaving home at 14:

I...lived in Kings Park in Perth for a while, lived in Park Street in South Melbourne in the back of a panel van for quite a while. I have lived in cars a few times, and this has been mostly because of not being able to afford housing...

Living in a house is one thing, but feeling at home is another because you can live in the house always with the threat of — well the house is pretty run-down.. it is the sort of place that you are going to get chucked out of soon because they want to pull it down. I have lived in quite a few places like that. Always the threat of just scraping through to pay the rent this week...³¹

5.21 This pattern of instability was also the experience of a 16-year-old Brisbane witness who told the Inquiry:

Because I had no money I had to sleep on beaches and in bus shelters. I came down to Brisbane with a friend two and a half years ago and we met some guys who invited me to stay with them. It was a two. bedroom flat with 10 people living in it. I had all my pillows, sheets, towels and clothes stolen and we had a lot of trouble collecting the rent from other people, until finally we got evicted when the landlord found out that there were 10 people instead of three.

So I went to my auntie's house for two months to save up some bond money and three of us moved into a one-bedroom flat where I had to sleep on the lounge room floor. All of us were homeless and we had a lot of friends stay over because they had nowhere to go. We were all on the dole and we were getting behind in our rent so we got evicted again. Then I moved in with a Fijian bloke that I had heard about. The first night I was there he climbed into bed with me and asked me to have sex with him. I moved out straight away.

Then I moved into my boyfriend's house, who lived with his brother. His brother was into drugs and we had the police coming around all the time. I finally moved out of there. I went down the coast where I had a job and lived in a caravan but it was a really rough area and I did not like being by myself. I had to put my age up to 18 just to sign the lease. When I came back to Brisbane we borrowed some bond money from families. Three people moved into a house — it was \$135 per week because we had to get it privately because we cannot sign a lease.

In the end there were 12 people living there instead of three, six of whom we did not know. They broke furniture, stole all the money for our bills and we were given a month's notice to get out. We got no bond back. I then moved in with two friends of mine temporarily for one of them was having a baby. When she finally had the baby they said I would have to leave..."

5.22 A Fremantle witness also told the Inquiry that such instability in accommodation affects an even greater number of children and young people than those who spend long periods living on the streets:

the real dominant problem is overcrowded, unstable, unsatisfactory housing, dispersed housing where one young person has...different parts of his gear in three or four different places...the floating people who drift amongst such friends as they can maintain."

5.23 Refuge-hopping is a very real lifestyle for a great many young people. The YSAP Evaluation found, for example, that only 8% of clients moving into one YSAP service from another would move on to their family home. Of young people using a YSAP service who had arrived there from their own or another private home or from another SAAP service, almost one-quarter moved on to yet another SAAP service? This lifestyle of 'refuge-hopping' does not allow the young person 'to develop a social context with stable peers, or long-term supportive relationships with significant adults'. The person 'is never in one place long enough to consider finishing his [or her] schooling or seeking employment. He [or she] is always "on the run".'

5.24 The accommodation options for girls and young women are more problematic than those for boys, although boys are also at risk of exploitation and abuse (see Chapter 15, Youth Supported Accommodation Program).

...young women live on the streets or in the railway stations, and even in mixed refuges as an undesirable last resort. Young women will stay in violent, dangerous and inappropriate places where they are housed, rather than become visibly homeless..."

5.25 O'Connor's respondents indicated that there is a shortage of shelter accommodation for young women.³⁷ This was borne out in other evidence to the Inquiry and is discussed in detail in Chapter 15.

I went to Redhead in Newcastle — no vacancies for females. Everywhere I went — no vacancies for females...most of them are male that stay there.

I came here Sunday night — there was no vacancies for females. Came back here not yesterday but the day before — one of them went to hospital so I stayed here. She came back yesterday so I slept in the reading room with the heater.'

5.26 Young women have reported experiencing sexual harassment and violence in refuges.

The majority of users in youth refuges are males. Therefore the environment is dominated by males and this means that sexual harassment or even rape can occur."

5.27 Some of the young women in O'Connor's study also expressed their fear of violence and exploitation in mainstream accommodation:

...women can't live with men really, unless you've known them for a long time. While men can just move into any share house. I mean they're not likely to get harassed or raped, while women can't move in with most men."

...if a female moves in with a total male stranger, you never know what he's like and he could try something.'

...if you try and get a room and there's guys living there, they'll just take advantage of you and say, 'Yeah, you can stay here for free, but you know I want this out of you and that!'

5.28 A number of O'Connor's respondents referred to the pressure to prostitute oneself in exchange for shelter." Several respondents had been in this situation themselves. Sybil, aged 17, stated that she 'did sleep with people for a roof over my head!'. Rozanna, 16, and Gerard felt, like Sybil, that they had no real choice in the matter."

529 Another of O'Connor's respondents, Anna, reported that she had left home recently at 15: She headed for Bondi and slept on the beach her first night away from home. Next day a stranger approached her and offered to let her stay."

After two months, however, everything began to go wrong.

Her 'benefactor's' husband not only raped her on a number of occasions but infected her with genital herpes and warts. By chance, Anna came to the attention of the police and was placed in a refuge."

At the time of the interview Anna, still aged 15, had moved from Sydney to the Gold Coast and was working as a stripper."

530 Maria, now aged 16, had a similar background. After years of physical and sexual abuse from her father, she left home. She found employment through a male friend with whom she started living since she had little money and no accommodation. However, he would bash her. With almost no money and nowhere to go she persevered in this situation for some months."

INCOME

531 The evidence which emerged from O'Connor's research led him to the conclusion that: Those young people who leave or are forced out of home at short notice are rarely in receipt of an income."

Thus, this initial period can be expected to be accompanied by considerable hardship for many. By the time they were interviewed, 27 of the 100 respondents had no source of income at all. Another 17 relied on family or friends."

532 In Chapter 14, Income Support for Homeless Young People, the evidence critical of the lengthy waiting periods for government income support payments is detailed. The point is made there that a total lack of income in this period often forces young people to turn to prostitution, other exploitive relationships and/or crime to survive. A 16-year-old witness told the Inquiry in Brisbane:

When I first left home [at 13] I applied for Special Benefits from social security. That was delayed for three to four months. During that time, the only money that I got was from stealing and I had to stay with various friends and their parents."

533 Many of O'Connor's respondents had experienced difficulties obtaining government income support payments such as the Job Search Allowance and the Young Homeless Allowance. Of the 100 homeless adolescents interviewed, 29 were in receipt of the Job Search Allowance but only 19 received the Young Homeless Allowance (although three times that number had applied). 35 of the respondents had not bothered to apply for the Young Homeless Allowance."

534 Meeting the eligibility requirements was a major difficulty for most of the young homeless people contacted both by and on behalf of the Inquiry.

I'd shown them all the identification I had, birth certificate, Learner's Permit and some other thing...then they sent out a letter that said there was insufficient identification."

A 17-year-old homeless woman in Melbourne told the Inquiry:

I have applied for Young Homeless Allowance but that is very, very, very difficult to get on to. Also the.. Job Search Allowance. That also takes a long time to come through. So really I just have to sit back and wait and see if I can get on to them before I can really do anything."

535 Once secured, the benefit may even be vulnerable to termination as a result of the lifestyle of homelessness. One of O'Connor's respondents, for example, claimed to have had her benefits terminated 'about 20 times' in three years:

Sometimes they think I've got a job. If I change my address on the form. If I change my bank account number on the form.. .Sometimes they even lose my form that I hand in, so I don't get it and they blame me for it."

5.36 Those receiving the Job Search Allowance at the independent rate of \$50 described the difficulty of making ends meet.

You can't survive on it. Now you work it out. You pay \$25 to \$30 a week board...Out of the \$20 you've got left for the week, you've got to feed yourself. If you're a girl you've got to look after yourself... monthly, and if you want to take precautions you have to buy the Pill, smokes, food,. It can't be done."

O'Connor reported that many young homeless people 'survive on the margins of society' begging, prostituting themselves, stealing, dealing drugs and so on.

Offending

5.37 In O'Connor's survey:

The interviews showed that homeless young people engaged in a wide variety of offending, from avoiding fares on public transport to robbery with violence in order to survive or supplement their income.^o

A 1986 study of 'streetkids' in Perth made a similar finding. To the date of the survey, 33 former street-kids had committed 1,429 offences (an average of 43.3 per person) while 20 current streetkids had committed 370 offences (an average of 18.5 per person).

These offences were mostly against property (eg. break and enter; stealing and receiving) and traffic (eg. driving without a licence, careless driving). It appears that all those young people who identified themselves as streetkids, had committed several relatively minor offences."

5.38 Shop-lifting and breaking and entering were common among O'Connor's sample. When asked what they did for food, James and Clare replied as follows:

Well, we'd go down to shops...and nick the food...Sometimes we'd go out, break into houses and get the money and that, or go and break into shopping centres or bowling clubs and that.^o

Pinched, just pinched it. Just break and enters and all that stuff.⁶ⁱ

Another respondent, when asked what he did for food when he first left

home, stated: Stole food out of the shops and things like that. Money? Stole that too."

Another formerly homeless young person stated:

Homelessness to me was a feeling of death. There is nowhere to go, no-one to see and no-one who cares. People generally believe you are a bum and were always meant to live a homeless existence.

Beside the feeling of shame and uselessness is the feeling of terror and hunger. Hunger can turn a person into a madman. The desire for food greatly exceeds the thought of right and wrong and in many cases I stole to survive."

5.39 In Sydney, in particular, resort to robbery with violence was admitted by some respondents.

Sometimes I'd granny snatch. .when ladies are walking past you just run up and grab their bag.. .^o

When asked how homeless young people obtain money in Kings Cross one witness, himself homeless for three years, told the Inquiry:

Crime...break and entries, punching up people, mugging people, breaking into cars, getting stereos, stealing the stereos, stealing cars, selling them for \$50."

5.40 In Newcastle the Inquiry was told of a 50% increase, in the first three months of 1988, in juveniles appearing before the Children's Court charged with offences. The majority were first offenders with no fixed address. ⁶⁶ No connection was drawn by the witness between the increased rate of juvenile offending and the changes to the youth unemployment benefits from January 1988. A submission from Tasmania, however, did suggest a connection between lack of income and crime:

A lack of income and adequate housing is one main cause for the high rate of crime in Launceston among teenagers. Most is due to a need for survival — if they cannot get enough from Department Social Security to live and they cannot find work, they feel that the only alternative is to steal it.'

Drug Dealing

5.41 In the 1986 Perth study mentioned above it was found that:

Those who committed drug offences and offences against the person were few and the number of their offences was small. 68

However a number of those interviewed for O'Connor's study were, or had been, involved in drug dealing. All were small scale dealers who were mainly concerned with making just enough money to survive.⁶⁹ A witness in Geelong told the Inquiry:

I found after a while of being homeless, if you wanted to make a bit of extra money, that drugs were the go

Prostitution

5.42 Prostitution would appear to be somewhat more common than dealing in drugs. After all, when drug dealing one needs money first to buy the drugs." O'Connor reported that:

Prostitution appears to be an integral part of the lives of most young homeless people in Sydney, Who tend to congregate around Kings Cross. Both males and females are vulnerable to its offers of money.

Even those who haven't got involved appear to have considered it very seriously."

The Inquiry was also told that, of 117 young people with whom the Streetwork Program of the Perth Inner City Youth Service was involved during March 1988, 15% were involved in street prostitution. 8% of those young people were under 18 years of age."

5.43 In Newcastle the Inquiry was told of a 15-year-old girl involved in prostitution who told a youth worker:

Dad has left home. He has gone to Queensland with my brothers. I am up the country now with my mother. My mother has had a change of life and she has gone back to her second childhood, and this is just what I'm doing now. I am just helping the finances of the home...There are five or six of us in it and the younger the child, the higher the price, and it is \$100 a time for me."

5.44 The way in which the lack of income and the lack of other options can edge a young person into prostitution is also illustrated in the following case history presented to the Inquiry by a witness from the Sydney City Mission.

Julie is 16 years old. She left home at 15 where her alcoholic father bashes the mother. Julie made several attempts at suicide before we met her. On 28 September this year she came to our attention. Her mental health required assessment. Her drug abuse needed to be addressed. She required intensive counselling and a place to live. Investigation as to her family background was needed. Over the course of the following 10 days we were unsuccessful in finding her temporary accommodation out of Kings Cross. At a count, over 25 refuges and other — in desperation — places of referral away from the area were contacted but none had a vacancy for Julie. In this time her experimentation with drugs progressed and she made contact with prostitutes within the Kings Cross area.

On 9 October Julie's plea extended to her running up to a police officer in a paddy wagon — this was actually witnessed — and asking police to lock her up because she really just could not help herself and there was nowhere for her to go. The best we could offer her was a bed in Kings Cross. On 10 October Julie prostituted herself. She arrived on our doorstep that day so drugged that she could not even stand up. Julie had fallen down onto a member of the public who had brought her to our doorstep."

5.45 The Inquiry received evidence of other similar cases, including a witness from the Sydney Area Health Service who told the Inquiry of a girl of 13:

She came to the Cross when she was 10. She is an IV heroin user. Her only means of financial support is prostitution. If she was not a prostitute she would have no money at all. She lives in a squat...⁶

O'Connor also concluded from his study that:

The young homeless become involved in prostitution as a direct consequence of the poverty and the lack of legitimate access to a livable income and secure housing."

5.46 Prostitution may be financially rewarding but many see it as a last resort. As one stated, 'it's real scary'." Another said:

Before, I had more money because I was working on the streets. But I don't think I'm worse off now."

TRANSIENCE

5.47 Evidence presented to the Inquiry clearly established that the one constant of homelessness is transience. The 100 young homeless people interviewed for O'Connor's study were highly mobile:

Thirty-nine had lived in from two to five residences in the past year. Thirty-one had moved from six to ten times, whilst the remainder had more than eleven moves in the past year."

Also significant is the fact that only one-half were living in the same city as their mothers and only one-third in the same city as their fathers."

5.48 One respondent, Marcus, now aged 15, began the process of homelessness when his father died. He first moved to Canberra to live with his mother and her new husband. This arrangement broke down due to conflict between Marcus and his step-father. Marcus left of his own accord and moved to Brisbane where he spent several days and nights on the streets trying to locate an aunt. When he did so, he moved in with her but the arrangement failed. He moved to a friend's house but was returned to his aunt by the welfare authorities. The arrangement failed again and Marcus spent several nights sleeping in industrial bins. He then moved onto the refuge circuit."

In the 13 months between his father's death and when he was interviewed, Marcus had moved 19 times."

5.49 The high degree of mobility found among many homeless young people, and often involving short-term moves interstate, makes them even more vulnerable and less able to access sources of assistance.

...their transiency makes them all the more vulnerable, so they are susceptible to...prostitution, to petty crime, and they are sometimes employed, taken into the work-force in a sense and grossly exploited.

...their transiency makes it very difficult for them to deal with the government-run welfare bodies. It is hard for them if there are benefits due to them to collect those benefits and their situation is such that they tend to lose whatever cash is involved in those benefits very quickly."

5.50 The Inquiry was told by several witnesses that crisis youth refuges actually encourage high mobility because they generally have rules restricting length of stay. One of O'Connor's respondents expressed her reaction to this rule:

...when I first came here...they couldn't do enough to help you, you know. [It is] sort of like a little boy who gets a puppy dog and plays with it for the first few months and can't do enough to help it and then all of a sudden they say, 'Oh, go away'."

5.51 O'Connor's study also revealed a lack of stability within refuges. For example, some enforce a rule requiring residents to be out of the building during the day." Personal possessions cannot be adequately protected in the refuge environment and privacy is a scarce commodity."

VIOLENCE

5.52 Many young homeless people have escaped violent homes only to encounter further violence on the streets.

To be homeless is to be vulnerable to violence. Being on the streets with no shelter or having insecure shelter such as squats, leaves the young person open to violent attacks."

O'Connor reported that:

The interviews are replete with descriptions of being attacked in all manner of situations and of the ever present danger of violence."

Gavin was sexually abused by a worker in a youth refuge; Mandy was bashed by the man she lived with; Liza by her pimp.⁹⁰ Ann, who apparently felt she was fairly fortunate, stated:

I've only been bashed at a max. four times...I went to hospital once. Two broken ribs, a black eye and dislocated jaw."

5.53 Not surprisingly, these young people often also resort to violence. Violence was accepted by them as a way of life, a way of surviving. In particular, according to O'Connor's survey:

Street violence amongst the longterm homeless in Kings Cross seemed common.% Tony stated:

We fight nearly, sort of, every couple of days up here, always fighting.%

5.54 Serious violence also occurred in the course of robberies."

I was down in Coogee once with these two guys and my cousin and me, and we went over to this guy's house and we bashed him up pretty bad and broke into his house to get to him. And we ransacked his house and we kidnapped him and broke into one of his shops that he cleans and took the till and all the money and stuff.'

I'm up for attempted murder now. I've got to go to court. I rolled this guy. I broke a bottle over his head."

HEALTH

5.55 As detailed in Chapter 19, Health Needs and Services, young homeless people are likely to suffer chronic ill-health. In O'Connor's sample, respiratory illnesses, particularly asthma, were common and many suffered the results of violent attacks." Also common was a lack of concern for physical health." Cost was the primary barrier to seeking medical attention as most respondents did not have a Medicare Card or a Department of Social Security Health Care card, nor could they afford to fill prescriptions.⁹¹ Specialist care, including dental treatment and physiotherapy, was beyond the reach of most.

The conditions in which homeless youth live and the associated life-style often leads to various states of poor health ranging from inadequate nutrition, substance abuse, unwanted pregnancy, to emotional and psychiatric disorders. There are many factors that inhibit these problems being dealt with. Quite often young people are unaware of health services available to them particularly if they move locations frequently. There can also be a reluctance to involve professionals because of the distrust of any type of authority figures and perhaps the fear of parents being contacted or being forced to live somewhere they are unsatisfied with, for example, an institutional foster placement."

In Kings Cross the Inquiry received the following evidence from a doctor working with young homeless people:

...homeless youth have minimal or no resources to address health issues. Health advancement and protection are the 'in' words but they are also very necessary objectives for all. Most individuals can protect and promote their health status through attention to fairly simple lifestyle factors such as adequate nutrition, hygiene, sleep, exercise, avoidance of stress and avoidance of substance abuse. However, many of these basic factors are just not available to the homeless young. A suitable diet and necessary, and what we consider normal, hygiene measures, are totally outside the reach of homeless with no access to kitchen, bathroom or laundry. Normal sleep patterns can be very difficult to establish."

5.56 More than three-quarters of O'Connor's respondents reported experiencing episodes of serious depression. Just under one-third had attempted suicide while many others had engaged in self-harm of other kinds.⁹² Thirteen-year-old Fran, for example, had made several suicide attempts and said:

The way I feel...you can't survive, so why live if you can't survive? That's what I keep saying to myself."

5.57 Vulnerability and loneliness underline depression for most:

When you're on the street you feel defenceless and upset because you've got nowhere to go...I've thought of hanging myself because people kept pushing me around."

Another homeless witness retained a measure of hope:

What I would really, really like is for someone to pipe up and say, 'come here'. We all want to be held instead of being pushed aside. We get pushed aside. No-one cares about us. We are rubbish in their eyes. We are doing our own thing and people look down on us all the time.. .For once in my life I'd like someone to say, 'I need you, D...Come and be held'."

5.58 In Launceston the Inquiry was told:

Among many of our service users there is a real feeling that nobody cares for them, that they could cease to exist and nobody would care...

Included in the downward spiral are the elements of unemployment, homelessness, lack of motivation, lack of finance, lack of education and a lowered self-esteem.¹⁰¹

In this context the abuse of drugs and alcohol, as well as violent self-harm and suicide attempts, is explicable. O'Connor reported that:

The abuse of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, was prevalent amongst these young people. ...alcohol and drugs were frequently used to dull the pain of daily existence."

5.59 A young homeless person told the Inquiry:

Every street kid in the Cross is using some sort of drugs, mostly needles, too.'

O'Connor confirmed that heroin use was not rare among the 100 homeless children in his study.¹⁰²

5.60 The Inquiry was told of another homeless young person in Sydney:

He has been out of home since he was 14 years old. He talks of a life of drugs and crime to support his lifestyle which spans four years)"

As the Inquiry was told in New South Wales:

Drugging is a social activity, and it is very sad that drugs are a common currency and a means by which young people can at least get together, or make connections with people. Drugs are part of their financial system."

5.61 In Kings Cross, Dr Pearson of the Kirketon Road Medical Centre told the Inquiry that:

Stress and substance abuse are often inherent in the lifestyle of street kids, particularly in the Kings Cross area, as is high-risk sexual behaviour associated simply with the vulnerability of being on the streets and also the frequent need to resort to prostitution to support basic physical needs and/or drug dependency."

In Port Hedland, Western Australia, on the other hand, the Inquiry was told that:

The residents of House 64 [youth shelter], we find, cannot afford the expense of drugs... [However] alcohol is a very significant problem with a lot of the people at House 64."

EXPLOITATION

5.62 The situation of many young homeless people, as described above — their extreme vulnerability — is 'the precondition for exploitation'.

Life on the streets is living on your wits, being constantly on guard, constantly on the move, avoiding the police and acquiring food and money. It generates a lifestyle for some young people that necessitates participation in crime and prostitution. It provides alternatives that lead only to a more transient, more at risk, lifestyle."

One Sydney youth accommodation service submitted to the Inquiry that 'many of the homeless are • exploited for pornography and other deviant sexual behaviour and in many cases have no access to trustworthy adults to report the abuse'.⁶

5.63 O'Connor reported that some of his 100 respondents were used by adults for criminal activity:

There was some evidence that some crimes were actively commissioned by adults. D...was used by an adult to steal cars which were later stripped or sold.⁷

In Cairns a witness told the Inquiry:

...I do not believe that many young people of this age group.. are very much involved in the heavy drug trafficking. I think it is mostly in the lighter stuff, mostly marijuana and that sort of thing. But there is big money in it for somebody and a lot of people are finding young people very useful because of their contact with their peer group and others."

This witness noted that young homeless people are most vulnerable to involvement of this kind."

5.64 The Inquiry heard evidence in several cities of exploitation of homeless (and other) young people by the tourist industry. A large hotel in Cairns was alleged in evidence to engage in exploitive practices as follows:

[It] has the habit of engaging. ..young boys as porters on the understanding that they are on a trial run for two weeks. Over that period they are not paid, but. ..whoever is the most satisfactory will finally be given the full-time job. So the practice is, after having got two weeks work for nothing, for no pay, out of a kid, 'Sorry, you're not satisfactory. We'll try the next one.'²⁰

In Alice Springs:

Tourism.. is attracting young people here in the search for jobs. The jobs are very often very low-skilled jobs and very low pay... It is quite likely at the level of making beds and sweeping floors in a motel-hotel type set-up...they are exploited in those jobs."

5.65 Some had even been cheated by employers. Maria, aged 16, was paid \$40 per week for a full-time job living and working in stables ¹²² Jim, aged 15, confronted his employer when he was paid \$50 for a 40 hour week and the employer admitted his `error'." Marcus, aged 15, worked a six day week doing car detailing and was paid only \$150.²⁴ Witnesses to the Inquiry gave evidence to the same effect. In North Queensland a youth worker from Innisfail told the Inquiry:

We have had evidence of that also [exploitation of kids in employment], of young kids being expected to work for \$2.50 an hour with the employer putting over the story that, `I'm doing this to help you'."

5.66 Juvenile prostitution rackets also prey on the homeless and this occurs not only in the larger cities. In Alice Springs the Inquiry was told that young women had sought shelter at the women's refuge 'via the escort agencies in town when they have not been doing the services they are supposed to there and so they get dumped on the street'." In Cairns, Queensland, the Inquiry was told:

The prostitution, of course, is well known and there are areas in Cairns where young girls and boys are being picked up and offered large amounts of money for services.

I do know of two or three premises in Cairns that are being run as male brothels for young boys 16 years and tinder.'

The Inquiry was told that American tourists were the most likely and frequent users of young prostitutes in Cairns"³ and in Mackay, Queensland."

POLICE

5.67 Homeless young people are very likely to come to the attention of the police. As O'Connor states:

Youth is a risk factor in itself. This is aggravated by homeless youth's life on the margins of society and their visibility in public spaces.³⁰

5.68 O'Connor's respondents had had mixed experiences with the police. Some first encountered police when they made complaints of physical or sexual abuse at home." The accounts of these young people indicate their frustration at the essentially narrow scope of the responses available to the police.

...the police officer was very nice at first, but then when I withdrew the statement [at her mother's urging] she just started saying, 'Oh, you made us do all this work for nothing. You have to go back home and you have to stay there or else'."

5.69 Respondents complaining about physical, as opposed to sexual abuse, often encountered an even less sympathetic response.

The last time I got busted for wagging it, they [the police] brought me home and I was crying...I didn't want to go home because I knew...my stepdad would give me a flogging. And I tried to tell them that. I tried to tell them what had happened, that he hit me around and that I'd end up getting beaten up. But you know they just sort of didn't worry about it. They said you know all stepdads are like that and they don't get on with their stepkids...I was you know really upset and sort of hysterical. I just didn't want to go home. But they sort of just didn't worry about it, just all went over their heads."

5.70 Other young people described their encounters with police on the streets. Some had found police helpful in providing information about refuges and even phoning to secure a place." One reported staying overnight in a police station." Others, however, found the police less understanding:

I think they should have put me in a refuge and not locked me in a cell as if I was a criminal. I wasn't doing anything wrong. They were the ones that picked me up...most police just laugh at you."

In Adelaide the Inquiry was told:

You always got harassed by police all the time [when living on the streets] and every time you would go somewhere to sleep or whatever, the police would come up to you and they would say, 'Listen, you can mov

In Hobart the Inquiry was told:

If the police know you live on the streets they are out to get you. Not out to get you but out to look at you. They see you walking around and they think you want to do something. They harass you. They keep at you; watch you; keep picking on you. Like if you are walking through the mall at night they are going to tell you to get out."

WELFARE AUTHORITIES

5.71 Young people who turned to State welfare authorities for assistance did not always find much there. In Chapter 8, Families Under Stress, we mention that some welfare authorities refer homeless children on to youth refuges. As Liza, aged 17, stated:

...they put [you] in refuges. That's their escape from the subject. But if you've really got a problem they're not [of] very [much] assistance."

5.72 Evidence was also presented that welfare authorities cannot be relied upon to provide emergency relief. For example, a young homeless witness in Adelaide stated:

The Department of Community Welfare, they help you once and that is it. They give you a \$25 food voucher or a \$25 cheque.. and you go back to them when you are in dire need.. .and they say, 'No, sorry, we cannot help you — you have been here once before'. And they turn us away."

As for the statutory responsibility of welfare departments for the protection of children, there was evidence that many homeless children in need were not even noticed by departments. As O'Connor reported:

A surprising number of those interviewed had never had contact with statutory child welfare departments, despite some cases having been homeless for several years."

YOUTH WORKERS

5.73 On whom then do these young people rely?

[They] are more often detached from mainstream supportive establishments such as schools, churches and youth groups and so suffer from social and personal isolation."²

Refuge workers are not popular with all. Their rule enforcement role and the fact that the refuge is intended only for short-term stays make it difficult for trusting relationships to develop. Moreover as Skye told the Inquiry in Hobart:

...moving into a youth shelter was reasonably like moving into gaol because you sort of got interrogated as soon as you turned up. The first youth shelter I moved into I think I spent about two hours in the office giving my life story which was the one thing I did not want to do."⁵

5.74 When a youth service is able to provide its service each time a young person seeks it there seems to be a chance for trust to be built. In Adelaide a homeless witness stated:

...the only other place to go to, really, is the Second Story [a medical service] and they do not turn us away. They give us a cup of coffee, a shower when we need one, which is great, they give us counselling when we are sick. They also give us counselling if we are uptight about something."

As another witness stated:

That sort of close supportive help I think is a big start and if that can go not just for three months but for a year or two years, then I think we are going to get somewhere."³

5.75 Thus effective assistance for homeless young people will involve not just the provision of shelter or training or employment.

But it is about creating new networks. It is about creating new safety nets, people they know, people they can go to, people that they can talk to and relate to...so that they can feel a part of the community and contribute to it."⁴

Ultimately people need friends and many young homeless people spoke of the support they gave to and received from their friends on the streets:

With your friends you can give advice out to each other and they don't laugh at you and they don't feel like you're trying to interfere or anything like that. But with the worker...it is just different."

EDUCATION

5.76 Few homeless children and young people are able to continue their schooling, although an increasing number are younger than the minimum school leaving age. For example, only 14 of O'Connor's sample of 100 young people were students (another 'one was described as a 'truante)',¹⁴⁸ although 40 were aged 13 to 15 years.⁴⁹ Those who did remain at or return to school:

...were held there by their own determination, sense of commitment to the future and active assistance by the school and teachers."⁵⁰

5.77 Various factors coincide to make it extremely difficult for young homeless people to stay on at school. The Austudy allowance is payable only to students aged 16 and over and Special Benefits are notoriously difficult to obtain. Only four of O'Connor's sample were in receipt of Austudy while another four (not necessarily students) received Special Benefits." One was ineligible for Austudy and was able to support himself at school only by stealing and dealing in drugs."

5.78 Stable accommodation is necessary for viable school attendance. Penny left home at the age of 15 and was able to complete Year 10 while living with friends. During the school holidays she lived with her grandmother who, however, lived too far away from her school.

So during the school holidays I found it very hard to find somewhere to stay that was close to my school and I soon gave up hope. I wanted to go to school but I found it hard to start another new school."³

Penny was lucky in the end: suitable accommodation was located for her. Ian, evicted from his home at 13, at first stayed with the parents of a school friend and continued at school. He was able to continue at school in spite of moving among several such situations until he was eventually forced to leave school and find employment in order to support himself.⁵⁴ The refuge situation is even more unsuitable for school students,

5.79 Another factor is the stigma associated with homelessness. Nichole, a Year 11 student at a private college, had been homeless for three years. She told the Inquiry:

At first I was classed as a real -- I was under the stereotype — kid who had left home. Real street kid, rough and ready, did anything they want; swore, bashed, everything. In a way I am that way but I enjoy my study. They were very stunned and most parents at the school — most parents say, 'Don't muck around with that girl. She's a bad influence.' I have had a bit of trouble with parents. Many parents at the school did not want me to go when they found out that I was homeless."

5.80 Moreover, the education system neglects the needs and difficulties of children who are in unstable homes or detached from their families. One of O'Connor's respondents stated:

The education system in High School is geared to them and their situation of being at home with a family, whereas with me I don't have that family support, either financially or emotionally, and I sort of feel like a square peg in a round hole with...the way the school is run."

A Hobart witness told the Inquiry:

...a refuge is not the most conducive spot for working and doing school work in. Also too...the education system is inflexible in regards to young women who have left school because of personal reasons and are now living in refuges. We find that the education system is inflexible in allowing them scope to be able to work out their problems and then go back to [school]. So many of the young women who actually leave school will never go back to school anyway because of the stigma that is placed on

5.81 Thirty-one of the young people in O'Connor's sample had left school before reaching the minimum school leaving age and another 30 left at the minimum legal school leaving age." In a Perth study of 'street kids', three-quarters (75.4%:40 people) gave up their studies between Year 8 and Year 11 at High School, 9.4% (5) left school between Grade 6 and Grade 7 Primary School, and only 15.1% (8) either continued or intended resuming school."

5.82 These figures support a great deal of other evidence presented to the Inquiry which indicated that many homeless young people have poor literacy skills and that few possess adequate qualifications to obtain employment of any but the most marginal kind. The Inquiry was told in Surfers Paradise, for example, that one-third of the residents of one hostel had poor literacy skills. In Hobart a witness from a young women's shelter reported that, of residents who were not attending scho' oh

...most had not completed Year 10 and the majority of them were illiterate.m

5.83 Most of O'Connor 's respondents had been at school when they first became homeless but the majority received no useful assistance from their schools." In addition, most had been unhappy at school." Sybil, Tom and Anna reached high school without being able to read, with consequent loss of self-esteem as well as deteriorating academic achievement and loss of motivation.⁶¹ Others left because of the attitudes to them of other students,⁶⁰ while a number had refused or simply failed to conform." O'Connor reported that some of his respondents saw schooling itself as 'a process of marginalisation'."

For some..., their schooling difficulties and education were terminated through expulsion. Others are increasingly alienated and 'drift' out or are forced out of school."⁶

5.84 Yet some homeless young people try to resume their schooling after leaving home.

A common pattern was, however, to return to school briefly and again drop out. ¹⁶⁹

As one witness recognised:

For the homeless young person in particular, school can be an intolerant place to be...¹⁷⁰

O'Connor concluded that:

For homeless young people, school is an option only for the strongest and most resourceful.'

5.85 Some unsupported students expressed a strong determination to succeed at school and in employment:

Sometimes I wonder what the kids at school think about me because I do not live at home and come with my friends to school every day, but I want to stay at school and I want to go to uni.'

Vicki periodically leaves home as a result of her father's physical assaults. While away from home she does not attend school, partly for fear of being located by her mother and partly because she does not have her books with her:

You know, they [her parents] said, 'If you're not living here, you're not taking anything we've bought'. I missed weeks of work and it took me ages to catch up. I want to finish school. I want to be a teacher or a lawyer."

EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

5.86 Only 11 of O'Connor's 100 respondents had a job. Some stated that they felt employers discriminate against young people not living at home. In the Perth study of 'streetkids' referred to above, only 7.5% (4) were employed, 32.1% (17) had left or lost jobs and 37.7% (20) had never worked."

I put down that I was living in the youth shelter and, because they found that out, they wouldn't let me work there.'

Another respondent felt that 'people just think that if you don't live at home, that must have been your fault; you've done something wrong'. A young witness told the Inquiry:

I once went to a job interview and when I told the lady that I did not live with my parents.. .she called me a slut and she said that she would never employ a 16-year-old person who didn't live with their parents."

5.87 Others mentioned the impossibility of turning up clean and appropriately dressed at an interview or on the first day after spending the night in a squat or on the street." Some of the respondents had had to relinquish their jobs when they became homeless.' O'Connor reported that those who had found employment often found that junior rates of pay were insufficient to live on independently.

CONCLUSION

5.88 It is disturbing to note that, while the Inquiry did not seek to canvass the problems of adult homelessness, it appears likely from the evidence presented and studies commissioned that large numbers of homeless children will not make a successful transition to stable and independent living situations as adults. Many will, instead, make the transition to adult homelessness.

5.89 Figures such as the following are alarming. Of 143 young residents leaving the Wollongong Youth Refuge in the year ending June 1988, only 44 (31%) returned to their families. Of the remaining 99 young people:

- 26 left to reside temporarily with friends;
- 22 to the streets or to unknown places;
- 22 to other YSAP/SAAP services;
- 15 to live independently in the private rental sector;
- 4 to remand centres;
- 3 to share group homes or State ward institutions;
- 2 to psychiatric units;
- 2 to the Community Tenancy Scheme; and
- 2 to crisis housing provided by the Housing Department for three months only.

Notes

1. Austin, aged 15, in O'Connor, *Most of us have got a lot to say and we know what we are talking about: Children's and Young People's Experiences of Homelessness* (1988) at 209. Note: given names attributed to O'Connor's respondents are fictional.
2. Sybil, aged 17, *id*, at 236.
3. Department of Social Work, University of Queensland.
4. *Most of us have got a lot to say and we know what we are talking about: Children's and Young People's Experiences of Homelessness* (1988).
5. N.Burrows, *Transcript* at 1805.
6. S.Gokhale, *Streetkids in Perth Inner City: Main Features and Comparisons* (1986), at 4.
7. Youth Housing Enquiry (SA), *Beyond Tent City...* (1987), Appendix A, at 10.
8. C.Parfrey, Melbourne City Mission, *Transcript* at 923.
9. C.Shevels, Melbourne City Mission. *Transcript* at 924.
10. O'Connor, *op cit*, at 27. IL Marion, aged 17, *id*, at 38.
12. Steph, aged 14, *id*, at 40.
13. Skye, *Transcript* at 1458.
14. *Transcript* at 1932.
15. Tracey, aged 15, O'Connor, *op cit*. at 123.
16. *Id*, at 145-146,
17. *Id*, at 77.
18. *Id*, at 78.
19. *Id*, at 77. See also Craig, *Transcript* at 1217.
20. Anon., *Transcript* at 1329.
21. J. Bailey, *Transcript* at 1654.
22. O'Connor, *op cit*, at 32.
23. Petra, aged 17, *id*, at 33.
24. O'Connor, *op cit*, at 37-38.
25. R. Soutar, Brotherhood of St Laurence (Vic), *Transcript* at 1114.
26. S. Hindle, Salvation Army SOS Crisis Centre Newcastle, *Transcript* at 1943.
27. S.I 12, Bankstown Workers With Youth Network (NSW), at 17.
28. K. Gregory, Youth Accommodation Coalition (Vic), *Transcript* at 931-932.
29. In O'Connor, *op cit*, at 39.
30. S. Hindle, Salvation Army SOS Crisis Centre Newcastle (NSW), *Transcript* at 1942.
31. Craig, *Transcript* at 1218.
32. J. McLearn, *Transcript* at 231.
33. G. Davies, Uniting Church Community Youth Services Fremantle (WA), *Transcript* at 715-716.
34. J. Schwager, Youth Supported Accommodation Program (*Working Paper, SAAP Review, 1988*) at 22.
35. S.50, Come-In Youth Resource Centre (NSW), *No Vacancies*, at 26.
36. K. Lyall, Young Women's Housing Collective (Vic), *Transcript* at 1020.
37. O'Connor, *op cit*. at 108.
38. Debbie, aged 16, *id*, at 109.
39. L. Upham, Youth Advocacy Centre Brisbane, *Transcript* at 236.
40. Petra, aged 17, O'Connor, *op cit*, at 111.
41. Wendy, aged 14, *id*, at 112.

42. Fran, aged 13, *id.* at 112.
43. *Ibid*; Ann, aged 17, and Harry, aged 17, *id.* at 229. See also R. Passfield, North Queensland Youth Accommodation Coalition, *Transcript* at 471; N. Clay, Wollongong Youth Refuge (NSW), *Transcript* at 1797; P. Connors, Perth Inner City Youth Service, *Transcript* at 666.
44. O'Connor, *op cit.* at 235.
45. *Id.* at 235-237.
46. *Id.* at 85.
47. *Ibid.*
48. *Id.* at 86.
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Id.* at 92.
51. *Id.* at 24.
52. J. McLearnie, *Transcript* at 230-231.
53. O'Connor, *op cit.* at 24.
54. Harry, aged 17, *id.* at 152.
55. Anon., *Transcript* at 1093.
56. Mandy, aged 15, O'Connor, *op cit.* at 153.
57. Sybil, aged 17, *id.* at 156.
58. *Id.* at 162.
59. Gokhale, *op cit.* at 4.
60. James, aged 16, O'Connor, *op cit.* at 163.
61. Clare, aged 17, *id.* at 163.
62. Jim, aged 15, *id.* at 151.
63. S.27, Youth Affairs Council (Tas), at 20.
64. Dennis, aged 16, O'Connor, *op cit.* at 164.
65. Tony, *Transcript* at 144.
66. S. Hindle, Salvation Army SOS Crisis Centre Newcastle (NSW), *Transcript* at 1942.
67. S.109, Fusion Australia Launceston (Tas), at 2.
68. Gokhale, *op cit.* at 4.11
69. O'Connor, *op cit.* at 164-165.
70. Craig, *Transcript* at 1217.
71. Jason, aged 15, O'Connor, *op cit.* at 164.
72. O'Connor, *op cit.* at 228.
73. S.71, Perth Inner City Youth Service, at 5.
74. S. Hindle, Salvation Army SOS Crisis Centre Newcastle (NSW), *Transcript* at 1948.
75. J. Brown, Sydney City Mission, *Transcript* at 136-137.
76. K. Swanton, Sydney Area Health Service, *Transcript* at 149.
77. O'Connor, *op cit.* at 230.
78. Tom, aged 17, *id.* at 154.
79. Petra, aged 17, *id.* at 165.
80. O'Connor, *op cit.* at 29.
81. *Id.* at 30.
- 8¹. *Id.* at 89-90.
83. *Id.* at 90.
84. G. Costigan, Anglican Parish Alice Springs (NT), *Transcript* at 1751.
85. Louise, aged 16, O'Connor, *op cn.* at 121.

86. O'Connor, *op cit*, at 118.
87. *Id*, at 121.
88. *Id*, at 216.
89. *Id*, at 218.
90. *Id*. at 217-218.
91. *Id*. at 219.
92. *Id*, at 39.
93. *Id*. at 221.
94. *Ibid*.
95. *Id*, at 222-223.
96. Mandy, aged 15, *id*, at 223.
97. Tracey, aged 15, *id*. at 223.
98. O'Connor, *op cit*, at 199.
99. *Id*, at 201.
100. *Id*, at 203-204.
101. T. Campbell, Hedlartd Community Youth Services (WA), *Transcript* at 777.
102. V. Pearson, Sydney Area Health Service, *Transcript* at 152-153.
103. O'Connor, *op cit*, at 207.
104. *Ibid*.
105. Jason, aged 15, *id*, at 208. See also Milan, aged 16, and Richard, aged 17, *id*, at 208; Shelley, aged 15, and Tom, aged 17, *id*, at 209.
106. Anon., *Transcript* at 1339. 107. M.Voumard, Uniting Church Child and Family Service Launceston (Tas), *Transcript* at 1539.
108. O'Connor, *op cit*, at 200.
109. Tony, *Transcript* at 143.
110. O'Connor, *op cit*, at 212. III. S.112, Bankstown Workers With Youth Network (NSW), at 18.
112. A. Mayo, Maitland Refuge (NSW), *Transcript* at 1988.
113. V. Pearson, Sydney Area Health Service, *Transcript* at 153.
114. T. Campbell, Hedland Community Youth Services (WA), *Transcript* at 781.
115. O'Connor, *op cit*, at 41.
116. S.59, Jesus Cares Refuge, at 2.
117. O'Connor, *op cit*, at 239.
118. G. King, Cairns Anglican Youth Service (Q1d), *Transcript* at 444-445.
119. *Id*, at 445.
120. G. King, Cairns Anglican Youth Service (Old), *Transcript* at 449.
121. G. Costigan, Anglican Parish Alice Springs (NT), *Transcript* at 1755.
122. O'Connor, *op cit*. at 233.
123. *Id*, at 232. See also Peter, aged 17, at 232-233.
124. *Id*, at 231.
125. T. Smith, *Transcript* at 474.
126. E. Tyson, Women's Community House Alice Springs (NT), *Transcript* at 1773.
127. G. King, Cairns Anglican Youth Service (Old), *Transcript* at 446.
128. *Id*, at 454.
129. R. Passfield, North Queensland Youth Accommodation Coalition, *Transcript* at 471.

130. O'Connor, *op cit*, at 137-138.
131. See Wendy, aged 14, *id*, at 138-139 and Petra, aged 17, *id*, at 139-140.
132. Petra, aged 17, *id*, at 139.
133. Julie, aged 17. *id*, at 142.
134. John, aged 17, *id*, at 145-146. See also Thomas, aged 17, *id*, at 147. ----
135. Debbie, aged 16, *id*, at 145.
136. Mandy, aged 15, *id*, at 149.
137. Anon., *Transcript* at 1328.
138. Darren, *Transcript* at 1460. See also Sean, *Transcript* at 1933.
139. In O'Connor, *op cit*, at 135.
140. Anon., *Transcript* at 1334.
141. O'Connor, *op cit*, at 128.
142. G. King, Gold Coast Youth Service (Qld), *Transcript* at 366.
143. *Transcript* at 1456.
144. Anon., *Transcript* at 1334.
145. V. Dwyer, Bidwell Youth Emergency Accommodation Unit Mt Druui (NSW), *Transcript* at 133.
146. K. Ferdinand, Fusion Australia Launceston (Tas), *Transcript* at 1531.
147. P. Sulley, *Transcript* at 837.
148. O'Connor, *op cit*, at 25.
149. *Id.* at 19. The proportion of students in O'Connor's sample of homeless adolescents seems high even so, but should be considered in light of the fact that his sample included children and young people on the verge of becoming homeless: at least 37 were in accommodation which was 'untenable', that is to say, they were in immediate need of accommodation and at risk of being without shelter in the near future: at 22.
150. *Id.* at 192.
151. *Id.* at 24.
152. *Id.* at 87.
153. K. Gregory, Youth Accommodation Coalition (Vic), *Transcript* at 934-935.
154. O'Connor, *op cit*, at 77.
155. *Transcript*, at 1214-1215.
156. Laura, aged 17, O'Connor, *op cit*, at 183.
157. K. Robinson, Annie Kenney's Young Women's Shelter Hobart, *Transcript* at 1507.
158. O'Connor, *op cit*, at 25-26.
159. Gokhale, *op cit*, at 4.
160. P. Bryant, Blair Athol Hostel (Old), *Transcript* at 363.
161. K. Robinson, Annie Kenney's Young Women's Shelter Hobart, *Transcript* at 1507.
162. O'Connor, *op cit*, at 90-91.
163. *Id.* at 170.
164. *Id.* at 170-171.
165. *Id.* at 171-173.
166. *Id.* at 174-176.
167. *Id.* at 177.
168. *Id.* at 176.
169. *Id.* at 192.
170. V. Dwyer, Bidwell Youth Emergency Accommodation Unit Mt Druitt (NSW), *Transcript* at 129-130.
171. O'Connor, *op cit*, at 196.
172. K. Gregory, Youth Accommodation Coalition (Vic), *Transcript* at 935.

173. *Id.*, at 936.
174. Golchale. *op cit*, at 4.
175. Helen, aged 16, O'Connor, *op cit*, at 158.
176. Mandy, aged 15, *id.*, at 158.
177. J. MeLearie, *Transcript* at 232.
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179. *Id.*, at 159.
180. N. Clay, Wollongong Youth Refuge (NSW), *Transcript* at 1797.
181. L. Wheatman, Cessnock Youth Refuge (NSW), *Transcript* at 1968.
182. Michael, *Transcript* at 1213.
183. C. Blank, *Transcript* at 479.
184. R. Hughes, Stepping Stone Streetwork Hobart, *Transcript* at 1466.
185. I. Boyson, Southside Youth Refuge (ACT), *Transcript* at 583.
186. G. Costigan, Anglican Parish of Alice Springs (NT), *Transcript* at 1754.