IDEAS FACTS & FUTURES

Part 1

YOUTH & THE ARTS: DISUCSSION & DIRECTIONS

Australia Council
for the Arts

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PREFACE

Ideas Facts & Futures is the culmination of the Australia Council's 'Youth and the Arts' project.

It represents the work of many people, including Australia Council consultants and staff.

'Youth arts' has always been a priority of the Australia Council. Various initiatives have been taken by the Council to develop and ensure the access and participation of young Australians in arts activities.

The area of 'youth and the arts' is vast and complex. The issues go well beyond consideration of increasing young people's participation in traditional arts to also include youth attitudes to 'the arts', cultural participation patterns of young people, the nature of youth cultures and the ways in which young people already significantly contribute to Australia's cultural life.

Ideas Facts & Futures maintains Council's commitment to 'youth arts' and provides an opportunity for the Council to play a greater advocacy role in this area. It aims also to promote debate and encouragement throughout all levels of the youth and arts communities.

The four parts of *Ideas Facts & Futures* are 'hole-punched' to make it easy for them to be kept in the same place for convenient reference. It is recommended that they be placed in a 'lever arch' file. This can then form the basis of a set of related documents to which past and subsequent youth and arts research, policy and advocacy documents may be added.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BACKGROUND

Ideas Facts & Futures is the culmination of Stages 1 and 2 of the Australia Council's 'Youth and the Arts' project.

The information and discussion is assembled into four parts :

- *Youth & the Arts: Discussion & Directions*

- *Youth & the Arts: Policy Possibilities & Opportunities*

- *Youth & the Arts: Agencies – Some Facts & Futures*

- *Youth & the Arts: Attitudes, Participation & Recommended Reading*

The goal was to provide a base of information to assist the development of accessible and relevant arts-based activities for young Australians.

The main aims of the Project were:

- to evaluate government arts and cultural policy and its impact on young Australians.

- to consider the potential for forging links among arts funding and other government agencies, arts organisations, key youth advocacy and support groups, community service groups, and business and commercial cultural industries to provide for future arts and cultural development relevant to youth.

- to provide a platform for discussion on developing accessible and relevant arts for young people.

- to consider opportunities for allowing young people to participate in the planning, provision and evaluation of arts for young people.

The Australia Council commissioned a variety of inputs. These ranged from detailed and extensive consultations with Federal, State and local government policy-makers, arts funding agencies and 'youth arts' workers, through to an original inquiry into youth attitudes to 'the arts'.

Stage 1 of the Project was to commission a variety of discussion papers. (See *Ideas Facts & Futures –* Part 1, *Youth & the Arts: Discussion and Directions*)

These discuss aspects of Australian youth cultures and the implications for arts policies, the way young people from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal youth and rural youth relate to 'the arts', the music industry, youth theatre and the significance to youth of the mass media and communications technology.

Proposals were then sought for **Stage 2** – the research, consultation and evaluation phase.

This mainly examined arts activities for young people, government and private support for 'youth arts' and attitudes of young people to 'the arts'.

Two groups of consultants were engaged. Firstly, the Institute for Cultural Policy Studies in the Division of Humanities at Griffith University was commissioned to provide two briefing papers, two research reports and the final report on main findings and recommendations. Secondly, Colleen Chesterman and Jane Schwager were commissioned to write an independent briefing paper on 'youth arts' in Australia.

The key aims of publishing the various discussion papers and reports are to:

- support the development of a 'youth and the arts' policy framework to b   ed by the Australia Council and other arts funding agencies in defining their own youth   cies;

- encourage other government agencies and departments to develop similar policy overviews in their youth and/or arts funding;

- open up community development organisations to the use of arts and more especially 'youth arts';

- recognise the nature of youth cultures in the context of 'the arts';

- develop links between 'youth arts' and other youth organisations; and

- encourage corporate sponsorship of 'youth arts'.

  Ideas Facts & Futures offers a tremendous range of material, covering theoretical and practical considerations and offering new ideas and directions for the particiaption of young Australians in arts and cultural activities.

INTRODUCTION

YOUTH & THE ARTS: DISCUSSION & DIRECTIONS

The first stage of the Australia Council's 'Youth and the Arts' project was to commission a variety of discussion papers to gain opinions on a cross section of activities and issues concerning 'youth and the arts'.

The papers were commissioned from proposals received from around Australia. They examine youth cultures and the implications for arts policies, the way young people of non-English speaking background, Aboriginal youth and rural youth relate to the arts; music and young people; youth theatre; and the relevance to young people of mass media and communications technologies.

It is the first time that such a range of discussion on 'youth and the arts' has been assembled.

An exhaustive analysis is not offered; the Discussion Papers are intended to raise issues and promote debate on and further consideration of those issues.

The commissioned papers include:

1. *Marking the Landscape: Youth in Search of Identity* by Mary Mooney, Anne Marshall, Linda Forrester, Gordon Beattie and Trevor Cairney (The University of Western Sydney, Nepean)

2. *New Directions for Youth Theatre* by Mark Radvan (Drama Department, University of Technology - Queensland)

3. *Youth, Media & Communications: Towards 2000* by Jo Moulton (Express Australia)

4. *Music & Young People* by Sue Gillard (AUSMUSIC)

5. *Urban Aboriginal Youth: A Redfern Case Study* by Louise Blazejowska and Suzanne Kenney

6. *Rural Youth & the Arts : Barriers & Strengths* by Jane van der Stoel and Linda Freedman (Care Consult - Mildura)

7. *Non-English Speaking Background Youth & the Arts* by Sarina Marchi (Ethnic Affairs Commission)

8. *Youth Cultures - Arts Policies* by Tony Bennett, Toby Miller, Gillian Swanson and Gordon Tait with research assistance from Barbara Johnstone. (The Institute for Cultural Policy Studies, Division of Humanities, Griffith University, Brisbane)

MARKING THE LANDSCAPE : YOUTH IN SEARCH OF IDENTITY

By Mary Mooney, Anne Marshall, Linda Forrester,
Gordon Beattie and Trevor Cairney
(University of Western Sydney, Nepean)

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines non-traditional arts activities of contemporary youth in Western and South Western Sydney.

There are many factors to note which concern youth and their search for identity as they creatively mark their landscape:

- youth cultures depend upon the dichotomy of rebellion and acceptance;

- social and educational environments can dictate cultural practice - in Western Sydney, regionality affects their definition of identity;

- non-aesthetic expression of creativity is related to style, where youth live and their artforms as they mark their environment;

- young people display their art work in what amounts to a mobile public gallery.

The first part of this paper defines non-traditional arts activity. Although youth may not recognise their creative expression as art, it is obvious that it can be identified as such. Their non-traditional expressions of creativity can be perceived as style which is transient, changing, and continuously coming into being. Youth operates more wholly within 'popular' than 'high' culture.

The section **Case studies of contemporary youth and their creative cultural activities** summarises interviews with young people about their individual expression and gang art. Interviews were conducted with youth involved in rap graffiti and music, street machines, skateboarding, martial arts, body building and school military cadets.

Important points raised in this section include how youth define their cultural practice, language, relationship to the community, ambitions for excellence and lifestyle.

Emerging themes and issues and **Questions for further debate** highlight the lifestyle of disenfranchised youth of the Western Sydney.

> *Popular (or non-traditional) art is like the marks on the skin of the urban or metropolitan body. These marks are in themselves as important as the underlying source or unity we might assign to them. For it is on the surface that history intersects with desire, it is there that identities are realised.* (Chambers. 1986)

The section describing our methodological procedure details the process of collecting and analysing material about youth in the Western and South Western region of Sydney. It followed an ethnographic approach.

Aesthetics in the fast lane

In discussing non-traditional artforms we address non-traditional means of understanding the function of art. We can identify art through cultural definitions of creative practice or we can appreciate and define art through aesthetics.

Aesthetic theory is problematic. We have chosen to look at formalist notions of aesthetics and apply them to non-traditional art practice.

> When analysing why totally different art works have the power to invoke an aesthetic response, we must ask what these works have in common? Only one answer seems possible and that is significant form. Where lines and colours combine in a particular way, certain forms, and relationships of forms, stir our aesthetic response. (Hosper. 1969).

In Western European traditional art, 'significant form' is apparent in the relationship of art elements and pictorial composition. We also find significant form in most contemporary artforms. However, some, such as conceptual art, create a dilemma for this defining process. With non-traditional art, we can look for significant form without the need to identify elements of traditional or formal structure in the work or performance.

> In contemporary aesthetics, the notion is accepted that anything the artist/author identifies as art is art. (Chambers. 1986).

Duchamp, for example, at the turn of the century, claimed a urinal was art because it existed in concept and in authorship as a piece of art and was housed in a significant European art museum.

Following this definition, if youth today claim their creative activity and expression has parallel qualities to art, we can accept it as art. If it has elements of design, form and meaning, compositional structure and creative dialogue, it is art.

The Style Council

When looking at the creative activities of urban youth, we notice that although there is scope for individual expression, as a rule it is a group effort.

Youth operate in groups. While this is a phenomenon of their age, we suggest it is also a result of their perception of their position in society. They regard themselves as being under siege, powerless, jobless and unable to control their own lives.

This is their social reality and 'the influence of social origin is strongest in "extra-curricular" and "avant-garde culture" '. (Bourdieu. 1984) Therein exists motives for carving out a physical and psychic space for themselves.

They define who they are in terms of what they do. This then becomes style.

> Caught up in the communication membrane of the metropolis, with your head in front of a cinema, TV, video or computer screen, between headphones........ among the record releases and magazines, the realisation of your 'self' slips into the construction of an image, a style, a series of theatrical gestures. (Chambers. 1986)

When we use the word 'style' in regard to cultural activities of youth, we are not referring to style as 'flair' or the 'style 'of the Impressionists.

This traditional use of 'style' is equated with technique, with modes of expression used to characterise a period of art history.

When we talk of 'style' we intend it to imply the co-existence of author and 'style', living the artform.

> *It is as if the popular aesthetic...were based on the affirmation of the continuity between art and life, which implies the subordination of form to function.* (Bourdieu. 1984)

In or out of the marketplace?

Without power, jobs or control, feelings of rebellion can grow in adolescence. But it is more than the idea of revolt that motivates youth. They are familiar with the market place and the mania of consumerism. The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought defines the consumer society as:

> *A society that sets an inordinate value on consumer goods, which it tends to regard not merely as the ultimate aim of all economic activity, but as the ultimate good.*

However the access that young people have to the marketplace is not just monetary but through a communication network. They have been exposed to the tools and manipulation of a consumer society through long hours of watching television, cinema and videos, reading magazines and listening to music. This framework permeates everyday existence and youth understand it intimately.

Conversely, they have found a niche where their behaviour is not criticised. Indeed, the marketplace co-opts their style and appropriates their activities and icons. It then throws them back, ratified and formalised, as consumer items that promise 'style'. It legitimises the activities of youth and at the same time quickens the pace of redundancy.

Ironically, it is youth with hunger for some control and a healthy appetite for change that can keep pace with the avarice and fickleness of the marketplace.

The marketplace provides a mechanism, venue and a nurturing of youth style, with the consumer society as audience and the marketplace as playground.

Anything that allows youth to deliver something of the style they have generated in their creative activities becomes a warm medium in which they can operate.

> *Our legitimising cultural institutions are not warm mediums for young people and their non-traditional art activities.* (McLuhan. 1978)

A 'Semiotic' summary

In looking at youth cultures, we must change our notions of what is traditionally perceived to be 'the arts' and embrace an expanded framework.

Youth observe a traditional culture yet see very few codes that they relate to through their home or educational environments. They lack an understanding of the structure and language of traditional culture which leaves them bewildered and isolated.

As they need to belong and contribute to their world in culturally significant ways they make their own meanings and codes. These codes are often so complex that we need an interpreter to understand them.

So the position of power is reversed and those in the mainstream culture do not have access to youth codes. They can only guess at what is signified by the behaviour and creative expression.

It is this reversal of cultural roles that is most significant in the analysis of non-traditional artforms or artistic activity. Within these roles, youth speak with a descriptive language so loaded with meaning their cultural input becomes a distinctive genre with significant form.

Case studies of contemporary youth and their creative cultural and arts-based activities

Individual expression and the gang art of youth in the densely-populated Western and South-Western Sydney regions are detailed in the following case studies :

Rap Graffitists and Music

Street Machiners

Skateboarders

Martial Artists, Body Building & Cadets

Full transcripts of the interviews for these case studies are contained in *Marking the Landscape: Youth in Search of Identity: Part II Case Studies* which is held at the Australia Council in Sydney.

The methodology used to collect the data is described in a section following discussion of the case studies.

RAP GRAFFITISTS AND MUSIC

Graffiti is a visual art. In an industrialised society, however, 'grafitti' art has the status of vandalism almost to the exclusion of any artistic merits and the aesthetic and creative choices of the youth who now practise it.

Modern graffiti can be of vast dimensions, covering whole walls of city buildings or just a signature or tag on a train door. Some is extremely complex and innovative, using skills of design and execution equal to many recognised, major artworks. Some is very crude and just sheer vandalism.

Between these extremes is a wide range of work which has one thing in common. It is a comment on the world in which the artist or artists (nearly all graffiti is the result of collaboration) live. The Rap music goes hand in hand with the graffiti and verbalises the visual images and feelings of the artists. Some groups do both.

Def Krew, a group of young rap graffitists from Colyton High School in Western Sydney were interviewed :

Voice 2	We do a lot of stuff.
Voice 3	A lot of rhymes. Contributions.
Interviewer	Why rap graffiti? What's so good?
Voice 1	It expresses your own feelings. It's good to see your own creation...especially when it looks good.
Voice 2	Rap's different to any other music.
Voice 1	It has meaning and stories to it.
Voice 3	Sort of has poetry to it...
Voice 2	Not like love songs and all that stuff that everyone does.
Voice 1	Graffiti and rap are really tied in together. and later...

Voice 2	Yes, that's what rap is, saying your feelings and stuff with a point of view. It's not like writing love songs and stuff like everyone else does.
Voice 1	Don't be like sheep.
Voice 2	Yeah, rap's different. Totally different. And there's a lot of stuff to write about out here in the western suburbs. I suppose if we lived on the North Shore, we'd have the equipment (recording equipment) but we wouldn't have anything to write about because our families would be rich.

Practitioners of rap graffiti and music are almost all young males, often still at school. They usually come from economic and social backgrounds that make them want to express themselves in a graphically violent way. Their art appears to 'deface public property', protests against every kind of repression – real or perceived, risks danger and even death. Their work is seen by the artists and musicians themselves as being an artform in the same way European traditional visual arts and music are by their practitioners.

Voice 1	Getting good at it.
Voice 2	Something good and you look back and think, there's something good in yourself. It's like any other art.
Voice 4	The fame in it. If you're really good and you're well known and heaps of kids know you and you do a piece, they go: 'Look, look!'
Voice 3	It's like any artform. If you do any art and you feel satisfied. You think it's good, it's from yourself, it's what you wanted to put down and that's really satisfying.
Voice 1	Art's expressing. You can put feeling into any form...that's art. It can be lyrically. You can't single out graffiti just because you don't like graffiti. It's just expression.

Some groups are older, having matured into serious artists and having been involved with some major projects – some legitimate, others clandestine. A selection of Australian major works is published in *Vapours*, a magazine that publicises 'graffiti' art activities and the recordings made by the Rap musicians. The range is considerable, but members of Def Krew lamented that the magazines like *The Enemy* and *Vapours* are not in colour and not easily available – that is, newsagents do not stock them.

The criminalisation of 'graffiti' art is undoubtedly a factor in the failure of large, commercial publishing houses to take up opportunities for reproducing examples of this art. Colour, essential in an art book, is beyond the means of the present publishers.

'Graffiti' or 'aerosol' art magazines in colour are seen as a need by young 'aerosol' artistsists' so that they can swap ideas and share their Rap lyrics with other practitioners. Recordings of Rap music are available and some Australian material is reaching overseas markets just as overseas material is available here.

On the other hand, Def Krew were shown an 'aerosol art' book – *Spray Can Art* (Chalfant. 1987) - which they studied with enthusiasm and critical comment, comparing examples in it with their own work and that of artists they had admired in the city. There are quite a large number of books published on this subject; in Western Sydney many are held in TAFE college and council libraries. The publication of such books has helped establish 'graffiti' or 'aerosol ' art as a 'legitimate' artform within art institutions and among academics.

The Role of School

It appears that as many 'graffiti 'or 'aersosol' artists are still students, their schools are often a focus for meetings, rehearsals, design sessions and planning raids. This was cited by Def Krew as the only reason they come to school on a regular basis. This also places them in economically restricted groups as they do not, as a rule, have the money to buy even the spraypaints they use, let alone a car for transport.

It is therefore an impoverished art at this level. Much of their time is spent in dreaming and designing and composing. When they do get paint it might be by stealing it, as a gift from a parent or as the result of a community graffiti project organised by youth or community arts workers attached to an authority like school, a council or a youth centre. Such an example is the Mt Druitt Police Citizens Club and the Bonnyrigg Youth Centre.

The link with trains and other forms of public transport can be traced back to their reliance on public transport which is often the victim of raids because these young people spend so much time there and it provides the challenge, the risk, the danger, the thrill that accompanies such acts of social defiance. Like the murals they paint, trains provide a public forum for their work, like a mobile gallery.

Voice 1   The risk!

Voice 2   The risk of the coppers.

Voice 3   Getting caught.

Voice 4   The adrenalin's always going while you're doing it. You just think the next car that comes around the corner could be a copper, a security car. Could be anything.

Voice 2   You're always shitting yourself, no matter what.

Voice 1   You'd do anything. You'd dodge fences, fight people, anything!

Voice 4   Fight to get away.

Originality is sacrosanct. The unspoken rules are that one does not 'bite other people's style' or cover up someone else's work. It is acknowledged that there are definable styles of 'graffiti' art, some of them ethnocentric, and that there are acknowledged 'masters' who enjoy an almost legendary reputation, such as Chess the Kook, Top Cat, Jamie and Bat Boy, as well as groups such as TDF (Tour de Future), KIS (Krime in Style) and SOS (State of Shock). Def Krew were conversant with the work of many local and inner-city Sydney individuals and groups.

The technology is not very complex, but a wide appreciation of and expertise in various spray 'nibs' and the quality and use of particular paint brands and their application is essential. The 'Tuxan' brand, for instance, is favoured because of its aroma, '...it smells nice. Bubble gum, sort of thing'.

The finer points of outlining and filling in and shading are learned by experience. Style is the most important ingredient – and there are many others. 'Graffiti' art might all look the same to outsiders, but it has as many variations as abstract expressionism. 'Graffiti artists' spend a lot of time designing and preparing their work and many keep a comprehensive record of both designs and finished work.

A feature of the work is a very sure drawing hand. Some 'graffiti' or 'aerosol' artists have had graphic or commercial art training, but look to 'graffiti' as a way to express themselves freely and with meaning. Much 'graffiti' art is in 'code' – that is, its meanings are only understood by other practitioners. Sometimes 'graffiti artists' working in this 'wild style' also put a translation for ordinary members of the public to read. The language of 'graffiti' art goes from ordinary verbal communication into their art.

The provision of designated spaces may solve some problems, but protest is hardly protest if it.is allowed. Some worthwhile projects have occurred in both Sydney and Melbourne. These include a project by the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, a series of paintings on Melbourne trains and the Bonnyrigg Multicultural Mural Project in Western Sydney, plus the recent national touring exhibition 'Pump Up The Can'. These projects have provided an outlet for 'graffiti' artists, but do not usually address the basic tenet that graffiti is a protest.

The 'graffiti' art crews are often well informed on political issues and are aware of the constraints of cooperating with the authorities. They are scathing of some more accepted forms of youth art and music.

They dismiss popular singer Kylie Minogue and rock bands like Midnight Oil on the grounds of content. They judge art in the same way. They respond to groups like BUGAUP favourably and to teachers at school who do not always appear to conform with the system.

'Graffiti artists' and Rap musicians, despite the accusations of vandalism, have serious and worthwhile points to make. They are socially and politically aware, put content and meaning on a par with technique and creativity and strive for excellent performance standards. Not content with hiding their light under a bushel, they place their art in the most public of places, untroubled that it may be 'devaluing public and private property'. 'Graffiti' art is not just art, it is active political dialogue.

In August/September/October 1989, students from the Faculty of Visual and Performing Arts at the University of Western Sydney at Nepean were involved in a program of expressive and performing arts with students of Colyton High School, the school Def Krew attend. Rap music was part of that program.

In April 1990 Def Krew gave a lecture demonstration to education students at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean.

They explained and demonstrated clearly and intelligently the validity and importance of their work as both artists, musicians and commentators.

This recognition and cooperative exploration of their art has had a significant effect on the members of the Def Krew. Respect for their work by parents, teachers and peers has grown as a result.

They have, in turn, started to look at their own work differently. Signing the work is a major operation. Each individual or group has a signature that is recognised by their peers. The public nature of the work means that it is assessed critically from the moment the signature or tag is completed. Reputations rise and fall as all work is acknowledged by both the artist and his/her critical public.

Girls are virtually excluded from rap graffiti although it is known that girls overseas are very active in graffiti gangs. Views expressed about girls by male graffitists are extremely sexist.

Rap graffitists see their work as artistically, socially and politically relevant. Their knowledge and grasp of the current social, economic and political scene is gained mainly from the press but also from the enormous number of songs they hear. They express this graphically in their art.

STREET MACHINERS

One of the most visible forms of youth activities is on the streets. The motor vehicle industry began with one-off designs and only later became a mass production industry under the aegis of industrialists like Henry Ford and his European counterparts.

Production line vehicles are now desirable. But a custom-designed motor vehicle was once the ambition of many who could afford one and the dream of those who could not.

Unique cars are now seen as historical rarities or radical, with elements of the unknown and the dangerous. The first question that arises is - 'Are they safe?'

Registering, insuring and policing agencies are all geared to conformity. The production line car with two-year warranty and no ostentatious decoration is acceptable. The car which has been customised and individualised, whether in its mechanics or appearance, has an element of the anarchic, attracts suspicion and sometimes persecution.

However, it is also a celebration of the motor car and a creative activity. Research indicates that while school students want street machines, they can not afford them. The high cost comes not only with the basic vehicle, but also parts, paintwork, engineering and mechanics to make the desired changes. Younger boys gain the enthusiasm and interest in street machines through role models in immediate or extended family or friends.

It also seems that 'working class' youth have a very creative attitude to their cars. They learn skills to be able to create the sort of car which reflects their personality, expresses membership of a group and demonstrates their knowledge and aesthetic appreciation of a major item of twentieth century life.

This is connected to post-school training and career which, in most cases in Western Sydney, are geared away from academia and the fine arts and into trades and the popular arts. Numerous demographic studies of recent years support this claim.

The ambition of some youth to design, drive and perhaps race their own cars is fraught with obstacles and dangers; this adds to the appeal. To achieve it requires flair, originality and design and technological skills. The final result is assessed by knowledgeable peers both in the local community and in national competition. The emphasis is on originality and on making a personal statement.

> Wayne   And you can build your car the way you want. You can buy your car from the production line and it's not what you want so you do it the way you want.

> Andrew   Well, if you have a look at every street machine, they're all different because everybody's different. Everyone's got their own imagination, that's why they're all different.

Street machines are unrecognised as a medium of creative expression by both the authorities and parents, unless there is a tradition within the family – for instance, uncles or fathers who were into cars in their youth. They are seen as a waste of time and money, but fiercely defended and justified as art by the youth themselves.

> Andrew   My mum would look at it and say, 'What a waste of money!'. She doesn't see it. If she saw needlework or something where you spend months on it, she'd know what it was like.

> Wayne   Now if a painter paints a nude woman, it's OK. If someone paints a car...say, a guy says, 'I'm going to paint a painting of a nude woman' or a guy says, 'I'm going to make my car as low as possible with wide wheels'. It's alright for the painting of the nude 'cos it's art.. you know? When it comes to the car, it's classed as a defect.

Street machiners see their work as a huge investment in time, skill, money and creativity. The lack of community respect is a sore point, especially when they cannot get their cars insured.

Andrew   No one respects how much money you spend on your car, how much pride you take in it, how much you look after it.

Wayne   It's the same as when a picture's stolen. If a painting worth a quarter of a million dollars is stolen, it's on the news.

Andrew   Look at the Museum, dinosaurs, Mona Lisa. If they get stolen, because they're worth so much money.. that kind of thing is news. If a car gets stolen, it doesn't matter 'cos you're a hoon.

Wayne   And if it's not fully insured, the police won't even bother looking for it.

Street machiners seek community support. Their cars make an individual statement and they want their work to be appreciated.

Wayne   I believe I build a car to be appreciated. For me to appreciate my car and for society to say, 'Well, isn't that a credit to them'.

There are avenues for support – friends with similar interests, clubs, meetings, races and competitions.

The grassroots are the young men whose cars are objects of personal expression.

Earnest people damn street machiners as superficial, vacuous, profligate with money and labour and suffused with bad taste. Their cars, it is charged, are gross and wasteful props for insecure egos. Their drive is to wallow in illusions of power.

Yet Streetmachiners, men usually, put as much of themselves into their creations as an artist puts on to a canvas, a film director into a film, an actor into a role.

It takes from one to seven years and tens of thousands of dollars to create a classy street machine – an object designed and handmade to please the eye and excel as a piece of engineering. (Robinson.   *Good Weekend, Sydney Morning Herald*, P.33, Dec. 23, 1989)

Female participation seems to be growing and is now receiving coverage in magazines. One who found success was Kathie Davis, of Queanbeyan, who won the top ute award in Canberra at the Third Summernats Competition. Her investment was six years of work to re-build her own vehicles and a very substantial financial outlay. But she is an exception. Raelene, in our interview, gives the more typical woman's viewpoint. It is a noticeably male territory. Girls are viewed as liabilities because they resent 'their man' spending so much time with his car. Peer and social pressure are cited as being almost insurmountable, no matter how great the interest. The singlemindedness of young male street machiners often excludes women completely.

The participation of Penthouse Pets as 'wet T-shirt' lovelies at the Third Summernats indicates a more widespread attitude to women – that they are accessories just like a set of wide wheels. These highly chauvinistic and sexist attitudes are also reflected in car modifications – power and thrust coupled with display. The overall impression is of tribal posturing.

Wayne   If you want to save up, for instance, for a set of tyres. You've got to have tyres. And you want big tyres, OK? If you're saving up for a set of tyres and they're $200 each and St Valentine's Day is coming up or your girlfriend's birthday...

Raelene   Yeah, it's stuff your girlfriend, get the tyres.

Magazines like *Street Machine* support every facet of the street machiner's activities, but they are criticised for being too up-market and commercial. There is no forum for the young street machiners to discuss and share ideas with other young people with similar interests. Most of the articles are about 'dream machines' and out of the reach of the teenager on a low income.

Despite low incomes, youth aim high and are critical of those who fall short. Status is acquired largely by doing it 'the hard way', by yourself, using your own skills not just by putting on fancy accessories.

Aesthetics is also clearly a factor.

Wayne   I've seen one that's going around Penrith. It's orange. He's sprayed the grill orange, he's sprayed the bumper bar orange, he's sprayed the hub caps orange....you look at it and you think to yourself, 'I'm glad I didn't try. It would have been a waste of time'.

This is true not just for the visuals, but for the mechanical modifications and the electronics. There are very defined styles and conventions and young street machiners are very literate within those conventions.

Any lack of originality is scorned. Street machiners deride imitators. Ethnic groups are recognised as having their own styles. Criticism and appreciation occur within these contexts.

There is also a sense of historical style. Creative appropriation and blending of two or more historical styles is seen as risky, but it sometimes pays off. There is a deep sense of pride and value for the vehicles that are created. Damaging or even threatening to damage another street machiner's work is seen as flagrant vandalism.

Street machiners are aware of other artforms, but reject much traditional Western European art, as irrelevant. They use elements of other artforms but overall see their street machines as being extensions of or statements about themselves and their skills and valuable as objects and aesthetic ideals.

The lack of facilities for young people to meet, work on their cars and exhibit them is frequently mentioned. The established car racing venues are clearly inadequate and the streets are unsuitable.

Street machiners make the comparison with skateboarders who have been supported in recent years by local councils who have built special facilities for skatboardetrs. Such 'official' recognition raises the status and acceptance of this and similar youth activities within local communities.

SKATEBOARDERS

Skateboarding is an integral part of the popular culture of contemporary youth. It is a non-traditional form of creative expression and is particularly popular in Western and South-Western Sydney. Skateboarding is mobile, three-dimensional, dynamic in its application and is gang or group related.

It is predominantly an outdoor street activity where 'as many as one in three Australian boys between the ages of twelve and eighteen own a skateboard', according to John Fox, Editor of *Skatin' Life*.   It is more than a fad; it is creative youth expression.

Characteristics of skateboarding and its popularity:

* *it is self-taught.*

* *anyone can skateboard almost anywhere.*

* *initial success comes quickly.*

* *it satisfies the desire to move, to speed, to glide, to swoop, to master more space.*

* *endless variations in movements and tricks makes success achievable in many ways - the continual challenge of new tricks, higher jumps and the mastering of difficult manoeuvres.*

- *scope for individualism, for building a repertoire of achievements for display and approval.*

(Jerogin. 1989)

The first of these characteristics must be emphasised. Skateboarding is identified as a manifestation of youth culture where adult intervention is not needed for the training and practice of the craft.

As a result of substantial lobbying, skateboarding has gained support from various sectors of the community. It is listed as a legitimate sport in some high schools in Western Sydney and a number of councils have constructed skateboard ramps. However, there has also been some backlash. There have been closures of skateboarding facilities following local opposition.

Another reason for the popularity of skateboarding is its high-risk value and the creative skills required.

Skating will survive because it provides the skater with total control and freedom.
(*The Skateboard Book : Blast!*, 1986)

Skateboarding in Western and South-Western Sydney

Local government authorities and the wider community of Western and South-Western Sydney are convinced that skateboarding is more than just a fad due to the prolific ownership of boards and presence of the skaters on the street.

Skateboarding concerns local councils for many reasons. First, there is increasing parental support for skateboarding. Second, petitions for offstreet facilities have been tabled at local council meetings by youth and their parents/supporters. Third, recent changes in the Local Government Act now allow councils to 'restrict skateboarding in malls, shopping areas and wherever there is a high risk of collision with pedestrians'. (*Mt Druitt-St Mary's Standard*. 15 Nov. 1989) Fourth, Western Sydney councils have formed a combined insurance group called Westpool to counter the 'high risk' insurance premiums for public liability. Finally, the Traffic Authority of NSW has shown interest in improving skateboard safety and facilities through legislation and enforcement, as well as education and promotion.

Action taken by local councils' youth and recreation planners and community health workers demonstrates the level of interest in and concern about skateboarding. They have been facilitators in the region, aiding the construction of proper facilities.

Construction decisions by councils which greatly affect the skateboarder relate to the surfaces which can be a:

- *flat area for freestyle tricks.*

- *gradient for speed and slalom.*

- *bowl with sloping sides/or half pipe.*

- *mixture of bumps, curves and straights for variety.*

Council options for skateboard structures include:

- *concrete mounded tracks (snake tracks).*

- *concrete performance bowl.*

- *flat area/open bowl.*

- *the ramp – half pipe, quarter pipe, street or jump ramp.*

(Jerogin. 1989)

Action which demonstrates growing support for this significant youth cultural activity has been taken by four high schools in Western Sydney – Greystenes, Bonnyrigg, Newman and Freeman Catholic College – allowing skateboarding at the Fairfield Leisure Centre as part of their school sport program. The skate ramp facility within Blacktown Memorial Pool promotes safe skating as 'some skateboard riders...pose a danger to pedestrians'. *(The Mt Druitt-St Mary's Standard.* 15 Nov. 1989)

The action of skateboarding

In interviews with three skateboarders Douglas, Greg and Ronnie interviewer Marianna Movrin explored their creative experiences. Most of the quotes are extracts from these interviews.

The significant interest of young people between the ages of ten to twenty who regularly skateboard stems from a peer challenge. Douglas tells us he started skating 'cause I was bored sitting at home and doing nothing and...because of my friends' and 'you just pick it up. Like everybody does it when you're around 12, 13...'

Greg, Ronnie and Douglas skateboard as a pastime and like many other skaters explore their skills/tricks of momentum and movement dynamics on the ramp at the Fairfield Swimming Centre about three times a week. Before this complex was constructed, they used to skate 'on the street or at Manly'.

Kids tend to learn to skate on the street before trying out vertical skating on a ramp or bowl. Whether a street or a ramp skater, equipment or tools-of-trade are 'decks' which come in different shapes and concaves, 'the trucks to hold the wheels, the different types of bearings for the wheels, different compounds of the wheels...the hardest is for the ramp and the softest is for the street'.

Having the right tools-of-trade and accessories heightens their expressive statements. They will often decorate their 'decks' with paint or grip-tack.

The skater extends his/her means of expressing an identity from the medium of trick making into the fashion arena. It is the current trend for skaters to wear designer labels by Vision, Powell and Bonecrusher. Baggy and comfortable clothing worn with caps is the fad. Helmets are acceptable. Bandanas, a previous fad, no longer communicates their gang identity. Skating is an ongoing creative challenge of street riding and ramp riding, of taking risks, sustaining the thrill of speed and forming new tricks. Gangs of street skaters gain recognition and momentum in street style, freestyle, slalom or downhill.

The fastest skater attains hero status as they usually lead the street skating gangs. By the mid-teens street groups usually consist of only three or four skaters, whereas young ones skate in groups of ten to fifteen in number. Popular locales for street skating are shopping precincts. Sometimes skateboarders street skate all day using gutters, balls and handrails as obstacles in order to pursue their craft of street tricks which involves imitation of each other's manoeuvres :

> *You master the trick and you get really stylish.*

> *Yeah and if you get really good on the street, well then you move onto the ramp...and you've got to start all over again and that's a new challenge.*

Whether a street or a ramp skater, the goal is excellence. Skaters' desire for quality is enhanced by critical discussion and comparison among themselves and in the media. Viewing American skate video promotes the challenge of practicising new manoeuvres. Skaters create variations of other's

tricks and naming them accordingly. For instance, if a skater extends a basic trick like an 'ollie', he/she can rename it such as an 'ollie starfish'. The interviewees described an 'ollie starfish' as :

> *when you 'ollie' in the air like...when you kick the tail and jump and you get mega height and keep the deck under you, and you grab the back of the deck while you're in the air and you twik it out. That's all in one movement – and then you slam.*

The aesthetics of critical viewing followed by transforming or re-making tricks is just as significant for the skater as the process of any original artistic creation. A purpose of this critical analysis is the display and promenading by skateboarders who entertain and communicate to an audience of their peers making their mark on the arena of the street. Spontaneous performance of well-rehearsed tricks on the stage of the street or ramp manifests commonalities of other non-traditional artforms such as graffiti.

The tricks can be adapted from the street to the ramp and vice versa. On the ramp all the skaters take turns. When a skater falls, another proceeds to skate. The 'first in first served' policy rules - though often the better skaters (who are bestowed privileges of rolling more often) are invested with hero status.

Gaining commercial sponsorship such as from the local skateboard shop, is the aim of many skilled skaters. (One of the skateboard interviewees achieved this.)

It was observed that not many girls skate at the Fairfield complex. Evidence suggests that boys do not take much notice of the girls whether they skate or not:

> *It's just that it's rough and when they hurt themselves, they're going to hurt themselves bad.*

There was a hint of jealousy when one of the interviewees stated:

> *I'm twice as better than some girls and they get sponsored like 'cause they're girls, which isn't fair.*

Boardspeak or Skatespeak

Skateboarders have created their own language. Some commonly used terms are:

Rad - radical, cool

Ollie - stand on back of board and spin it around

Fakies - back and forth on the ramp

Kerbside grind - street manoeuvre

Twik - skating trick or manoeuvre

Deck - board

Half pipe - a ramp structure built in or above the ground, consisting of two curved sides connected by a flat section with platforms at either side

Mogul - hump or bump

Quarter pipe - a ramp structure built above the ground, consisting of a platform and curved side

MARTIAL ARTS, BODYBUILDING AND CADETS

After some preliminary research the team came to the conclusion that these areas were unsuitable for this research paper. Research included three interviews, reading the available magazines, researching the literary sources and reviewing the media sources.

While of interest to many young people and supplying them with a great deal of creative outlet, they were basically activities under the guidance of adults. Few took their interests any further or developed them into a youth-generated creative activity.

Only bodybuilding had the makings of a creative activity – elements of sculpture, working with self instead of objects, attaining standards of perceived beauty, critical discourse that sometimes uses art terminology.

However, it was practised under very strict, disciplined conditions set down by adults and dictated by access to gymnasiums.

Martial arts have many aesthetic qualities indicating they might be included. But the attachment to a 'master' and a 'way of life' taught by elders disqualified them.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURE

The methods used to obtain data for this paper were largely descriptive and in two stages. Firstly, data was collected from sources such as journal articles, government papers, media reports and working papers. The literature was searched for previous work in this area.

Secondly, a series of case studies was conducted. A total of four activities were selected with selection influenced by three factors. These were the desire to examine a range of non-traditional arts activities, to select activities where work involved a variety of social and cultural groups and the specific interests and expertise of the investigators involved in this project.

Within the second stage, many documentation methods were used. These included both structured and unstructured interviews with individuals and groups involved in art activities, observations recorded as fieldnotes and photographic and audio recording of the arts activities.

A priority was to capture more than just a record or create an artefact of each situation. A more important concern was to describe the contexts within which the artistic activities were taking place. The participants' attitudes towards the arts, purposes for becoming involved, the impact of the arts upon individuals, and finally the interrelationship between youth, the situation, and the creative experiences.

Conducting the Interviews

The major method employed in this research was a semi-structured, group interviews. These were usually conducted on the interviewee's territory and usually while observing the activities.

The format for the interviews was sensitive to how the young people perceived the questions. They were given joint responsibility for structuring the interview and every effort was made to avoid artificiality and formality.

Interviewees were able to read and comment on the transcripts. While we had key issues we wished to explore, we did not close off other areas of concern to the subjects. Throughout the interviews we attempted to inject our questions naturally into the conversation rather than reading them in a pre-arranged order.

Training of the Interviewers

Writers and interviewers collaborated in a series of training workshops lasting four hours. These provided background on the study with members of the writing team leading interviewers through

various concerns such as the purpose of the study, possible sites, methods to be employed and issues of confidentiality.

Interviewers were asked to record details such as age, sex, relevant background information (eg., member of a minority group; place of residence...), the setting for the interview – number of participants, physical layout or other circumstances under which the interviews were arranged, and the relationship (if any) to the participants.

Transcription of the interviews

All interviews were transcribed by research assistants and were then subjected to a number of procedures to ensure their reliability.

Analysis of transcripts and field note data

To analyse the data, the principles of grounded theory were used to identify central themes that emerged. This process was used for each of the four sites. Team members identified themes then allowed their conclusions to be critically analysed by each other.

To ensure the interpretations were valid, team members worked initially in isolation then together. They examined the conclusions and used a process of triangulation by cross-validating these findings for different participants in the project (ie., subjects, interviewers, team members) and by examining data in a variety of forms (ie., interview data, filed notes, artefacts).

EMERGING THEMES AND ISSUES

In examining the material gathered for this study, the writing team, identified a number of emerging themes and issues. These themes, issues and questions highlight future directions for discussion, debate and inquiry.

How can these activities be described as art?

The three major areas share certain characteristics. Some of these are tied to notions of aesthetics:

- *the generation of criticism though qualitative and critical comparison.*

- *notions of excellence and enthusiasm to excel.*

- *awareness of technique and excellence in execution and performance.*

- *notions of purism, plagiarism, lack of originality*

- *notions of appropriation.*

- *awareness of historical and social context and the evolution of style.*

- *awareness of other artforms in the community.*

What are some other common characteristics?

- *generated by the group without outside intervention.*

- *a highlight is public performance and display.*

- *an awareness of particular audiences.*

- *a concern with the groups marking out a social space of their own.*

- *this social space is a place for social contact, networking and barter.*

- *each has its own social/language code.*

- *each contributes to the way the participants establish their own identity.*

- *elements of revolt against a perceived norm.*

- *a positive work ethic including the generation of income to support the activity and a commitment to excel.*

How do these activities relate to individual identity and lifestyle?

When we talk of style in a non-traditional role, we mean the co-existence of author and style, living the art form.

- *Each has a community-specific vocabulary and language. Individuality is defined by membership of the specific group, peer recognition, level of participation and skill.*

- *Each group has a code of social meanings, behavioural characteristics, and fashion style. The art defines the lifestyle.*

- *Each group sets its own socially defined rules.*

- *An individual's status is created according to group's guidelines and values.*

- *Participation provides a basis for identity beyond a single group or location. There is individual and group mobility to others involved in the activity elsewhere.*

What are some other social and cultural issues related to these activities?

The activities are often regarded by institutions of authority (political, educational, cultural, community and media) as invalid or illegal.

The difficulty for institutions is their inability to recognise or respond to emerging cultural practices as a result of their investment in the status quo.

How do non-traditional artforms evolve? Are there distinctive stages of movement from non-acceptability to acceptability ?

- *The groups generate their own validity or legitimacy by choosing their activity to the exclusion of others. The paradox is their hankering for recognition when they are motivated by its oppositional nature. (Individual and gang satisfaction with the risk, thrill and danger.)*

- *Where local councils provide ramps for skateboards, ramp styles develop. The freestyle street style still flourishes, although illegal.*

- *Commercial developments, with sponsorship for state and national gatherings in street cars and skate boards, publications, and sophisticated products are legitimising these activities further. At one end of the market is the amateur, at the other the developing professional (cf. with surfing).*

- *With 'graffiti'/ Rap artists there is evidence of growing information networks. Individuals are documenting work and sharing it interstate and internationally.*

Questions for further debate

1. What is the role of traditional institutions in developing non-traditional artforms? How can they be supported without being institutionalised?

2. How can the authorities generate a supportive climate for community/ cultural development of these oppositional youth artforms and still recognise their potential for generating new enterprises and playing a developmental role in a more creative and productive Australia?

3. Are young people involved in non-traditional artfroms likely to be attracted to traditional and 'accepted' arts activities?

4. Do the 'youth' artforms transcend socio-economic barriers?

5. What differences can be identified based on ethnicity? Do different ethnic groups pursue different artforms? If so why? Is there 'slippage' between ethnic groups where similar activities are pursued?

6. Why are there gender divisions? In the activiites examined, women assume subservient roles - why?

7. What are the activities that young women are involved in and why?

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NEW DIRECTIONS FOR YOUTH THEATRE

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to characterise the changing face of youth theatre and drama for young people in Brisbane over the last eight years and to examine the impact recent developments might have had on youth theatre policies at both a government and a 'grassroots' level.

When I wrote *Essay on Youth Theatre* in 1980, I was specifically describing a form of youth theatre I had been exploring since 1978 at City Road Youth Theatre which was based in Sydney's Seymour Centre. This was a youth theatre centred on the principle of creative and, to a large degree, autonomous artistic freedom for the participants; a principle which at that time seemed very new. Since then, we have witnessed the mushrooming of community theatres throughout Australia working on exactly the same principles, and I realise that my ideas and those of Derek Nicholson, the guiding spirit behind City Road Youth Theatre, were part of a philosophical movement that began many years ago and now permeates the community arts and even occasionally the mainstream.

City Road's notion of creative and autonomous artistic freedom was also influenced by the ideas of Errol Bray, the founder of Shopfront Theatre in Sydney. This notion found a strong and natural expression in the activity of playbuilding. While Errol and I differed on exactly how much 'adult intervention' was permissable in the process, I think we had broad agreement on the central principle that youth theatre participants should control their own creative process in both content and form. It was to be a theatre by young people, for young people, and inevitably about young people in so far as it would always express their values, explore their issues, and reflect their concerns. In other words a participation-based theatre specifically addressing youth communities and committed to playbuilding as its central activity.

HISTORY OF YOUTH THEATRE

The genesis of youth theatre had a lot in common with that of drama-in-education in England in the 60s and early 70s. Drama-in-education was characterised chiefly by child-centred learning and by the concept of child art and child drama as having both innate and educational value.

The style of youth theatre that developed in Australia in the late 70s accepted these two ideas, but then went on to differ in one vital respect. It promoted the notion that experiential drama should be developed through playmaking and the acquisition of other theatre skills into a performance product. It was this particular characteristic that gave youth theatre its unique identity.

In Queensland, where I have been working since 1982, there have been a number of developments that have had an important affect on the evolution of youth theatre. This paper examines the most important of these and analyses how they might affect future youth theatre policies with regard to both theory and practice.

When I developed the Youth Theatre at La Boite in Brisbane in 1982, it was very much conceived as a focus for ambitious young performers most of whom were still at school or had just left. None of them as far as I remember had the opportunity to study drama at school outside of involvement in the school play. At that time the fledgling drama and dance courses at the Kelvin Grove Campus of the Queensland University of Technology (then part of the Brisbane College of Advanced Education) did not have a very high profile. La Boite's Youth Theatre was seen by its participants as a stepping stone towards the profession.

But the trend was changing fast. Within a mere two years the youth theatre had become a place where young people went to improve their chances of getting into a drama training centre. By then an even bigger force was coming into play. This was the acceptance and rapid spread of theatre and drama as legitimate studies within the secondary school system, which in many philosophical and practical ways were soon to differ little from the youth theatre we conceived ten years before.

It is now possible to take drama related subjects all the way from Grade 8 to Grade 12, in a large number of Queensland secondary schools. Under the new curriculum this will extend all the way down through primary into preschools. Drama now has one of the highest growth rates as a subject in secondary schools.

The Board of Senior Secondary School Studies 1989 figures show that there were 9,555 students taking drama subjects in Years 11 and 12. In addition, there were 6,756 Year 10 speech and drama students and a conservative estimate of another 7,000 students in Years 8 and 9. This makes a total of about 23,500 students taking drama in Queensland. Ten years ago there were 730 students taking drama in Years 11 and 12, which means the growth rate in senior school was well over 1300% in the last decade. In the junior school, the growth has been just as strong.

The development of Drama within the Queensland school curriculum is deliberately aimed to place drama (including theatre) as a serious discipline study on the same level as music training or visual arts. This is a sophisticated, comprehensive and ambitious program, backed up by rigorous four-year training at Queensland University of Technology's Drama Department at Kelvin Grove which consistently produces high quality drama teachers to achieve this objective.

The curriculum goes well beyond the old-style English 'progressive' drama-in-education models that were in vogue in Australia in the 70s. The old drama-in-education models saw themselves as strictly classroom-based and non-performance oriented. 'We don't do the school play' was the motto they universally chorused.

The new curriculum does all that the old drama-in-education models aimed to do and much more. Drama as both a teaching method and in the sense of issues-based exploratory workshops is complemented by formal studies of theatre styles and genres at both practical and theoretical levels. Thus not only do teachers 'do' the school play (though there are very strong reservations about this area: cf. Haseman, 1989:11) but they are also artform based, teaching various theatre genres including Brecht, Commedia, Theatre Sports, Mime, TV, and Stanislavski-based naturalism. And they also do Playbuilding. In other words what was once accepted as an identity unique to youth theatre is now increasingly shared by drama in schools.

This is even more striking in the case where schools set up drama clubs deliberately modelled on youth theatres. For example at a recent open day at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre a number of schools presented drama work (initiated by drama teaching students) that was identical to the kind of work one would see performed by intermediate level youth theatre classes.

This expansion although a very recent phenomenon, is already starting to have significant repercussions on mainstream and youth theatre in Queensland.

For the mainstream theatres there has been a predictable growth in young audiences to the point where for some theatre companies they have become a significant sector of their 'market'. And in Drama schools like that at QUT – Kelvin Grove, there has been a massive increase in the number and quality of applicants for tertiary drama courses.

Many students are graduating from high schools with an involvement in drama classes and productions that extends back several years and with an increasingly sophisticated knowledge of drama processes, techniques and terminology.

In simple terms, the schools have taken or are taking on the role of supplying theatre experiences for young people. And they have taken over this role on a scale that dwarfs anything being done by

any other theatre for youth organisations. It certainly does not take much imagination to work out the enormous investment this represents in terms of personnel, training, space and equipment.

It is clear that if a youth theatre policy is to have any credibility, whether at the macro level of government funding bodies, or at the micro level of individual youth theatres, it has to be referenced to this development. In a recent survey of two Brisbane youth theatres (Radvan:1990) 85% of all school-age participants were already taking drama subjects at school. Ten years ago this figure would have been a fraction of this proportion. This surely must raise questions about what role youth theatres now see themselves playing.

The aims and objectives of the three youth theatres described in *What Is Youth Theatre?* (Young People's Theatre Workers' Weekend:1984) would in the main now sit comfortably with a good school drama program. Phrases like 'accessible to all young people'(Shopfront), 'not career-oriented, but rather creates ever-widening opportunities for, and alternatives of creative expression.' (Australian Theatre for Young People) seem very appropriate.

This is especially the case given that young student drama teachers at the Kelvin Grove course do practical units in Playbuilding, Youth Theatre and Theatre-in-Education as a part of their course, and many of them tutor part-time in local youth theatres. There are strong practical and philosophical links between these drama teachers and the youth theatres. For example Contact Youth Theatre, La Byte and Townsville's La Luna Youth Theatre are mainly staffed by Kelvin Grove teaching graduates or by people who were involved in that teaching.

There is some movement by young graduates between youth theatre, theatre-in-education and the teaching profession. And because of the system of coordinated training that operates at the Queensland University of Technology Drama Department, each of these teachers is part of a wider peer group network of practitioners that extends across all areas of the profession.

It is therefore possible to characterise the growth of teacher-training in drama in Queensland as having come from a dynamic theatre and drama infrastructure development across the whole State rather than developing in isolation, away from the practice, and oriented solely towards schools. The philosophy and values underpinning the training of drama teachers for secondary schools are exactly the same as those which currently inform youth theatre.

It is not surprising that many schools are running drama programs similar to those offered by conventional youth theatres. Some high schools are already entering their work, both scripted and devised, into youth theatre play festivals in Brisbane. Of course there are many schools, particularly in the non-metropolitan regions that are not yet able to offer drama as a subject, or certainly not at the level of sophistication indicated here. However the trend is definitely there and growing. There are currently between 25 and 35 drama teachers graduating each year from Kelvin Grove and this number is expected to rise. The continuing expansion of drama in schools keeps the demand for new teachers at a high level.

But far from dampening demand for youth theatre it appears to have increased it. Brisbane youth theatres have been expanding rapidly, facilitated by the availability of more trained tutors from the Queensland University of Technology. This has led to a changed profile of the youth theatre clientele. As we have noted there are now very few participants who are involved because they are unable to take theatre subjects at school. Why are they there?

INTERPRETING THE BRISBANE YOUTH THEATRE SURVEY

The idea for this paper grew out of a survey I conducted recently on participants at La Byte and Contact Youth Theatres in Brisbane. I believe it is relevant to draw some lines between the results of the survey, *Moving Culture* the report of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's inquiry into youth cultures in Britain, the Performing Arts Board's policy on youth theatre as articulated in their Programs of Assistance booklet, and the document *Towards a National Agenda for the Arts*.

The survey was restricted to La Byte and Contact Youth Theatre, the two main Brisbane youth theatres because I could personally supervise it and because I could run it as a pilot to find out what questions were useful.

The results were surprising. Not only did they reveal new information, they crystallised, quantitatively, numerous implications that were suspected but had not been focussed on before.

The survey characterises what might be considered the typical urban youth theatre participant at the two youth theatres. Most of the participants, that is 147 out of the 178 surveyed, were school students, with 115 of these at high school. Some 61% of these attended private schools and a good proportion of the 39% attending public school went to highly regarded State schools.

But whether they attended private or public school 85% took drama subjects. More than two thirds had at least one parent/guardian with tertiary education.

The typical youth theatre participant was already a regular theatre goer (and that took into account more than half the surveyed group who attended youth theatre for less than a year). Only 8.5% of the total group had not been to the theatre in the previous 12 months, and of the rest 60% went three or more times.

This compared well to cinema attendance with 2.8% never going, and of the rest 85% went three or more times. Compare this to rock-concerts where 40% never went and the majority only went once or twice. In fact they were more likely to be at art galleries or museums, where only 10% had never been, and 43.5% went three or more times.

Only classical concerts fared badly with 58% never going – but this is not bad given that 53% never attended a public sports event.

The average youth theatre participant appeared to be culturally privileged, with a comparatively rich arts background. I should stress average because there were exceptions.

Their reasons for attending were:-

78% wanted to improve their drama knowledge and skills
57% wanted to perform
39% wanted to become professional theatre workers and
38% went for fun.

Interestingly, the 'social' choices, 'My friends go to youth theatre' and 'Youth theatre is a place where I can make friends' were the least popular choices.

Implications

I believe the survey results, cross-referenced with other youth theatre statements, suggest three generalisations.

It is worth looking at the results in tandem with the Australia Council's Performing Arts Board's statement on youth theatre as articulated in its Programs of Assistance booklet. (1989)

> We believe in providing active, direct access for young people to the performing arts to enable them to explore and express their interests and ideas. The participation of young people in the performing arts stimulates their wider cultural awareness. Our support of youth arts aims to develop not only young performers, but also audiences of the future.

> In order to achieve this, we consider that the involvement of the professional artist is essential.

> *We particularly wish to encourage programs for young people which offer the potential for their participation in all aspects of the creative process, working through youth companies, orchestras or small groups.*

The first implication I propose is in relation to **ACCESS**. The survey indicates clearly that the bulk-end of the present youth theatre market is in the 'upper middle-class' zones of the socio-economic spectrum. While there is nothing wrong with this and the demand for theatre services which has been stimulated by exposure to drama at school must be met, the question is where do the subsidies get applied?

I believe this end of the market should not be subsidised, and that scarce funding dollars should be applied instead to encouraging access by groups outside the normal market.

For example, some years ago Street Arts Community Theatre undertook a large performance project in Logan City, a 'blue-collar suburb' of Brisbane, working through the local school, its drama teachers, and local businesses. This was enormously successful and involved young people in a very ambitious playbuilding project that would otherwise never have been available to them. Other projects are now happening there.

It is this kind of developmental work that subsidised youth theatres ought to consider undertaking, modelled perhaps on some of the more successful community theatre projects. And clearly of course they have to happen within the community concerned.

In other words, where public money is involved we cannot and should not dodge the political ramifications of the work we are doing.

My second point is also to do with Access. Given the recent increase in drama and theatre schools, and given that 85% of the surveyed youth theatre clientele already do drama at high school, then subsidised youth theatres rather than ignoring these important developments, need to look at offering **LEADERSHIP**.

There is no reason for example why schools should not be able to organise their own after-hours youth theatres.

What professional youth theatres can do is to supply philosophy and methodology. These can be disseminated and encouraged through kits, seminars, teacher in-service training and focussed through annual youth theatre festivals, conferences and the like.

As some schools seem to be on the road to obtaining more discretionary power over spending on part-time personnel, youth theatres should certainly be offering their services, and obtaining further employment opportunities for their tutors.

In this way the developmental benefits obtained by subsidy can have a multiplier effect within the community. Calculating this multiplier effect might indeed become an integral part of any project's assessment criteria.

My third point is to do with cultural messages as expressed in the Performing Arts Board's statement cited above and in *Towards A National Agenda for the Arts*.

If young people are to find positive ways forward for their lives, they need to be able to think creatively and to understand their world. They need opportunities for a cultural life pertinent to them, and beyond the standardisations of the age. They need to be able to encounter fundamental questions expressed in the arts at their own level of experience and aesthetic.

To my mind there is a danger here of producing an absolute confusion between art and culture. Indeed there is almost a notion that art produces culture, and therefore that a people without art are a people without culture, and that a people without culture, if one could imagine such a phenomenon, are a bad thing.

This may be workable 'realpolitik advocacy', but it is certainly not a sustainable argument and, as a plank on which to build youth theatre, seems very dangerous. *Moving Culture* - the report of the Gulbenkian Foundation's recent inquiry expresses an alternative view intelligently and convincingly.

> *The general purpose of 'the arts' is often held to be the reflection and expression of important human qualities and values – of reflecting and making identity. Although most young people's lives are not involved with the (fine or traditional) arts, their lives are actually full of expressions, signs and symbols.*
>
> *And it is through these expressive resources that individuals and groups seek to establish their presence, promise and meaning – their own lived identities. It becomes crucial to recognise this where the received arts fail to connect or are seen to be irrelevant.*
>
> *The aims of the new Inquiry can be simply stated. It is to make a provisional reversal in what seems to have become the accepted chain of logic in our society – that 'art' produces 'culture'. A comparative or historical view readily grants that different cultures produce different arts. But this awareness has worn very thin in our everyday sense of our own culture. We need to say again culture produces art, only a small part of which is ever (formally) recognised.*
>
> *What if the cultural forms of everyday existence and identity are made the subject, not the object of aesthetics and creative expression? What if we make the working assumption that the young are already engaged in imaginative, expressive and decorative activities, but that they are not (formally) recognised? What if the young are seen as already, in some sense, the artists of their own lives?'* (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Inquiry Draft Report. 1988)

This last question – What if the young are seen as already, in some sense, the artists of their own lives? is a very important one for us. Those of us who work at the coalface, with the young people, would immediately answer in the affirmative. The richness of imagination they bring to their work must lead us to say yes.

My personal concern is that the kind of missionary thinking suggested within the subtexts of the official agendas has us cast as 'bearers of civilisation', bringing light to the 'hoi polloi', and creating new audiences for those tired, old, and torpor-inducing white elephants we call State theatre companies. And that unconsciously we may reflect some of those hierarchic cultural values in our thinking which may be contributing to the screening process which eliminates all potential clients who are not in our own image – white, privileged and middle-class.

In practice this means we have to be very careful that we do not create new hierarchic dependencies in our clients – dependence on experts for example – directors, designers, choreographers etc. who take over 'making the art'. In painting for example, it would be considered quite legitimate to advantage the student's work by framing it for them, but to finish it for them, or draw in the 'difficult bits' would be unthinkable. Or for that matter so would dependencies on professional services such as costume-makers, set-builders or theatre technicians.

If youth theatre has any function at all in relation to mainstream theatre or 'mainstream' culture, it is to reverse those hierarchies and to put the power of expression, the power of organisation and the power of creativity into the hands of 'ordinary people'.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR YOUTH THEATRE

While the discussion that follows may have the appearance of being about philosophy, for the subsidised youth theatres it is in reality much more about accountability. The non-subsidised youth theatre is accountable only to its clients and is therefore free to do whatever it wants within the obvious constraints of market forces. The subsidised youth theatre has a responsibility to the taxpayer as interpreted by the cultural policy decisions made by governments and their funding

agencies. Many of those policies are being reviewed and this paper addresses both policy makers and youth theatres.

In the past the keywords that crop up frequently in 'youth arts' policies are ACCESS, EQUITY and either CULTURAL AWARENESS or AWARENESS OF THE ARTS. These last two are often confusing, particularly since 'arts' and 'culture' are used as virtually interchangeable words.

However one interprets them, they are the keystones of a policy that developments in education, in Queensland at least, are making redundant. Sooner or later the question is going to be asked – do government arts funding bodies still have a role to play in 'youth arts'? And if so what should it be, given the obvious pointlessness of replicating what schools are already achieving?

One obvious move has been to provide classes and production experiences that attempt to go beyond what is available at schools. While this is an exciting development it is one which has brought strong pressure for youth theatres to transform themselves, for want of alternative models, into something like intermediate drama schools.

There are serious problems if this development is based unquestioningly on the fundamental assumptions that currently underlie youth theatre. For a start it is a replication of services, with youth theatres doing what is already being done in the many tertiary drama training centres across the country. This overlap has already occurred with one fairly recent youth theatre production in Brisbane which mainly featured tertiary level drama students.

Another danger is that youth theatres in the upper-age group where most of the high-profile and expensive production activity occurs, end up being subsidised to offer second-rung drama school style projects to participants who were not talented enough to gain entry into an accredited drama course in the first place.

It seems crucial that youth theatres in redefining their roles, and without abandoning their original foundations, build outwardly towards an identity uniquely different from the big 'youth arts' institutions. While retaining ACCESS, EQUITY and AWARENESS as important principles, several more might need to be added. These I would suggest could be under the four interlinked headings of DIVERSITY, LEADERSHIP, COMMUNITY, and YOUNG PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS, with some overlap.

DIVERSITY

The argument for continuing government patronage of the arts to preserve diversity of choices is one of the very strong ones. It surely has to be at the core of any society claiming to be truly pluralist.

By offering an alternative to schools, youth theatres are able to explore ways of working with young people in theatre unconstrained by curricula, assessment requirements, and by the sometimes restrictive ethos of schools. They offer opportunities for young people to explore theatre at a far deeper level than may be possible within the school timetable.

Additionally youth theatres are able to bring young people and theatre practitioners together with far greater freedom than is possible in schools. Whether such opportunities ought to be subsidised remains an open question. The Brisbane Youth Theatre Survey noted that 61% of school student participants came from private schools. While it would be foolish to rush to the conclusion that these are the children of the wealthy middle classes, they are certainly not underprivileged, and both personal experience and other data from the survey confirms this. Nobody has ever suggested that ballet classes or music lessons ought to be paid for by government.

LEADERSHIP

Youth theatres have an enormously important role to play to provide leadership to the 'youth arts' community. They can implement developmental or 'pathfinder' projects that can be used as models by other youth theatres and by the schools.

This argues however that each project is set within a designed context of coordination and dissemination.

This kind of project can only work if the youth theatre already exists within a strong network of other youth theatre providers (including the schools)who have some tangible connection with the project whether through consultative and advisory processes, or through more direct involvement. And secondly the appropriate modes of dissemination also need to be designed into the project from the start.

One wonders how often high quality or innovative work reaches no further than family, friends and immediate associates. One can also question whether performance is automatically the sole end-point of work. Workshare workshops, 'in-service' training for drama teachers, community forums etc. might all be appropriate ways of achieving add-on multiplier effects to the value of the project. In this sense one could compare youth theatres to research centres, providing research and development for the whole field.

To make this possible subsidized youth theatres need to take a pro-active stance in setting up professional networks across the whole spectrum of theatre and drama for young people. Youth theatres must take responsibility for providing leadership along the entire interface of young people and the dramatic arts.

COMMUNITY

The four principles of DIVERISTY, LEADERSHIP, COMMUNITY and YOUNG PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS are interlinked. This is especially obvious when dealing with community.

It is no longer enough to create advanced youth theatre projects along the conventional lines of 'putting on a play' in a hired hall or theatre. The dramaturgical context of the project needs to be thoroughly explored. That is, it must have a specific 'reason for being', and this would not be a strange notion to anyone working within community arts. I have argued elsewhere that youth theatre is most appropriately situated within the community arts. (YAPA Conference Papers,1990)

Community here has three meanings. There is the community from which the participants are drawn, there is the community of artists and arts-teachers which in a broad sense 'hosts' the project, and there is a community to which the end-product is aimed.

Youth theatres, unlike schools, have the opportunity to choose the community of participants they work with. Like community theatres, they can target specific communities for specific reasons. They might for example choose a particular emphasis on tackling 'disadvantage' eg. ethnic, social and economic background and location.

The network of professional artists and arts teachers within which youth theatres exist is of crucial importance. Our culture tends to breed fragmentation with disastrous results for the arts. No single company can possibly hope to achieve all its goals on its own. Patronage and advocacy particularly are only effective within a general climate of support for the arts and this can only be made possible by the networking of individuals and groups into an artistic community. In unity is strength. This is hardly a new argument, but the frequency with which it is advocated bears witness more to the breach than the observance.

Unfortunately organising power within the arts tends to be backward in its thinking, and much is still made for example of the unhelpful term industry. Prevailing notions smack of the old-style medieval craft unions and their emphasis on compartmentalisation and specialisation.

We need to think for the future in terms of an arts infrastructure, a honeycomb matrix where multi-skilled individuals can shape their careers in non-linear paths. In this model youth theatre is not thought of solely as an organisation but as an overlaid pattern of 'youth arts' concentrations or nuclei. Some will of course be formal companies, some might be 'wings' of other companies, some will

be theatre-in-education companies, but all of them are inter-related and actively coordinated and cooperating within a common field.

Where youth theatre teaching is specifically concerned this means involving a variety of professional artists in 'youth arts' as much as it means creating youth theatre specialists. It means focussing on breaking down the sclerotic barriers that exist within the profession and between the profession and schools. It means encouraging all branches of theatre to see that they all bear some responsibility for involving young people in the arts. It means looking at new ways of pooling resources, new ways of making theatre meaningful, understandable and accessible, new forms of 'value-added' cooperations.

Thus within the arts community, youth theatres should see themselves as playing a leadership and advocacy role in encouraging theatre groups to directly involve and engage young people.

Finally, there is the community to which the project 'performance' is aimed. No project design should be complete without reference to the audience it intends to address. Some youth theatre works have been designed specifically to tour to schools, for example Corrugated Iron Youth Theatre in Darwin. There are potential audiences in hospitals, retirement villages and so on. The important point is that the audience should already exist since few if any youth theatres, certainly in the metropolitan areas, have the resources to market their work to a general public. Much has been made of youth theatre providing a voice for young people, but a voice is of little value without an ear to hear it.

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL ARTIST

The last principle to be examined here is the neglected one of the young professional artist. While a 'youth arts' policy must necessarily engage itself with the issues of young people's participation in the arts, such a policy would be totally meaningless if it did not also provide leadership in the encouragement of young artists who have committed themselves to participation at a professional level. While many established companies have taken some responsiblity in this area, there is no consistent policy and little encouragement.

It is surely pointless investing massively in 'youth arts', as we have done through the school system and then through the tertiary training centres if this expensively paved road ends in a desert.

I suspect that one of the reasons why this problem has never been properly tackled, in theatre at any rate, is that it represents an uncomfortable lack of interface between 'youth arts' policies (including training) and the so-called 'industry'. Once actors leave drama school they are on their own and market forces are left to winnow out the tiny percentage who will earn a living out of their craft. What of the rest? Some will find work in arts administration either backstage or front-of-house, some will fall back on previous training in another field, others will dream, drive taxis, live on the dole and wait for their one job a year. Their expensive narrowly-based specialist training, fitting them for little else, slowly atrophies like all unused skills.

The problem, put simply, is that the established theatre companies perform works largely requiring mature casts. Meanwhile, there are very large numbers of young actors seeking work and a shortage of much older actors. By the time actors are old enough to start qualifying for the mature roles most of them have given up.

A sensible approach to this problem would be to investigate what kinds of bridges could be built to span the 'gap' between professional training and the profession.

It would be worth experimenting with the notion of establishing professional youth theatre companies that employed 75% of their actors under 30 for a minimum of one year as developmental ensembles. It is possible such companies, packaged in the right way, might attract considerable corporate support.

The relationship of tertiary training to the theatre industry is much too big to be tackled here. But the point to reinforce is that youth theatre policy must reference itself to both tertiary and secondary education systems. In the 'wider world', there is probably a role for it to play in shaping training policies if it wants to take up that challenge.

CONCLUSION

In summary I see youth theatre's survival in having a much broader role to play than it does at present, and a much more upgraded, 'professional' and integrated one within the arts establishment.

Continuing marginalisation will only see it pushed out of the picture by the growth of the big institutions and by economic pressures.

At a macro level small arts organisations will only survive in a context of infrastructure development and multiskilling. The 'free movement' of talent and skills in any direction within the infrastructure will ensure that the 'specially gifted' (whether artistically or administratively) will not remain locked in the upper end of a hierarchic arts pyramid. Parity of esteem and mobility between the various theatre strands and teaching must begin at the training level and carry through the entire profession.

At the micro level, youth theatres benefitting from this cross-fertilisation and the consequent broadening of perspectives can take a much bigger role in promoting youth participation in the theatre arts. The logical end-point (as far as I can see at present) will be the establishment of young professional companies.

While these developments may only have current relevance to Queensland, they may well prefigure what will eventually occur Australia-wide. Certainly one would hope that schools effectively take on the responsibility for making the arts available for all young people, releasing 'youth arts' organisations from this base-level role towards more complex types of activities, some of which I have tried to characterise here.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.   Youth theatre policies be referenced to art education and training at secondary and tertiary levels.

2 .   Youth theatres be encouraged to play a leadership role in project design and in coordinating and networking across the youth theatre field.

3 .   Policies be developed for the encouragement and support of young professional artists, including the establishment of professional youth companies.

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YOUTH, MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS: TOWARDS 2000

By Jo Moulton
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INTRODUCTION

This paper examines Australian youth cultures in a mass media and communications oriented society, by:

- exploring youth cultures in Australia to identify any common denominators;

- presenting the Express Australia youth media and communications process as a successful model for giving expression to Australian youth cultures;

- examining distinctions between notions of 'high' art and popular culture in Australia experienced by young people;

- looking at television and other audio-visual technology and computers as relevant and appropriate media for the expression of youth cultures;

- comparing corporate marketing strategies aimed at Australian youth and considering the degree to which they recognise and relate to youth cultures;

- raising points for further discussion.

SOME COMMON DENOMINATORS

Forming a profile of Australian youth cultures requires a loosening up of our perspective, a tuning in to encompass contradictions, constant transformation, dilemmas, pressures, energies, and realities experienced by young people in our society. It is often necessary to define youth by the conventional standards of age, gender, income, geographic location, ethnicity, Aboriginality, socio-economic background, disability, and so on. To anyone who is working closely with a wide cross-section of young people, those constructs so often required by relatively distant bureaucrats, can be irritating and artificial.

Sex, drugs and music might be more illuminating perspectives by which to examine attitudes, practices, income, taste, status, language, style, consumer power, rights and so on of young people. Certainly, music and drug culture are dominating points of focus, perhaps because of the powerful commercialisation of these commodities.

It is my experience that, by providing opportunities for young people to express themselves (as in the Express Australia workshop program) one can learn to observe and listen to the 'everyday experience' of youth. It can be expressed through body language, conversation, image, social dynamics, through a camera lens or a 'rough' cartoon.

I shall elaborate on the focal point of interaction between young people, the mass media and communications technology, as a key means of accessing and producing youth cultures.

By observing young people producing media on issues that concern them, one can deduce some common denominators about young Australians. They have examined and produced media on a wide range of issues and themes relevant to their lives – divorce and family separation, drugs, work, education, suicide, income, sex, STDs and AIDS, parenting, smoking, addiction, the future, the nuclear threat, the environment, to name a few.

Express Australia spent 18 months during 1987-88 working with about 60 young people on the experience of divorce and family separation to produce a manuscript for publication entitled *Hey,What's Happening Here?*

The process of writing and shaping a book by young people was a successful one. The picture that it paints is one of increasing numbers of young people from all backgrounds as the emotional bargaining tools for separating parents. The impact of divorce often means a dramatic lowering of income and lifestyle, change of home and school. It increases the level of independence and is forcing young people into the casual workforce at a much earlier age, not to earn pocket money but income for school clothes and books.

The incidence of incest and child abuse alluded to by young people participating in this project was alarming.

The magnitude of homelessness, dislocation and poverty currently being experienced by Australian youth is now well documented in the 1989 Burdekin Report.

Young people's attitudes to work and their career aspirations have changed. In 1987, Express Australia conducted a project which invited written contributions from young people aged 18-24 years on their experiences of work for a publication entitled *Hanging in There*.

This revealed that young people are not often attracted to the idea of a vocation or life-long career. They want jobs in clean working environments, in glamourised high-tech industries where they can meet people, get good pay and have flexible working hours. Work must be politically and ideologically sound, which can mean anything, depending on their ideology. One young female tertiary student who evaluated the five part-time jobs she had experienced, rated her position as the manager of a massage parlour as the most satisfying. It provided flexible night shift hours, she had a high level of responsibility and authority, she met a wide range of interesting people and the job paid well!

Youth cultures present a range of contradictions. Young people can be extremely moralistic and racist on the one hand, suspicious and judgemental about homosexuals, politicians, and immigrants. They are subject to peer group pressure and will experiment at very early ages, 13 onwards, with high risk-taking activities – 'unsafe' sex, drug-taking and trading (amphetamines to heroin) and shoplifting.

Young Australians, unlike young Americans, are generally ignorant of their legal and constitutional rights, some do not know how to use a telephone book, many do not read newspapers and are vague about the democratic party system and structures of Federal, State and Local government. They are often underestimated by teachers, parents, counsellors, and agents of authority.

It is often disregarded that while young Australians of non-English speaking background can be labelled as semi-literate they will often be bi- or tri-lingual and skilled interpreters in their everyday life.

The consumer power of young Australians has often been ignored by government and commercial interests. But with recent marketing studies indicating that young people are doing the supermarket shopping, this is changing. Retailers and manufacturers are modifying packaging and presentation to target the young environmentally conscious consumer.

If there is one strong common denominator readily detectible in the young Australian, particularly in the 14-18 year-old age group – it is, their uncanny ability for 'bullshit detection'.

Most of the 3,000 or so young people who have participated in the Express Australia media and communications workshop program during the past five years have demonstrated the ability to work productively and cooperatively. They negotiate tasks efficiently and rapidly develop hands-

on technical skills – operating video cameras, microphones, recording equipment and editing facilities.

Having observed hundreds of these young people conducting interviews with politicians, celebrities, journalists, scientists and artists, I was inspired by their ability. They showed great common sense and critical and analytical ability.

The average Australian appears to lack self-confidence and be unable to express himself or herself in public or in 'the media'. I suggest our society can use many approaches and mechanisms to increase equity for our youth, increase their opportunities and skills and provide the means for them to express themselves creatively and effectively. The Express Australia media and communications workshop model is an example of a process designed to achieve such aims.

EXPRESS AUSTRALIA YOUTH MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

Philosophy

Express Australia is a youth media and communications bureau established in 1984. It is an organisation with members although its structure was designed to suit government bodies more than the members. Membership has been fairly transitory because of the age and mobility of its constituency.

Express Australia has always been a living, generating creative process – not an organisation which merely nurtures fine or traditional arts as do certain 'youth arts' organisations.

In this sense, Express Australia provides for expressions of youth cultures through mass media and other communication technologies.

This process is essentially hands-on and bottom-up in nature ie, 'it can only be developed from within; it cannot be imposed from without or above'. (Fiske, John. *Understanding Popular Culture*, 1989, p. 23).

The role of the organisation is to facilitate that process for young people. The process is product-oriented and the products (media and communications products) by definition require an audience.

The role of Express Australia has been to:

- create an environment where young people can work together to express themselves and their concerns;

- provide training and skills in media and communications technology and production;

- provide equipment and the opportunity to explore its uses and possibilities; and

- create mainstream audiences by distributing, publishing or broadcasting youth media and communications products.

The Express Australia publication *Anyone Can – A Fresh Media Manual* clearly documents the development of the workshop model. It demonstrates the means by which a wide cross-section of young people can collectively employ media and communications production skills to produce radio, videos, posters, films, press releases, articles and photography for distribution into mainstream media and communication outlets ie, to mainstream audiences.

The challenge for Express Australia has been to legitimise the process and its relevance as a vehicle of cultural expression for young Australians.

In a society where myths surrounding mass media and communications technology abound, it has not been easy to generate support or open doors to government, the mass media, publishers or industry. In

the frameworks established to celebrate Australian culture through such events as the Australian Bicentenary or major festivals in the 1980s, it is significant that there has been arguably little opportunity to celebrate innovative and creative processes of popular culture that are relevant to and appeal to young Australians.

In the wake of the Bicentenary and in the lead-up to the 21st Century, policy-makers and planners have the opportunity to broaden our cultural perspectives and to accommodate young Australians more meaningfully in the cultural and intellectual development of Australian society. I believe that mass media and communications technology can assist in this process.

Through mass media and communications technologies, young Australians can express themselves and examine their cultures. They can be linked or networked together and to audiences. They can develop self-confidence and skills for the workplace and participate in cultural development at a local and national level.

Objectives

Express Australia has re-defined its objectives for the 1990s to achieve the following:

1. To maintain and expand its youth mass media and communications workshop program. (The workshop program represents the bottom-line entry point for young people into creative production. It is a participation model with the ability to be transferable into schools and community organisations as well as rural and isolated communities via computer-networking, fax machines and ultimately television and satellite communication links.)

2. To increase awareness and generate support from government, industry, mass media and corporate sectors. In practical terms this means working to put Australian youth cultural development on the agendas of the private and public sectors.

    Input into developing strategies for future arts based initiatives for young people is one such opportunity.

    Express Australia has reported to Australian broadcasting policy reviews to encourage recognition of Australian youth as a major audience. It has argued that young people ought to be qualitatively reflected in the product of our broadcasting networks.

3. Marketing to Australian corporations to build corporate identity with young Australia and to invest in quality youth media/communications production rather than merely constructing and targeting youth marketing media product promotion.

    Express Australia successfully negotiated with Ansell International to to re-direct some of its advertising dollars into the production of a 'safe sex' education media kit for Australian schools.

    Express Australia has a small, but increasing, advisory role to television networks via representation on the HSV 7 Victorian Community Ascertainment Committee and to GTV 9 on youth-related programs in pre-production.

    Express Australia has promoted youth-generated media and communications strategies to industry. The Victorian Manufacturing Industry, for example, was a strategy linking young people, their information needs and career aspirations with industry needs and recruitment strategies.

    Express Australia has negotiated corporate sponsorship from companies such as ICI and Ansell International for its workshop program to provide opportunities for young people to produce media products to address environmental and health issues.

4.   To maintain and expand production of quality youth media; in particular, a state-of-the-art cultural affairs television series for young Australians. Express Australia has a concept for a series of half-hour programs focusing on youth issues – love, addiction, racism, fanaticism, etc. – as reflected in fashion, dance, music, the mass media, film, computer software, art and animation. The programs will include clips of footage from other countries/cultures around the world.

5.   To break new ground. Innovation has been our generating force in line with the demands of our bottom-up workshop process.

A small 'youth arts' organisation with limited resources can bring little innovation in access to mass media and communications technologies for young Australians. We do have a role, however, in the testing and trialling of innovative processes.

Since 1985, Express Australia has actively sought to bring young people into contact with new technology to give them opportunities to creatively explore its uses and possibilities.

In July 1985 Express Australia staged an exhibition of youth media and communications in action at the AMP Gallery in Melbourne. This included a daily computer link-up with schools to produce interviews and reports which were fed on-line into a conference at the St Kilda Town Hall. Young participants were remarkably adept at solving the day-to-day technical and organisational problems of this ambitious task and producing daily news releases on their activities.

The results of this pilot project formed the basis of a youth communications plan designed by young people, artists and technical advisers at Express Australia in 1986 entitled Voiceworks. The plan links groups of young people at six stations throughout the country, via an on-line computer network, into a production workshop program to produce a newsletter and other publications. It includes a second-stage down-time video satellite link-up with potential for television network broadcasting.

During 1990 Express Australia conducted a series of Desk Top Publishing Workshops for young people to produce its newsletter, *Voiceworks*. This program is a model for developing a communications network for young Australians. It will be the vehicle by which young Australians can exchange cultural opinion and ideas, and communicate with a network of associated youth/children's media bureaux in New York, Tokyo, Wellington and Boston.

Express Australia, during 1989, adopted a new company structure to avoid physical and financial collapse. It was thought necessary to separate wide-ranging tasks, to establish clear areas of expertise, and to achieve a legal structure which was viable and credible in the marketplace.

To protect the youth media and communications workshop program, which has always been primarily targeted at disadvantaged young people, Express Australia Workshops Pty Ltd has been established, operating as a non-profit company with a production and advocacy role.

Express Australia Pty Ltd is a profit-making company which advocates and markets quality youth mass media and communications product, attracts sponsors to its workshop program and is becoming a youth media production house and consultancy service. While this company structure sometimes seems at odds with the traditional structure of most government subsidised arts or arts-related organisations, it may well succeed as an important working model for future youth cultural initiatives.

COMPUTER CULTURE

Computer technology is no longer the domain of big business. It is accessible to everyone.

The micro-computer with its interactive connection between keyboard, screen, the machine and the user, has opened the world of floppy disc software. The digital computer has arrived. It is rapidly transforming computer graphics, remote sensing, image processing and the way in which we see. The new discipline is called 'visualisation'.

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The computer clearly has had an enormous cultural impact.

The arrival of the micro-computer with the almost conversational relationship between the computer and the user has enhanced the creative game-playing capacity of the computer. It was our youth population which most rapidly absorbed it into popular culture.

In 1985, I took three young Australians to Japan to participate in an International Children's Futures Conference at the Tsukuba Expo. It was like a giant excursion into a micro-computer culture for two-and-a-half weeks. Not only did our three young Australians delight in the range of micro-computers, but they ingeniously utilised the abundance of computer games software, as the key tool for communicating with the young Japanese and Korean participants. Throughout the two-and-a-half-week journey in trains, buses and hotel lounges, the inter-cultural links and exchanges were predominantly made through game-playing on computers. It enabled the kids to easily identify and select their peer leaders and spokespersons for more formal cultural rituals and it provided them with a common language which both united them and empowered them as a group. This experience illustrates clearly the consumer-producer process of interaction between young people and communications technology. The actual consumption of the computer software became a creative cultural expression.

The notion of the computer as a data base, ie as reservoirs of information, has now been superseded.

Contemporary historian Theodore Roszak has examined, in *The Cult of Information*, the impact of the computer on American society and has re-evaluated the 'folklore' surrounding computers, drawing a clearer distinction between the information processing of machines and the process of human thought or ideas (Roszak. 1988).

The capacity and potential of the computer in various aspects of our lives is relatively underdeveloped in Australia, in comparison to such countries as Japan or America. It could play a significant role in giving expression to Australian youth cultures.

Some would argue that the computer de-personalises and trivialises the creative process. The proliferation of junkware – video games, exercise programs, recipes and horoscopes – in the software market attests to the function of the computer as a source of entertainment, like TV, a major component of contemporary leisure and popular culture.

It is no surprise that when Roszak examined the contents of electronic mail on hundreds of bulletin board systems in local computer networks around California he discovered that the 'gems of thought lie scattered through a dense thicket of trivia – cute limericks, snippets of opinion, off-the-wall outbursts and illegible fragments'. (Roszak. 1988: 195-196).

The text of bulletin board systems users, more often than not, reflects the pop culture diet of magazines and television – film and record reviews, jokes, occult-lore, soap opera summaries, 'Dungeons and Dragons'- this is the hard-core of youth culture as computer text or computer graffiti. On this level, the computer, as an interactive medium, encourages creative role-playing, literacy and communication skills.

The success of 'Dungeons and Dragons' in the youth market is not in the packaging and promotion or quality of the software product, but in its ability to tap creative responses. The game promotes an obsessive response in many young users.

While it is true that the level of preoccupation with informal on-line communications has been concerned primarily with the trivia of games and entertainment, it does not necessarily follow that the collaborative process of on-line creative production leads to poor quality outcomes.

The Express Australia workshop model, a collaborative, democratic process of 'roundtabling' and interviewing technique which can be transferred into a software program, can ensure rich research, accuracy of language, content and design. *The Body Book*, a health magazine produced by Express

Australia with young people for 15-20-year-old Australians is a quality product and an accurate reflection of popular culture in language, format, style, imagery, typography and content. It is possible in Australia to see the computer as a powerful, cost-effective resource to overcome the social dislocation of young people. It is not only possible to disseminate information via computer networking for participating groups, but also a way for young people to comfortably access and exchange ideas, expertise and collectively design and produce cultural commodities. The *Voiceworks* newsletter production teams in the Express Australia workshop program have acquired a range of desktop publishing skills. They design, editorialise, and generate copy and images for a newsletter.

The potential of introducing an on-line computer networking facility into such a project would enable rural and isolated community groups or individuals to participate, not only in the dissemination of information but in the creative production process.

It is possible to imagine on-line communities of young people widely varied in cultural origin and geographical location, working creatively together to produce cultural commodities – publications, videos, computer software, designs, events.

The costs of a modem, a terminal program and a dedicated phone-line has, until now, been regarded as prohibitive, particularly, by under-resourced arts organisations.

While the establishment costs may be high, the use of information dumping and on-line 'down-time' can minimise costs. It is surely a question of efficient management rather than cost. Moreover, the communication technology companies have a vested interest to develop imaginative uses of communications facilities by future mass media and computer literate generations.

The issue of computer technology and its role in Australian culture is not a question of how we pay for it, but how it is blended into our cultural fabric and used to accommodate young people in our cultural programs.

The computer revolution is well under way and being thoroughly exploited by many young Australians. Youth Media of Australia is a small but rapidly developing desktop publishing business, established by a cooperative of young students in 1987 under the Express Australia umbrella.

While their initial objective was to produce and distribute a youth magazine – *Stop, Press, Play* – for both the secondary and tertiary education market in Victoria, their survival has meant the rapid development of a desktop publishing enterprise.

They market themselves as a young print media business with its 'finger on the pulse of youth culture'. Their marketing brochure is a floppy disk package.

Equally impressive is the group of 19-23 year olds who have established a highly successful computer software design business called CODEX Pty Ltd based in South Melbourne. They have consciously skipped tertiary education and have rapidly marketed their software design capabilities to major domestic and overseas government and corporate clients.

The talent and energy of these highly media/computer-literate young people are rapidly being absorbed by corporate interests. They have no apparent inclination or avenues open to them to channel their skills and knowledge into the traditional arts. They see themselves as riding on the crest of the wave of a new media and communications age and are assertively commercial and professional in their approach.

There is much to learn about our future from such young people.

THE MEDIUM IS STILL THE MESSAGE

Television

Australia's youth have been subject since birth to what McLuhan described as 'the all involving sensory mandate of the television image'. (McLuhan,1964: 329)

The image is a 'mosaic mesh of light and dark spots' – it is a flat two-dimensional mosaic requiring 'sensuous participation that is profoundly kinetic and tactile...the interplay of the senses'. (McLuhan, 1964: 335)

It is this interplay demanded by the TV medium that has put our young generation increasingly at odds with the values of 'the arts'. The new highly media-literate generation have adapted themselves to the more sensory and iconic structures posed by TV images.

The content of TV programs has little to do with the impact of the medium and the attitudes or imagination in youth cultures. The sensory mosaic image creates a sense of immediacy, intimacy and involvement.

A frequent adult perception of young people is as passive TV consumers, manipulated by hours of viewing.

The arguments posed by 'middle-class moralists' who tend to blame youth social violence on the impact of TV are insinuating a sense of gullibility on the part of the young TV consumer. There is a need to examine not just what young Australians watch on TV but how they watch it.

We know to some extent what young people watch on Australian TV although ratings are a questionable measurement. The introduction of 'people-meters' may well prove that young TV viewers dominant program selection.

We know by asking young people at Express Australia that Clive Robertson and Steve Vizard are popular TV personalities. But why?

We know that programs such as *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Fast Forward* and endless hours of rock-video programs are top rating with young audiences. Innovative programs, like *Beatbox* and *Blah,Blah,Blah* on the ABC achieved a strong identification from youth audiences despite the fact that young people are usually much less inclined to watch the ABC than the commercial TV networks.

When a young person is so deeply committed to the environment and concerned for disappearing rainforests and cultures of the world, why do they not want to watch quality documentaries about these issues on the ABC? Why is *Neighbours*, one of the most successful Australian TV exports to Britain since *Skippy*, breaking all BBC2 ratings records?

The answers do not lie in the content of these popular programs or the style of the personalities but in the way they exploit the relationship between the TV medium and the media-literate viewer.

Comedy and variety shows are currently enjoying popularity with young viewers for that very reason. *Tonight Live* with Steve Vizard, for instance, stumbles along in a seemingly chaotic fashion, but it actively and openly engages the viewer in the action. It not only works off a live audience in the studio inviting spontaneous reaction and performance by the studio participants, but involves the home viewer by inviting them to fax in their ideas, and comments. The interviewed guests range from unknowns to international celebrities beamed in by satellite.

Beatbox exploited the vox-popping technique, taking its audience along with the on-camera interviewer out on to the streets of the western suburbs of Sydney.

Blah,Blah,Blah bussed its audiences into the live studio program, as part of the show, while Andrew Denton, the presenter, not only moved freely among the studio audience with camera and microphone but also used close up shots effectively to make intimate asides to the viewer at home.

These programs are concentrated entertainment – 'spitting out' identifiable images, personalities, humour, fashion, and games that fit comfortably into the realm of popular culture. The appeal to young viewers is the anarchic mock-up style of the program which openly dismantles the medium and shows how it works. On this level, TV demands a high level of interaction and participation.

Australian TV news programs and presenters do not successfully impact on young Australians. A 1985 national survey by the Federal Office of Youth Affairs, clearly indicated that young Australians were now more interested in global affairs rather than local or national issues.

The style of presentation, formal language and editorial manipulation of TV news reporting, does not appeal to the media-literate generation despite their interest in world events. Australian teenagers do not usually discuss last night's news items in the school playground or among themselves.

On the other hand, Clive Robertson has a cult status among the media-literate. Clive Robertson presents world news, both significant and trivial, as pieces of media. He skillfully de-glamourises TV. He chatters to the cameramen behind the scenes, makes critical comments about his script and generally breaks conventions of TV news presentation.

Robbo, as he is nick-named, is popular with young people because he makes news entertaining, he 'talks real' as one young person described it, and he avoids condescension by assuming media literacy in his audience.

The most successful Australian soap operas in television's short history directly tap youth cultures. *Neighbours* reflects the issues and realities of the everyday suburban existence of young Australians. It captures the conflicts and strong peer group pressures that affect their lives and dishes it up in the narrative and formula of episodic soap.

The Kylie Minogue phenomenon, her rapid rise from *Neighbours* to international fame and fortune is puzzling. It may be that the young actor's ordinariness, her roots in suburban soap have been brilliantly marketed and translated into the lucrative media of popular culture – TV, records, film, rock concerts and magazines. Kylie is a multi-media triumph. She has been packaged, promoted and marketed as a cultural commodity.

Express Australia is breaking new ground by working directly with young people to design and produce a TV program for Australian youth audiences. Express Australia conducted a series of script development workshops in 1989 which led to a 20-minute TV pilot to develop as an international co-production. The program reflects popular culture – music, dance, fashion, film, art, animation, computer software and issues like addiction, fanaticism and sex. The program has a fast pace and does away with a presenter.

At this stage, the marketing of the TV pilot is meeting with resistance from cautious bureaucrats and financially crippled networks unwilling or unable to take risks.

Australian broadcasting policy, like arts policy, has often failed to recognise youth audiences. The commercial TV networks are highly regulated and subject to licence renewals. A quota system ensures that the networks make and broadcast a percentage of Australian-made products. Specific audiences, such as children, are catered for at certain programming hours and a percentage of programs must reflect Australian culture.

Neither the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal, nor the TV networks, distinguish between 13-18 year-olds and adults, either culturally or as a consumer audience. This gap ignores young people, dismisses their cultural interests and fails to recognise them as highly media-literate.

It is important for arts policy to accommodate and relate to broadcasting policy to cater for young people as both consumers and producers.

Young Australians who wish to become the Stephen Spielbergs of tomorrow, and I know there are many who do, are without adequate training or career structures. They have few opportunities to express themselves and develop opportunities in media production outside of the two relatively exclusive film and television schools in Sydney and Melbourne.

These ambitions are not restricted to young Australians. Recently, Express Australia was visited by 25 Japanese students (aged 15-16). They arrived here expecting a cultural exchange program based on making a film of their visit with young Australian students. Their school-based TV station produces in-house lunch-time programs and occasional small documentaries for local broadcasting.

ART vs. (A)RT – OR SIMPLY MISREAD – AN ANECDOTE

Some years ago, Express Australia was approached by the National Gallery of Victoria to engage our workshop participants in the design and production (to camera-ready stage) of a poster to promote the gallery to young disadvantaged people.

An art director and a comedy writer were employed to facilitate the workshop participants. There was one condition in the brief. The gallery has a strict policy to use objects from the collection on all promotional material.

Week 1   The enthusiastic team of young 'designers' visited the gallery to select an object that would appeal to young people as an image on the poster. Four hours later, they returned and explained that 'nothing turned them on'.

Week 2   The team was sent them off to the gallery again, and again they returned despondent – still nothing was suitable. They hated the place and had an unpleasant encounter with a security guard.

Week 3   In desperation, it was arranged with the costume curator for them to view the costume collection in storage. The team returned with photographs, content that they had an image which would attract young people into the National Gallery.

The next task was to produce some clever copy and suitable typography. By week 5, the writer was despairing. We realised that the young designer-writers had none of the concepts or language of art to write about. They recalled they could not work out how to read the labels under the paintings in the gallery. They were confused as to whether the man in the painting was the painter or the subject.

The copy for the poster with 'The Punk' costume originated as a doodle on one participant's worksheet. This resulted in '(A)rt at the National Gallery of Victoria'. The anarchy (A) symbol was the perfect 'make-do' solution, expressing the appropriate amount of 'tongue-in-cheek' disrespect. It symbolised their power to make their own style and language that brought art into the realm of popular culture. The poster was never printed by the client which is perhaps not surprising.

This anecdote illustrates poignantly the gap between 'high' and 'popular' culture experienced by many young Australians.

It is necessary to explore further how young people position themselves in the realm of popular culture and why they often feel alienated in galleries, museums and theatres.

Our galleries and museums are usually housed in imposing, sometimes monumental buildings, with overwhelming interiors, protected by uniformed security guards and requiring a code of behaviour consistent with the precious atmosphere surrounding valuable objets d'art. Theatres, particularly opera theatres, are sumptuous, formal settings and ticket prices are well beyond the means of the

average young student. Even the cost of a program, which could provide some access to or understanding of the play, opera or performance is prohibitive to the average young person.

Young people perceive themselves in a subordinate, disempowered position in our society, economically and socially disadvantaged. The nature of popular culture implies participation and relevance to everyday life.

John Fiske defines popular culture as a process of life, 'It is not concerned with the evaluation of quality, but rather the perception of relevance. It is less concerned with text than with what the text can be made to do...the relevance of the text to the everyday allows its textuality to be participated in; readers are cultural producers, not cultural consumers'. (Fiske, 1989:157)

'High' culture on the other hand is concerned with universal values, 'the preservation and enrichment of our cultural and intellectual heritage' (Whitlam, Gough. *The Whitlam Government 1972-1975*, 1985:553). 'High' culture is about critical and aesthetic discrimination.

The media of popular culture – television, radio, magazines, video-games, fashion, rock concerts, sports – can provide opportunities for young people to participate and make their own meanings of everyday life.

I do not believe, however, that the 'high' arts as such, are irrelevant to young people. It is more that 'high' arts are often outside their cultural realm and inaccessible as creative processes.

VIRGIN ON MEGA

Corporate Marketing

The growth of the British-based Virgin group of companies, headed by entrepreneur, Richard Branson, provides an interesting commercial model to examine effective youth marketing strategies.

The company started as a British record retail chain but during the 1980s expanded to video and film production, publishing, a cost-cutting inter-continental airline and condom distribution. Virgin Records closed its British record chain in 1988 and opened an international chain of 'megastores' in London, Tokyo, Sydney and Melbourne.

The megastore concept is a giant superstructure of youth culture where records are consumed. They are centrally located, high-tech, fun places to be and explore fashion, games, film, art, food, media technology and records or compact discs. They include a casual restaurant, pool tables, ice cream and confectionery bar, a mixed fashion and video cum digital sound systems departments, all there to assist in record sales. The target market is 16-24 year-olds, the age group that need somewhere to go. Virgin has created a user-friendly retail environment for young consumers which is tactile, audio-visual and interactive.

Little money is spent by Virgin on television advertising or direct media advertising. The second interesting component of their Australian Megastore marketing strategy has been to establish a corporate 'street credibility'. The marketing manager wasted no time in finding ways for Virgin to assist youth organisations and grass roots activities or 'street-cred' campaigns. Virgin has distributed 120,000 copies Express Australia's 'Body Book' health magazine, supported safe sex and needle-sharing campaigns and small local activities directly related to youth issues. Virgin will invest people, space, windows, videoscreens and time in local youth culture as a direct marketing ploy.

The Virgin company is innovative, unconventional and relatively chaotic in their corporate and management style and policy and that is exactly how they wish to operate.

Companies like Reebok Australia Pty Ltd and Coca-Cola Bottlers Pty Ltd are cautiously developing similar strategies to raise their profiles in the youth market. They sponsor rock concerts and video programs which acknowledge and support youth cultural activities.

Government strategies like NCADA, the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse, has had limited success in achieving credibility with young Australians or affecting their attitudes or behaviour.

What bureaucrats fail to do is achieve satisfactory youth participation in designing and implementing these strategies.

Early publications that emerged (1987-88) and targeted to youth were clearly written by middle aged males. The language was inaccessible to young people, the images presented a stereoyptical white Anglo-Australian nuclear family unit, and the values expressed, so threatened by drug and alcohol abuse, were of a middle-class white Australian patriarchy. Drawing on rock stars and sporting identities to lend credibility to such campaigns was an equally misguided element of these strategies. The rock music and sports industries are two concentrated arenas of drug and alcohol abuse and young people know it.

The Victorian Health Promotions Foundation, financed by the tobacco levy, is assuming a more informed role by encouraging participation by young people and community organisations to promote health. By linking arts activities – youth theatre, festivals, workshops and programs – to specific health agencies – like the Anti-Cancer Council, Rage Without Alcohol and AIDS organisations, the Foundation is resourcing the arts and ensuring participation while delivering and marketing health messages which will have a long-term impact on our culture.

The arts have a role in Australian youth cultures. The issue is in understanding and appreciating those cultures. The commercial marketing models, such as Virgin Megastores, may be profit motivated, but their marketing strategies accurately tap youth cultures and are worthy of closer examination.

A 'youth arts' strategy which encourages the essential elements of existing youth culture, establishes supportive, creative environments and provides resources for young people to express themselves and contribute to the cultural and intellectual development of this society, must also be marketed to young people.

VIEW FROM THE USA

In 1990, I visited New York to present the Australian position at a symposium entitled, The Media and Children's/Youth Issues. At the symposium, Barbara Pyle, Vice-president of Environmental Policy, Super Station TBS (Turner Corp) launched a new animated super series, Captain Planet and the Planeteers. The Networks not only recognize their vast youth audiences, but are directly linking productions with the youth environmental policy.

The symposium brought together experts and key leaders in all issues affecting youth and children – education, poverty, AIDS, the environment, employment, drug abuse – with representatives of media organisations. The emphasis was on media involvement, giving young people a voice in the mass media and looking at the responsibilities of mass media organisaitons to youth and children. The symposium also brought together directors of the international associated network of Youth/Children's Express Media Bureaux.

I would like to draw attention to the move of the Boston-based Children's Express Bureau into the Indianapolis Museum, Indiana. Regarded as the leading Children's Museum in the USA, it provides an exciting and interesting model. The museum presents a range of interactive programs for children covering music, performing arts, environment, history and mass media and computer communications. The Children's Express media production and reporting model fits well into their interconnected set of programs, providing active participation for children in integrated arts.

This model suggests that much could be gained by linking, if not amalgamating, exciting arts programs and resources. The computer/communications resource base in Indianapolis enables the Museum programs to link up with local organisations, schools and Express Australia in Melbourne. Discussions with executive producers at MTV New York indicated a clear development in production

and programming for youth audiences beyond the video clip into production and programming on sexuality and environment issues.

IN LONDON

I returned via London to explore pre-marketing, co-producing and distribution possibilities for Express Australia's youth TV magazine pilot, The Globe Show.

In London I met people in a wide range of small and large production and distribution companies, aggressively developing within a perceived international youth market and rapidly developing international co-production trends.

The youth programming successes of Channel 4, England, and the rapidly expanding youth program division of the BBC under Janet Street Porter, are indications of growing media interest in, and reflection of, youth cultures.

In the communications industry, discussions with Apple's publishing arm indicated a massive new development in personal computer software with 3-D colour animation and motion video capabilities – multi-media computers.

The race is on between the major computer companies to produce the base platform to match multi-media technology with the widest personal computer market. The impact of interactive computer technology and its applications in the visual arts and communications is going to be rapid in the 1990s.

This reaffirms my proposal that multi-media and computer-based strategies must be employed in the development and delivery of future 'youth arts' policy.

A NOTE ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA

Young Australians need to learn about quality, standards and productivity, not only for commercial purposes, but to regenerate their culture.

It is education's role to teach young people how to think. Too often, Australian education curricula tend to reflect basic skills, job training and competitive grading. There is little evidence of the innovative or creative use of computer or mass media technologies to encourage inventiveness in our schools or to encourage new disciplines and enterprises.

Youth and welfare organisations are primarily concerned with helping young people survive. This can and often does breed an unhealthy passivity which can make it difficult for young people to become independent.

The role of the arts ought to be the encouragement of creativity in young Australians, not just to ensure there are new audiences and consumers.

The political implications behind linking a 'youth arts' strategy to social justice policy reflects the increased national awareness of the magnitude of dislocation, homelessness, isolation, stress and poverty experienced by Australian youth.

I propose that careful consideration be given to the national political framework. Education policy is currently enjoying political and economic priority supported by award restructuring and technological reformation in industry. It would seem to be politically and economically sound to align an Australian 'youth arts' strategy within the broadest framework.

POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

1.   Given that youth have cultures, how do we recognize these cultures and support their creativity?

2.   Because contemporary youth cultures constantly evolve, it's not easy for them to be fitted into the established public arts assistance framework.

3.   A 'youth arts' policy needs to recognize social justice responsibilities; arts organizations, like any housing, health, legal, employment, or education body, must play a role in serving youth.

4.   Consider how to implement media and communications technologies to allow participation by young people to produce and exhibit Australian youth cultures.

5.   There is an urgent need by young Australians for information about careers in the arts and related industries. Consideration must be given to the ongoing demand by young Australians to enter these industries despite their economic vulnerability and limited job opportunities.

6.   There is a need to acknowledge Australian youth as a range of distinct subcultures and communities to be recognised and catered for within Australian broadcasting policy, as are other major sub-groups within the community.

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MUSIC AND YOUNG PEOPLE

By Sue Gillard
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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to:

- develop an understanding the music of today's youth; and

- formulate from this some implications for 'youth arts' policy.

To gain an understanding of the importance of music to young people, a survey was conducted throughout Australia. School students aged between 10 and 18 were asked about music and how they thought governments could make music more meaningful to them. This paper looks at the results of that survey.

What does popular music mean to young people?

As indicated by the survey, music means many things to young people, yet overwhelmingly it was not just that 'music is good fun', but that music is a release from the pressure and stress our young people are currently experiencing. Music creates a positive emotional response -

'It makes me relax' – almost without exception this was the response from young people throughout Australia. *'It means peace'*, *'Makes me relate to life in a happier way'* – Student, age 13 Sanderson High School, Northern Territory.

'Music helps me relax...It's a cruel world out there' – Student, Campbell Town District High, Tasmania.

Music gives young people an identity, a voice that adds meaning to their lives. The lyrics are very important. Greg Macainish, bass player and songwriter for the 70s rock band Skyhooks, believes the words are crucial. 'When you're up there on stage, and see thousands of mouths move to the words of your songs, you realize that the words are so important'.

Music creates varied cultural and social responses. These basically cover personal messages about life, understanding oneself and others, coping with life *'When I hear a song about drugs, I immediately think - keep away'* - Student, age 13, Highvale High School, Victoria. *'Lyrics help me learn about other people'*- Student, age 11, Campbell Town District High, Tasmania. *'The music I listen to doesn't really relate to my life, but I think music does divide people into classes'* - Student, age 15, Queechy High School, Tasmania. *'Music is the best way to get your mind off worrying subjects'* - Student, age 15, Bankstown Grammar, Sydney. *'It made me closer to friends'* - Student, age 16, Mercy College, Melbourne. *'Music fills some of my time when I am bored'* - Student, age 13, Trinity Grammar School, Melbourne.

Music helps young people study - almost 50% of students spoke of music as a background to effective study. *'It blots out the rest of the world'* - Student, age 15, Fremantle Secondary, Western Australia.

Is there still a generation gap?

There was not one response that mentioned a need to create an identity different from their parents. Some students spoke of joint record collections with their parents and a preference or a strong affinity with 60s music - *'Rebellious music such as The Animals is best in my book. If you want to relax...I listen to the Beatles'*- Student, age 13, Trinity Grammar, Melbourne. There is a standard

joke amongst many contemporary music commentators who speak of students not knowing Paul McCartney was in a band before Wings. Young people are subject to not only recycled music, but recycled artists.

The Gulbenkian Foundation's Inquiry, which extensively examined British youth cultures, also addresses this issue. 'While rock critics and researchers sometimes lament the present state of pop music as one which is virtually dead as old tunes are recycled, as music no longer seems to separate young people from their "yuppified" elders, young people view music differently - they claim that while tunes may be old to others, they are new to them'. (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's Inquiry - Draft Report 1988 - published as *Moving Culture*)

Music gives them a sense of belonging

Alfred Adles, Viennese psychiatrist believes that man is a social being and his main desire is to belong. Peer group pressure, and the need to feel accepted by your peers, is a crucial part of adolescent behaviour. Contemporary popular music is a means of achieving this. Some students who listed heavy metal as their favourite did so because - *'All my friends listen to it and say it's really cool'* - Student, Trinity Grammar School, Melbourne.

Young people as audience and practitioner

Our survey showed that approximately only 20% of students actively participated in music-making, and that was, almost without exception, within school activity, and mostly in more traditional music activity like playing the piano or the concert band.

Most students passively participated in music by listening to radio or buying cassettes (65%), records (30%) and CDs (5%).

Statistics from IBIS Business Information Pty Ltd on music stores indicates that the major market for records and CDs is in the 13-24 years age range, with 60% in the more popular, rock 'n roll area and 25% in classical and country and western areas. It also shows a real growth in recordings as opposed to static growth for musical instruments and sheet music.

Students usually attended local acts more than international concerts, although this seemed mostly due to accessibility or cost of the international acts. More students attended discos rather than live entertainment.

THE AUSTRALIAN MUSIC INDUSTRY

A brief history

When Bill Haley came to Australia to perform in the 50s, Australia was already on the international music map. Johnny O'Keefe was our Elvis Presley, singing good old rock 'n roll derived from American rhythm and blues. In the 60s we followed the hippie years, the Beatles came to Australia for $4,000, the Easybeats captured their sound in Australia, while the Beach Boys followed the surf sound of the US. The 70s showed the Australian Music Industry developing as a viable industry, with bands such as Skyhooks, Air Supply and Sherbet making it onto the international stage. The 80s and 90s have reinforced the potential of the music industry, with successes such as Kylie Minogue, Men At Work, Icehouse, AC/DC, INXS and Midnight Oil.

The current situation in the music industry

Australia has what is called a mid-Atlantic sound – not wholly American or British, but with influences of both. The industry behind the artist is huge – with a manager, a lawyer, and an accountant crucial to an artist's success. The first stage to success for most artists is to perform live, mainly in the pub and club circuits – the Australian audiences tend to like their band 'meat and potatoes' – which means bands work very hard, for very little money and do a lot of touring. They

tend to start with covers first, and then gradually develop an original repertoire, developing a style and image as they increase in professionalism and popularity.

The first key to success is to clinch a recording deal and the crucial recording contract. There are seven major recording companies in Australia, mostly overseas owned. These account for some 90% of local record sales. At least 80% of recording sold by the 'majors' are of overseas artists. About 50 smaller independent Australian record companies share the balance of the market, with Mushroom Records being the largest. The major record companies dominate the distribution of records, and most independents use the majors' distribution networks. Many independents, who often give the first break to a band, are struggling to survive, to distribute effectively and to get airplay.

The second key to success is publishing copyright. Australia has about 84 publishing firms, but most publishing is done by those affiliated with the major record companies. Australia has organisations such as AMCOS and APRA to ensure protection of copyright. (*The Popular Music Industry – Guide to Exporting*, Australian Trade Commission, 1987.)

The radio charts

Success in the industry is measured by the number of people who listen to you on radio, and the number of records sold. The Top 40 indicates the most popular recordings sold during a week.

The McNair Anderson survey informs radio stations of their rating. A high rating brings in advertising dollars. In 1986, the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal placed a 20% quota on radio programming to be allocated to Australian performers, between 6am and 12pm.

Careers

Hans Guldberg, in *Economic Evaluation of the Music Industry* shows very clearly the realistic career paths of musicians - they are very limited in the more traditional music forms, but not so much in the more mainstream musical styles. The music industry does not have a healthy middle level of the industry - it's either big time or struggling.

The music industry offers a range of more permanent, support careers - for example, as sound engineers, managers, in marketing and promotion and as booking agents to name a few. Guldberg also shows the lack of women represented in the music industry - in all styles. In the contemporary areas, there is an improved healthy development of lead female singers at the top performance level such as Kate Bush, Kylie Minogue and Kate Ceberano. There are also increasing mumbers of women in promoting/marketing and management at middle level areas of the industry. However, there is a noticeable lack of top level female backing instrumentalists and technicians in the industry.

Forms of Contemporary Popular Sound

Rock: A term that used to cover music which originated in America during the 50s with the fusion of African blues and rhythm with European harmonies.

Pop: As defined by the Top 40 eg. Kylie Minogue and listened to most by 10 - 14 year olds.

AOR, Adult Orientated Rock: Top 40 music with stronger beat and lyrics, for an older age group - eg. Phil Collins.

Reggae: A slow, rhythmic sound developed mainly from Jamaica in the Caribbean. It is characterised by a strong drum and bass guitar sound, which is usually about 60-100 beats per minute. It is deemed by some of its fans as capable of synchronising with the heart beat.

Disco Music: Dance music, characterised by regular, sequenced drum and bass guitar patters. The aggressive bass sound is usually fast (about 100-120 beats per minute). Derived from the French term 'discotheque', applied in the 60s for nightclubs that played recorded music.

Funk Music: 'music that permeates the body through the ears and ends up in the feet' - (*Creating More Opportunities for Black People in the Music Business*, URBED, London: 1987) - an aggressive bass sound, often with a slap technique playing with harmonics. Funk is usually used together with an aggressive vocal sound, often male and husky as is the case with artists such as James Brown. A 70s phenomenon.

Electro Funk: Same as Funk but tends to be either electronically or computer-generated. It involves the use of drum and vocal synthesisers and electric keyboards, and uses the very latest in technology. The music is very popular with 'Break Dancers' and 'Body Poppers'.

Punk: Originated in England. Punk is based on three basic chords thrashed over a strong, driving beat. The key is in the lyrics - it is unashamedly anarchic - it wanted to expose 'the system', then exploit it, as the Sex Pistols did in their aptly titled movie, The Great Rock and Roll Swindle.

Heavy Metal: Originated in the late 60s to describe the music of groups that wore long hair, tight-fitting clothes, chains, leather jewellery and played extremely loud hard rock with extensive distortion and often aggressive lyrics.

Rap: The 1980s version of punk - a mixture of social comment, male chauvinism and violence. Originated when black disc jockeys started talking over records they played at nightclubs and 'scratching', playing the record backwards on the turntable over and over for a staccato effect. It is almost entirely based on rhythm, essentially a good, solid beat with declarative, confrontational lyrics. The kids are saying, 'This is new, exciting and it's all mine'. Our survey only showed 20% of students mentioning Rap as a preferred style, and these tended to be in the older age group.

'Scratching' is like a soundscape collage, an exciting compositional technique combining contemporary rock sounds. In the Gulbenkian Inquiry's Draft Report it is described thus:

> *Young people do not passively receive these (recycled) tunes, but actively transform them. They do so by using two turntables and putting on two records, and 'scratching' – that is, turning the needle in reverse over one record, while playing the other. They also weave over one record, while playing the other. They also weave together several tunes...They mix different songs. As one enthusiast explained, "Like, they mix house music, then mix soul, they mix reggae on one tape. And they'll scratch it...like they'll put James Brown on. And over the top of James Brown you'll hear...some reggae...Say they're playing a James Brown record, and right at the end you'll hear reggae in the background and reggae will start to come'.*

Rap music or Hip-Hop or House and Acid music, as some of its forms are known, is the music of the 80s and early 90s.

Most likely at the heart of its enormous popularity around the world is the fact parents hate it. Our survey responses reinforce the belief that Australia's youth has not yet fully picked up on this overseas phenomenon.

- Acid/ House music did have links with the designer drug, 'ecstasy', but Rap fans say it's about being naturally happy and free. And parents are not aware that often there are messages in the lyrics - like 'don't take drugs', and 'don't grafitti on trains'.

- Hip Hop is music, art, dance, 'it's not a phase it's a whole culutre', says high rise Rapper, Con Pandis from Melbourne. Groups, or 'posses', spend most of their days pounding the pavements and dance floors of suburbia, jackin-swinging, break dancing or buggin' out on the funky sounds of a hip hop track, made up of fresh breaks, cuts and scratches'. (The Herald, p.9, 9 February 1990). Hip Hop is associated with the skateboard phenomenon.

Although Australia is nowhere near as Rap-wise as America, it is slowly taking on. TV commercials such as Australia Post are spreading the word across all stratas of Australian society.

At the time of writing there is only one Rap act, 'Mighty Big Crime' signed to an Australian record company (Virgin).

Aboriginal contemporary music

This tends to be a style developed with reggae, rock and country music influences in non-metropolitan and some urban /metropolitan areas. These are sometimes about political grievances or demands.

There is also a tendency to combine music technologies (such as synthesiser, drum machines and traditional didjeridu) like in the band Gondwanaland. Young Aboriginal people are also getting into Rap. Charlie McMahon from Gondwanaland reported from a recent trip to Gove (near Arnhem Land) - 'the young kids had been taught Rap by somebody, and they added the new influence'.

Western non-commercial – improvisation, alternative, contemporary jazz

Not one response from our survey indicated an interest or awareness of these styles. If jazz was mentioned, it was traditional jazz. Lee McIvor, Victorian Jazz Coordinator believes the youth of Australia are ignorant and uneducated about the arts. 'They have been brought up in a society of consumer madness, where music only exists on video clips to sell fashion...radio stations, TV channels, record companies primarily promote and control mass-produced music intended for a high-turnover market'. The solution for Lee is education - 'We need to encourage them from the early stages of learning to experiment with (musical) instruments, playing them without music in front of them, memorising simple tunes, trying to play simple variations on the tunes they have remembered, making up their own tunes and just experimenting with sound'.

Other solutions might rest with a more professional, entrepreneurial attitude of jazz musicians, and more airplay from the media at accessible hours.

Towards a National Agenda for the Arts (Arts Action: Australia, 1990) recommends developing performance venues and national touring circuits for jazz groups, and increased media coverage and promotion of Australian jazz composition and performance.

World Music

'It's a small world and musically it gets smaller every day. World music, ethnic pop, global beat – popular music from cultures other than America and the UK is beginning to change the way we hear pop music' (*STATIC,3PBS Subscriber Magazine*, December 1989). World Music originated in France and the UK. Examples of this are Peter Gabriel's (ex-Genesis) LPs with music from Cuba, Pakistan, Zaire, Northern Africa and the Middle East. The Rolling Stones used Moroccan pipes on Steel Wheels. More popular versions are the Gypsy Kings and the recent dance sensation from Brazil, Lambada.

MUSIC AND OTHER POPULAR MEDIA

Radio

The crucial ingredient for success in the music industry is airplay. Australian radio stations base their programming on stylistic formatting - so you have easy-listening, talk-radio, mainstream radio stations, and so on. There is constant debate in the industry about the responsibility of radio to protect, foster and play new Australian talent in prime time – or should we break down all trade barriers and force Australian music to compete in the international arena?

The Australian Broadcasting Tribunal presently enforces a 20% Australian quota for radio. The Tribunal's 1985 findings in the report *Young Australians and Music* indicated the average listening time of young Australians was 16 hours and 32 minutes per week. Our own survey, though limited, indicated a time of approximately 24 hours per week. As with the 1985 findings, almost all students listed to mainstream music stations, with none mentioning public/alternative radio or stations with

alternative formats. It is, however, public radio that plays a very important role in supporting the unsigned artist.

The new JJJ Radio is the most accessible youth station, with contemporary music, youth views and information. It was not mentioned by any of our respondents, although it went national only in 1990.

Press

Countdown is the most popular magazine for younger teenagers. It focusses on Top 20 music and accompanying trends. It covers all forms of pop culture – TV, film, fashion, with the emphasis on music.

For the older contemporary music scene there are magazines such as *Juke, In Press*, and *The Edge*. *Juke* is the longest-running rock weekly in Australia. It covers a wide range of musical styles, hard hitting news, a range of youth issues and comprehensive gig guide and charts.

Fashion

Contemporary music has always been linked to an image – from the Beatles haircut, to hippie flowerpower to Heavy Metal chains. It reinforces the role music plays in the identity of young Australians. The Gulbenkian Foundation's Inquiry identifies the current generation of young adults as one nurtured in a world of consumerism. Decoration of bedrooms, styles of clothing, jewellery and hair, magazines, posters and records reveal the importance to young people of creative and artistic expression as it is incorporated into daily life.

Also indicative of contemporary society and culture is the 'throwaway' mentality of packaged foods and products – including music. Contemporary music is not designed to 'hang around'. Young Australians regard change as a fact of life and expect it, often looking for the latest fad or fashion.

Television

There is no doubt about the prevalence of this medium in modern society. The 1987 national survey of Australian recreation patterns showed that seven of the top 10 activities were done at home.; this included watching television. 96.2% of 14-19 year old females and 96.0% of 14-19 year old males indicated that watching television was their main leisure activity. Listening to music and visiting friends/relatives were the next most reported activities *(Recreation Participation Survey July 1987.* Department of the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories)

Video

Some students in our survey indicated that by watching a video, they were more inclined to like the music. The video has become an important promotional tool for achieving the success of a band. Late Friday and Saturday night viewing of *Rage* and *MTV* is a ritual for some young Australians. Glenn Wheatley, Manager of The Wheatley Organisation and John Farnham, believe that video clips are crucial to making or breaking an artist.

John Farnham's success in Australia and Europe with *The Voice* is not duplicated in the United States because he cannot get airplay – they like the song but not the clip which cost $100,000 to produce.

Conversely, it was the video for Sinead O'Connor not the song *Nothing Compares to You* that gave her the break in the USA.

International trends

For young people, House Music is very big in the European scene, with the UK and USA more responsive to Rap and the more hardcore pop. Dance music is big everywhere, with World Music barely being picked up in the USA. The future is likely to be diverse. Independent labels are

developing to cater for this specialisation. Monopolisation of record companies and media ensures a mainstream international style, particularly with PAY, cable and satellite TV offering 24-hour music TV across the USA and Europe.

Role Models

Many contemporary artists are aware they are role models and in contemporary music professional stylists and managers ensure that a particular person/image is projected to the public. This is not so much outrageous fashion and image, and radical, anti-establishment attitudes as in the 50s and 60s. It now includes promoting a healthy lifestyle, being environmentally conscious, and having more socially acceptable attitudes.

The old addage of sex, drugs and rock and roll has had its day - much to the chagrin of many of the 50s rockers! With campaigns such as Victoria's 'Rage Without Alcohol', and health organisations supported by tobacco tax promoting a healthy image for youth - 'clean fun' (assisted by role models) - it is possible that there will be tobacco as well as alcohol-free venues available.

Socio-economic group and preferred musical styles

The results of our survey showed very little difference in musical tastes – from private to public school, working class suburbs to middle class suburbs, metropolitan to country students (although country students tended to be more Top 40 orientated).

Another result of the survey showed entries from the same school listing similar preferences of artists and styles. This indicates strong peer pressure, or students had a blank when filling in the forms, and were susceptible to suggestions.

There was also a lack of Australian artists listed in our survey, although out of an average of five groups/artists listed, there was generally one Australian artist included. In the ABT's Young Australians and Music Survey (1985), 65% of respondents felt that Australian artists were as good as those overseas. There is no data to date to ascertain whether the origin of the group or artist dictates the buying preferences of young Australians. This needs to be done, as well as a promotion package to encourage young consumers to 'Buy Australian Music'.

IDENTIFYING CHANGING PATTERNS OF MUSICAL APPRECIATION AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

The importance of musical styles to young people

From the ABT's Young Australians and Music (1985) we see:

- 45% of young people prefer Rock Music

- 15% prefer Pop Music

- 9% prefer Disco

- 5% prefer Modern, Top 40

- 3% prefer Heavy Metal

- 2% prefer New Wave

This compares with our 1990 survey which shows that 90% of young people prefer Rock Music (including either 'soft' or 'hard' rock) including artists such as John Farnham, INXS, U2, Alice Cooper, Billy Joel, B-52s, Midnight Oil, Paula Abdul.

Preferences in other styles listed show:

- 32% prefer Heavy Metal (eg. Metallica, Motley Crue, Poison, Guns and Roses)

- 9% prefer Disco (eg. Donna Summer, Michael Jackson)

- 4% prefer Jazz (eg. Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Kate Ceberano)

- 3% prefer Rap (eg. Bobby Brown, Technotronic)

At the risk of comparing two differently designed surveys, we can conclude that for secondary students, the most popular form is rock music. According to a report prepared for the Australia Council on *Potential Arts Audiences: Attitudes and Practices*, classical music, opera, and ballet are foreign and alien to many young people.

> *They have nothing to do with their world - a world where they are seeking to construct their identities as young men and women.* (Kippax. Koenig. Dowsett. 1986)

Discussions with older young Australians show a tendency to become more individualistic.

> *Musical tastes tend to change once secondary schooling is completed, self-esteem is growing, and peer group pressure appears less intense. Young people either enter the workforce or go on to tertiary education. There is a turning towards ballet, opera and classical music, although film, rock music and theatre appear to be, once again, the most successful in reflecting youth's experience.* (Kippax. Koenig. Dowsett. 1986).

The contemporary popular music style tends to become much more broad-based, with young adults tuning to alternative styles of music such as World Music. The vast majority of public radio listeners are in this category, and are in the 25-35 year old age group.

YOUTH ACCESS TO, AND PARTICIPATION IN, POPULAR MUSIC

Participation in and access to live music

While our survey indicated that approximately only 20% of students actively participated in music making, there were only a few students who felt that the music could be made more meaningful for them through participation. Most responses wanted increased access to top acts, free gigs, more gigs in rural Australia, more media coverage of 'their' music, better and greater access to contemporary music curriculum in schools, transport down to the city for big concerts, cheaper costs on recordings.

No respondent mentioned the lack of live gigs for under-18 year-olds.

Those interested in participation in music wanted more instruments available at school, more workshops, more opportunities to perform, more support to music programs in schools.

Access to the Industry

With older students who are seriously considering a career in the music industry, there are some major factors which inhibit youth access to the contemporary music industry. These have been identified in the McLeay Report (*Power Patronage and the Muse*, 1986) and in *Getting Started in the Victorian Rock Music Industry*, a report prepared by the Youth Affairs Division of the Department of Labour in Victoria and the Victorian Ministry for the Arts, February 1988.

Most of the following issues are being examined by AUSMUSIC

Arts Funding

Differences between the nature and requirements of the contemporary music industry and the subsidised arts are still an issue in relation to the current funding criteria.

$$$$ and other costs

- Lack of access to quality recording equipment. A basic four/eight track can produce the first demo of a band's material, but for mass distribution, without a record contract and money advanced to the artist, it is very difficult.

- Cost of instruments and equipment.

- Lack of information about industrial award protection, and legal and industrial rights for various types of work. Many young bands pay to play – especially those who are not prepared to be a 'working band' which only does covers.

- Success in this field requires a recording career in parallel with performance – it could take 3-6 months of studio time to produce an album and cost more than $300,000. Touring generally follows after the release of the album. These costs are also prohibitive. If the 'advance' from the record company is not paid back through record sales, the cost of touring adds to the recording costs.

Rehearsal Space

Given the volume of contemporary popular music, access to suitable rehearsal space is of great concern, particularly for unestablished bands and inner metropolitan musicians.

Management

There is an increased need for young bands to be aware of their responsibilities as employees and employers and as to copyright and contractual arrangements with venue promoters and booking agents. With sudden success, business circumstances can change quickly.

Lack of Support

- from the government and industry infrastructure, with lack of cohesion and advocacy within the industry.

- from the Musicians' Union, although the situation is improving.

- for training and education needs.

- in copyright issues, including piracy home taping.

- from employers and venue managers with lack of support for original music.

- from media and radio.

Lack of Performance Opportunities

- for the beginner band, local opportunities need to be created in schools and in the community, with the 'battle of the bands', and alcohol-free venues for under-18 year olds;

- with the big live venue squeeze, the future of live popular music is uncertain - the cover band, particularly those specialising in a certain style or group, such as Bjorn Again doing covers of ABBA, or Zep Boys doing Led Zeppelin covers, has been particularly successful in the late 80s;

- there are very few 'original' unsigned bands able to get work.

MUSIC EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

Current situation in schools

Music Education still has mainly a traditional curriculum. Primary music tends to be based on singing and the recorder and includes methods such as traditional Kodaly, Suzuki, Dalcroze and Orff. There is a shortage of trained music specialists and the tendency is for music to be integrated into an arts program.

Secondary music curricula generally have compulsory music at Years 7 and/or 8, with electives after that. The compulsory classes tend to be the more traditional concert bands and choirs, although an increasing amount of schools are now developing rock/jazz bands. The biggest restriction to music curricula is the narrow training base of music teachers, who, in all states come from a traditional classical background. AUSMUSIC is currently addressing these issues.

In 1983, New South Wales included a rock curriculum in senior music and this has shown a huge increase (60%) of students participating in music at senior level. Victoria has just developed a Year 11 and 12 Victorian Certificate of Education, which opens up the possibility for contemporary popular music studies. Northern Territory has a TS 11 Course in rock music while Queensland has a contemporary music curriculum , but with little effect yet in schools. Western Australia is developing a rock music curriculum, while South Australia offers a fairly broad-based school music program with a strong emphasis on instrumental music. Tasmania has a very innovative 'Rock School' program, where school rock bands combine in educational regions to learn about contemporary music and the music industry.

Music technology has greatly increased opportunities for young composers, songwriters and performers. With quality sampled hardware sounds (ranging from a didgeridoo to a racing car), students can experiment with their own sounds and simple sequencing procedure through MIDI. This technology also enables singer/songwriters to hear a full arrangement of their songs by producing it themselves.

Current situation in TAFE

Until the advent of AUSMUSIC, there have been only traditional music courses, a Music Performance Jazz/Popular course in Victoria and South Australia, and a retail-based course, offered on an ongoing accredited level at TAFE colleges. The Northern Territory Institute of TAFE has recently developed a one-year Certificate in Commercial Music.

Current situation at Tertiary level

ACMI, the Australian Contemporary Music Institute, University of Armidale, Lismore Campus, is the most prominent accredited tertiary musicianship course. The Phillip Institute in Victoria is planning to offer a Sound Production course in 1991, and CASM, Adelaide University, has two accredited tertiary contemporary music courses for Aboriginal students. AUSMUSIC is establishing contemporary music courses for trainee teachers in each State. These would aim to provide teachers with a broad base of musical styles more relevant to their teaching profession. Melbourne

University and the University of South Australia are operating the course, with St George Campus (UNSW) and Kelvin Grove Campus of the Queensland University of Technology doing so in 1991.

Distance Education Models

The Priority Country Area Program in Queensland provides services, facilities and resources, with parents, teachers, education department administrators and others in the local community working cooperatively to improve educational opportunities for country children. It is funded by the Commonwealth government and jointly administered by the State education department and Catholic education offices. The music program covers an instrumental teaching team, touring ensembles, computer-based music technology, and a music festival. No contemporary popular music is as yet involved, but the model for accessing remote areas is there.

As an extension, the Education Through Technology in Country Areas Project applied unsuccessfully for video-conferencing as an instructional medium for providing specialist teacher support to remote schools. This has enormous potential on a national basis for teaching music of all types.

In Port Campbell, Victoria, telematics is being used with keyboard laboratories to teach distance group music classes. Piloted by Roland, it has proved very successful.

SHOWCASES FOR CONTEMPORARY POPULAR MUSIC BY YOUNG AUSTRALIANS

Battle of the Bands

This is the most common way that musicians can showcase their music – they can operate at school level, regional level, or at the Yamaha supported national level. AUSMUSIC conducted the Rock Beat Band Competition as part of the Australian Music Show in August 1990.

Rock Eisteddfods

Perhaps the most popular inter-school event. Most States offer these events. Students present a visual presentation of taped music – a video clip. Usually involves drama, music, arts and physical education departments in schools. AUSMUSIC is hoping to encourage a section to include live music.

Radio

Public Radio offers an excellent opportunity for showcasing new talent. 3PBS, for example, has been granted a licence specifically for showcasing young unsigned talent. 3CR has programs such as *Burning Vynal* which broadcasts 'demo' tapes and new releases together with interviews with the artists. 3RRR has shows such as Oz Mood on which contains a segment Reel to Reel. This broadcasts demo material in conjunction with the Rock Music Support Service established by the Victorian Ministry for the Arts.

- Commercial radio programs featuring new talent, for example, *Homegrown Music* on MMM, from which an album is produced each year.

- JJJ recently produced a compilation album of young Australian artists with assistance from the Australia Council.

- Fresh Tracks is a distribution service to radio stations, provided by AUSMUSIC for young, unsigned bands, who have a quality recording of original material.

- *The Big Backyard* is a half-hour program of contemporary Australian music for the student campus network in America. This will be transmitted through U Net Satellite to 160 stations. It will be promoting more mainstream, recorded contemporary Australian music, include some 'live-to-air' and interviews with artists.

Intercity cultural exchange

Melbourne's sister city in Japan in 1988 requested an item of contemporary music from the youth of the city, to visit and perform. This has great potential in other cities throughout Australia.

Hi Rise Rap

This is a Victorian initiative involving youth workers, music teachers and contemporary music organisations. It was first held in 1989. Workshop tutors and crew visited five high rise estates over a two-week period. More than 500 young people were exposed to activities over one day to give them an opportunity to participate in DJ mixing, dancing, and aerosol art. It was funded by the Health Promotion Foundation and the Health Department, Victoria.

ORGANISATIONS WORKING WITH YOUTH AND CONTEMPORARY POPULAR MUSIC

National Australian Contemporary Music Development Company Ltd *Trademark AUSMUSIC

A national, non-profit company, set up by the Federal Government and the music industry in 1988. It has a mandate in education and training.

The Roll-Over Beethoven Program

Roll-Over Beethoven has been established in four States, with other States hopefully coming on line in 1991. The program involves a contemporary popular professional band touring schools offering workshops, performances, curriculum material for the classroom and in-service teacher training. There are at least two women in each band and almost 50% of gigs are in regional areas. It is designed to assist the classically trained music teacher to implement practical contemporary music curriculum, to develop the skills of students, to show realistic career paths in the industry, and develop more articulate consumers.

TAFE programs

AUSMUSIC has developed Music Business, a one-year certificate course. AUSMUSIC is developing a sound production course, a music retail course, and a rock musicianship course. This has been done in close liaison with the music industry and the Industry Training Boards established by DEET. The TAFE section of the University of the Northern Territory has developed a Certificate of Commercial Music.

Tertiary programs

AUSMUSIC is articulating TAFE courses with ACMI and assisting other tertiary institutions in business and sound production to develop courses. Music teacher training programs in contemporary music are also taught at this level.

Other programs

AUSMUSIC also has education and training activities outside the formal education system. Mastercall series are run in both Melbourne and Sydney – mostly short, 2-hour sessions in various areas of the industry, eg., songwriting, copyright and contracts, making and marketing your own recording, playing and rehearsal techniques for the band and basic management skills.

MITA, Music Industry Training Attachment program is being piloted in Sydney. Year 11 students from all over New South Wales have applied to participate in intensive careers orientation and specific work experience in the music industry.

To help get the untried product noticed, Fresh Tracks, a distribution service for young musicians with quality demo tapes, has been established. Five or six original Australian artists are selected

each month, and a copy of their material is sent to over 100 radio stations, managers, A & R representatives, etc. One of the biggest problems with this scheme is that often the quality of recording is not good, but the potential is great.

Other activities

These include the MITA program for middle level workers in the industry, 'Australian Programming for Radio', in conjunction with the Australian Film, Television and Radio School, and a project - 'Manufacturing in the Music Industry' with the Victorian Rock Foundation and Northern Metropolitan College of TAFE (Melbourne).

AUSMUSIC is also working to assist each State to develop its own Music Industry support network. Most States now have a representative body - Victorian Rock Foundation, Queensland Music Industry Association, South Australian Rock Foundation, Tasmanian Music Industry Association, Northern Territory Music Industry Association, Top End Aboriginal Music Association and Western Australian Rock Music Association. A New South Wales association is planned for 1991.

Building Bridges Association

A national cultural support project for the coalition of Aboriginal organisations to support Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participation in concerts and double compilation albums produced through CBS.

Australian Women's Contemporary Music Inc

This organisation is based in Sydney, run on a shoestring, mainly because it does not seem to fit into any appropriate funding criteria. It was established to promote women in the music industry because it is so male-dominated, particularly in all the support services. In 1989, the AWCMI conducted a Fast Forward Conference, with workshops and performances by and for women in the music industry. In early 1990, the AWCMI was involved in the Building Bridges concert, promoting and involving Aboriginal women musicians and groups. A 'SCRATCH' project was conducted in Melbourne and Sydney to train young women in disc jockey and video jockey skills.

Public Radio

There are more than 40 public radio stations throughout Australia. Public radio not only provides a local voice and opportunity for 'live-to-air' for artists, it also acts as a training ground for sound technicians and disc jockeys. Most stations survive by subscription, and as stated previously very few young people actually listen to their programs.

Musician's Union

The Musician's Union has traditionally catered for orchestra and band musicians. Now, branches in all States have an improved understanding of the needs of the contemporary popular musician and a desire to provide relevant support. In Victoria, for example, regular visits are made by a Union representative to Box Hill and Preston Colleges of TAFE and schools to explain to music students the role of the Union, the Industry pitfalls, and musican's rights. Regular visits are also made to live music venues to ensure that new bands are aware of the award rates and to provide a kit explaining the Union's role.

STATE ACTIVITIES

NEW SOUTH WALES

The Bondi Youth Wave Music Project

This is a series of workshops, seminars and performances for young people between the ages of 15 and 25 who are interested in working in the music industry. It is a Waverly Municipal Council Project held at the Bondi Pavilion Community Centre. Workshops are conducted over an eight week period, with morning sessions for tuition and afternoons for rehearsing or arranging under the supervision of a musical director. The participants are either unemployed or employed part-time and come from all over the Sydney metropolitan area.

Teenage Road Show

A group of professional artists, mainly musicians and visual artists, who tour the most remote parts of northern and central Australia. The rock band conducts workshops for the local Aboriginal and Anglo-Australian communities and provides live entertainment.

The Songwriters Association

The Songwriter's Association aims to bring together and promote local Australian composers, songwriters and lyricists. The Association conducts workshops and assists with the production of 'demo' tapes and a quarterly magazine.

VICTORIA

Victorian Rock Foundation

Established in 1988, the Foundation mainly conducts State industry development programs. The major event is the Melbourne Music Festival, which is Australia's largest public music exhibition, with a lot of 'hands on' experience for young people. More than 200,000 people attended the February 1990 event.

As well, the Foundation presents industry forums, conferences, seminars and workshops to develop further information exchange, understanding and skill levels through all tiers of the industry.

The PUSH

The PUSH is an initiative of the Youth Affairs Division of the Victorian Department of Labour. It aims to provide young people with opportunities to work at a local level, organising their own alcohol-free entertainment using local support, expertise, bands and entertainers. It was established as a non-profit organisation in March 1988, and is currently operating 13 clubs around Victoria. Western Australia is also considering establishing a PUSH network.

The PUSH has produced a booklet - Young Players Guide - with support from the Musician's Union. This booklet provides excellent, easy-to-read information for young musicians trying to succeed in the industry. This booklet has been taken up by the South Australian Arts and Industry Training Council, Western Australian Rock Music Association and the Queensland Music Industry Association.

Rock Music Support Service

This service is based at PUSH and aims to provide an information and resource base for young musicians.

Next Wave Festival – A performance opportunity for young musicians.

Fringe Festival – A performance opportunity for non-mainstream musicians.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Carclew

Carclew is a Youth Arts Centre based in Adelaide which coordinates a range of arts activities involving groups and individuals.

Come Out Festival

The oldest established 'youth arts' festival which aims for maximum collaboration with and accessibility for young people and provides high quality arts experiences. This is achieved through regional activities, local, State-based and interstate professionals working with young people, special events and presentations aimed at having a lasting effect on the development of the arts community.

SARF – South Australian Rock Foundation

SARF aims to promote the local music industry. It is funded by the SA Department for the Arts.

'Rough Cut' Skill share Program

'Rough Cut' is a training program in media and contemporary music for the unemployed. Works very closely with local support structures.

TASMANIA

Rock School

'Rock School' operates in northern Tasmania.

Tasmanian Music Industry Association

The Association developed from the Rock School program and now includes representation from across the local industry.

QUEENSLAND

QMIA Queensland Music Industry Association

Initially retail-based only. It now covers a broad cross-section of the local music industry. Projects include Music Festival, Music Expo, Battle of the Bands, research into music education initiatives, and industry promtions.

Rock Eisteddfod

Organised by the main retail store - the Australian Academy of Music.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

WARMIA – Western Australian Rock Music Industry Association

Established in 1988, WARMIA conducts Expos, business luncheons, industry seminars and coordinates contemporary music initiatives.

Kitchen Records

A cooperative record label, with musicians and technicians assisting each other in the production of recordings.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

TEAM - Top End Aboriginal Music Association

Established to develop and promote all forms of Aboriginal music.

NTMA - Northern Territory Music Association

Recently established and based in Darwin at the Northern Territory Arts Council. NTMA coordinates activities, particularly in regional centres of the Territory, with workshops, festivals and performances for and by both Aboriginal and Euro-Australian communities.

INTERNATIONAL

England

The report *Creating More Opportunities for Black People in the Music Business*, recommended building a network of community music centres. These are usually voluntary or community business ventures which provide a launching pad for those with the talent and commitment, but who lack money and contacts. They provide a combination of venues, recording facilities and eduction. The five essential elements in implementing the community music centres were identified as:

- securing sponsorship

- establishing a central resource unit

- building links with local school

- extending facilities

- providing initial work experience.

An example of how these centres could work is the Brixton Music Development Cooperative, a neighbourhood centre which provides services and facilities for music development, rehearsal and recording in Brixton.

YOUTH ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE FOR CONTEMPORARY POPULAR MUSIC

Out of the total 1984-85 budget of the Music Board of the Australia Council, for example, only $55,385 went to contemporary, popular music.

Music in the 1984/1985 allocation, 'worked out to be one seven-hundredth of the Australia Council's arts support budget for that year'. (*Power, Patronage and the Muse*, Commonwealth of Australia, 1986.) This situation has improved with developments within the Australia Council and closer consideration of youth activities.

The exploratory, informal activities which are a feature of youth cultures do not readily fit within public arts funding criteria. These criteria lead to dependence of youth (groups) on adults for validation of activities.

Particular areas of concern include:

- lack of liaison between overlapping instrumentalities such as the Federal Department of Community Services, the Federal Department of Employment Education and Training , AUSMUSIC and government arts funding agencies;

- youth largely excluded from the planning/provisioning decisions;

- value of process lost to the value of product – the need for funding bodies to support highly visible products;

- diminished opportunities for 'youth arts' funding to be directly available to youth who do not readily fit the criteria of funding bodies or sponsors; and

- training needs, such as for the commercial music industry in business principles and the use of technology.

Expected developments

Kingston Anderson, in *State of Play - A Review of the Arts and Young People in Australia* (1987) identified that the greatest challenge for the development of 'youth arts' in Australia was to provide participation opportunities. He identified two areas - the now defunct CYSS schemes and Youth Festivals. He states that 'it is only through local activities that young people will be involved in the arts...(The) real challenge is to carry on the initiatives of International Youth Year. Young people must be involved in the decision-making or they will become further alienated from society...There are no young people on any cultural or arts funding bodies in the whole country'.

MAXIMISING YOUNG PEOPLE'S MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Arts activities involving young people from the beginning

Maximum performance opportunities can only be achieved by increased audience and consumer participation. All sectors of government, the commercial music industry and the Australian people need to be encouraged to support our artists.

International year of Youth in 1985 recommended that youth must be involved in the decision-making processes. They must have ownership of programs and not have them imposed on them. Successful examples of this are the PUSH in Victoria and the Come Out. Festival in South Australia, where maximum participation and encouragement in developing local artistic and organisation skills are encouraged.

Arts activities applied in the work of youth advocacy and support services

There are many support bodies working with and/or for youth and 'youth arts' in our communities: State Music Industry Associations, Youth Access Centres, Youth, Officers, Community Arts Officers attached to local government, teachers, service clubs such as Lions, Apex and Rotary and the Police. These workers know the youth in their area and can encourage them to find the best means to involve them in meaningful arts and related cultural activities.

Arts activities with training/work experience opportunities

AUSMUSIC is actively involved in providing industry work attachment through their MITA program and proposes programs of linking successful artists with young people.

The Artist-in-Schools program and Roll-Over Beethoven expose young people to the realities of being successful musicians.

Public radio also provides training and a sense of local identity for young people as listeners and as voluntary support staff.

ARTS ACTIVITIES FOCUSSING ON ISSUES RELEVANT TO MINORITY GROUPS

Young women in popular music

As stated previously, the music industry is a very male-dominated industry. Until recently that also included 'on stage'. With artists like Kate Cebrano and Jenny Morris, women are now being more commercially successful. However, in the support areas of management, marketing and promotion, sound production and instrumental performance women are under-represented. Australian Women's Contemporary Music Inc is attempting to redress this, but until now they have not fitted well into funding categories. AUSMUSIC has raised this issue within sectors of the industry and will support, in general, the activities of the Australian Women's Contemporary Music Inc.

Concurrent with this is the very sexual nature of rock music, which started with Elvis Presley gyrating his hips and now the Madonna and Cher phenomenon. Many young men will tell you the reason they started playing in the industry was because of their sexual egos.

Creating a distinctive Australian sound in our multi-cultural society - multicultural fusion

There are numerous arts groups across all artforms that are concerned specifically with the art of a immigrant cultures. Only 11% of the groups listed are for young people and these mainly deal with learning traditional arts from their parental culture. (Anderson. *State of Play - A Review of the Arts and Young People in Australia*, 1987)

As a teacher of ten years in schools in the western suburbs of Melbourne which have up to 98% non-English speaking background students, I believe there is a huge potential to develop a contemporary multicultural sound. An example is what happened in many of my 'prac' teaching classes, where a rock drummer and bassplayer got together with say a traditional Yugoslavian clarinet player and piano accordion player. The soloists improvised over a rock beat, bringing in folk tunes and rhythms.

The integration of music and musicians from other parts of the globe into the contemporary popular sound is already happening in World Music. Organisations such as The Boit (Victoria), Perth Ethnic Music Centre, Brisbane Ethnic Music and Arts Centre, Multicultural Arts Centre (South Australia) and Multicultural Arts Victoria, are providing excellent support for traditional multicultural music and musicians. They tend, however, to have many supporters who are real purists. The opportunity for young people to blend their two cultures needs to be offered, both for their own identity and national identity. An excellent example of combining styles of music with contemporary technology, was the performance of Soundscape at the 1990 Next Wave Festival. Nine musicians on a rollercoaster ride of visual and musical sensations, played extracts from Bach and Mozart along with African and contemporary music behind a visual display using the latest video technology.

Other associations like The Music Hive at the Footscray Community Arts Centre create opportunities for performers from many diverse cultures to perform, integrate ideas and run workshops.

Young Aboriginals, Youth in Isolated Areas

Programs such as Teenage Road Show are successfully addressing this issue and should continue to be funded. The issue of ownership of initiatives is just as crucial for Aboriginal youth, and associations such as TEAMA (Top End Aboriginal Music Association), initiated and run by Aboriginals, are important structures in the development and success of young Aboriginal musicians.

With satellite television, local radio and telematics, access for youth in isolated areas should be able to be redressed. This has to be done, however, with young people getting opportunities to perform, discuss and workshop together with each other and with professionals.

The Roll-Over Beethoven Program provides quality performance, workshops, curriculum material and teacher in-service throughout Victoria. Equality of access is high on the agenda of AUSMUSIC.

Homeless and Unemployed Youth

This group is perhaps the most in need of help. Many youth workers say that rock music is the only thing that the kids are enthusiastic about. It is crucial that assistance be provided to community-based youth workers to develop durable programs within appropriate support structures. Using 'their' music, programs can be developed to maximise their potential, not only as musicians but as confident players in our society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Arts funding agencies should work closely with organisations such as AUSMUSIC and DEET when making decisions regarding the contemporary musical development of youth to ensure non-duplication.

2. Government arts funding agencies should only fund youth initiatives with youth participation at the conceptual, strategic planning and implementation stages.

3. Government arts funding agencies should provide for youth representation in the grant decision-making process.

4. Government arts funding agencies should establish multi-disciplinary youth advisory committees to ensure relevancy for youth and advise on policy and funding.

5. Government arts funding agencies should give priority to youth-initiated projects that are community-based and supported locally by an established structure.

6. Government arts funding agencies develop funding initiatives that involve musical development for young people as both producers and consumers.

7. Government arts funding agencies develop funding strategies to encourage youth to develop.

8   Government arts funding agencies should assist projects that provide performance and employment opportunities for young musicians.

9   A 'Buy and Play Australian Music' campaign be launched to increase performance opportunities for young Australian artists.

10 Government arts funding agencies should give priority to the skill development of women working in the music industry, particularly in the support areas of sound production, instrument performance and management.

11 Government arts funding agencies should work with AUSMUSIC and DEET to explore satellite music education, training and cultural development for youth in isolated areas.

12 Government arts funding agencies should acknowledge in policy and funding practices that not all contemporary music-making is just 'commercial' – it is a valid arts/music activity for young people, both as producers and consumers.

Research methods and sources

- Through the national network at the Australian Contemporary Music Development Company, AUSMUSIC **a survey questionnaire** was sent to school students (age 10-18) throughout Australia to ask them about their music and how they thought government could make music more meaningful to them.

- **Informal interviews and discussion with young people** at gigs, rehearsal studios, music retail stores and both commercial and public radio stations.

- **Interviews with participants in established programs** such as the PUSH and 'Roll-Over Beethoven' school concerts.

- **Consultations with industry operatives** including music producers, video producers, fashion and music journalists, radio programmers, music tutors, specialist journalists, teachers, venue promoters and managers, photographers, public radio managers, presenters and volunteers and workers in established music and arts projects.

Others Consulted :

Gordon Gunn.- musician, band leader, songwriter, expert in music technology, recording techniques, MIDI sequencing and sampling, Roll-over Beethoven Coordinator, Music Coordinator at Preston East Technical School.

Henry Vyhnal.- Curriculum writer, musician, teacher, Performing Arts and Ethnic Music Coordinator for the Melbourne City Council, developer of contemporary music curriculum for secondary schools and teacher training programs.

Brian Peacock – Executive Director, Western Australia Rock Music Industry Association.

Richard Micallef – consultant and creator of the AUSMUSIC 'Fresh Track' Demonstration Cassette Distribution Scheme, alternative popular music expert, public radio programmer and announcer, band manager, tour promoter.

Jane Groeneveld - NSW AUSMUSIC Coordinator, music teacher, musician, developer of rock curriculum for schools, Roll-Over Beethoven Coordinator.

Marcella McAdam - Music consultant to private schools Sydney.

Jim Dowling – Queensland AUSMUSIC Coordinator, musician, tour organiser and promoter, manager, teacher, Roll-Over Beethoven Coordinator.

Warrick Cheatle - AUSMUSIC Coordinator.

Jackie Katona – Executive Officer for TEAM (Top End Aboriginal Music Association).

Tony Joyce – AUSMUSIC Coordinator (Northern Territory).

Nic Walkem - AUSMUSIC Coordinator, (Tasmania).

Brian Wise – Developing radio program of Australian talent for the American College Circuit.

Pete Steedman - Executive Director AUSMUSIC.

Kathy Kenyon - Business Manager, AUSMUSIC.

Melinda Mustar - AUSMUSIC.

Vicky Gordon – Coordinator National Women's Rock Institute, musician, promoter, artistic director and administrator of many successful contemporary music projects. eg, *On Edge.*

Gary Foley – actor, Aboriginal activist, developer of Koori College.

Ken Hutton – Kormilda College – Music Coordinator of the Aboriginal Regional school, Northern Territory.

Steve Dillon – Music Coordinator, Footscray College of TAFE, rock singer and music teacher, active in music technology.

Penny Amberg – General Manger, Export Music Australia. (now Australia's Cultural Attache to the USA)

Karen Catt – Central Station Records, promoter, stylist, manager.

Michelle Taylor – Victorian Rock Foundation, Programs Manager.

Gill Harrison – Art and Working Life Coordinator, ACTU.

Peter Noon – Musician's Union, Victorian Branch.

Rob Fairbarn – President, Australian Songwriters' Association.

Greg Macainish – Bass player and songwriter for Skyhooks.

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URBAN ABORIGINAL YOUTH: A REDFERN CASE STUDY

By
Louise Blazejowska and Suzanne Kenney

INTRODUCTION

This paper is based on a case study of the planning, implementation and evaluation of an arts program for unemployed Aboriginal youth in Redfern during 1988 and 1989 organised by the Redfern Youth Action Group. It also looks at a number of issues affecting the Redfern Aboriginal community, which had to be addressed before the program could proceed.

This study looks at the needs of unemployed Aboriginal kids in Redfern only and does not attempt to make findings about other areas of NSW or Australia. The same or similar problems may affect other urban Aboriginal communities and might need to be considered as part of the development of arts-based cultural programs for the youth of those communities. An overview, which is outside the scope of this paper, must take into account the diversity of traditional and traditional-urban communities.

BACKGROUND

Aboriginal Culture in Redfern

Redfern has been the centre of the urban Sydney Koori community for decades. Ruby Langford in her recent book *Ruby Don't Take Your Love to Town* talks about going backwards and forwards to Redfern from the bush in the late 1940s and early 50s, beginning work in shops and small businesses from the age of about 15.

> *On Saturdays we went shopping on Botany Road for the weekend vegetables and groceries. It was an outing we looked forward to, browsing through the shops, and there were lots of Koories there. It was our area....*
>
> *Palms Milkbar in Botany Road was a place for all the Koorie teenagers. There'd be heaps of kids there. He had pinball machines and made the best milkshakes in Sydney or so we thought.* (Langford, 1988: 47,48)

Tracey Moffatt's work collecting oral histories and her archival study of the Aboriginal history of South Sydney for the Visual History of South Sydney Project (1984), also documents Redfern's modern Aboriginal history:

> *An Aboriginal community has been formed here over the past 50 years. Aboriginal people came from country towns in New South Wales like Dubbo and Moree and from the north and south coast from the 30s through to the 60s. In the 1970s many people came down from Queensland. It was during this latter period that black organisations like the Legal Service and the Medical Centre emerged and were used as models for other black communities throughout Australia.* (Moffat, T. in Weary. 1984: 8)

Redfern has long been a meeting place for Aboriginal people from all over NSW, increasingly becoming a focal point for Aboriginal issues. It has been one of the main Sydney locations of 'the resistance' both in the past and today. Organisations such as the Aborigines Progressive Association had strong branches in Redfern in the 40s, 50s and 60s and today political demonstrations and rallies in support of black rights are frequently conducted in the area.

The many-faceted Aboriginal cultural revival in the 70s also saw the establishment of other Aboriginal community-controlled organisations in Redfern such as the Aboriginal Housing Company and the Aboriginal Children's Service. Although the work of these organisations may not be specifically arts oriented, they have helped in many ways maintain a strong sense of Aboriginal culture in Redfern and surrounding areas.

Some places have been set up with a specific concern for arts, culture and education for Aboriginal people. The Eora Centre, Tranby Aboriginal College in Glebe and the Aboriginal Dance Theatre in Redfern enrol Aboriginal students from both the local area and other parts of NSW and the structure and content of their courses reflect an awareness of arts and culture as central features of Aboriginal life.

In all these organisations 'Aboriginality' is the essential feature – in the staff employed (most of whom are Aboriginal), and also the physical environment. 'The colours' (red, black and gold) and the Aboriginal flag feature prominently along with Aboriginal themes and perspectives in posters and artwork.

Urban Aboriginal arts and culture also flourish in Redfern in the daily life of the residents. Music is especially noticeable. There is often someone playing a guitar, radio, a tape, or singing. In addition a number of older community members hold special knowledge of their own traditional cultures, some being speakers of the traditional languages. These form the basis of a distinct 'Redfern lingo', which has recently been the subject of a pilot study rejecting a finding that urban Aboriginal English in Redfern and La Perouse was essentially the same as 'working-class' Australian English. (Kenney & Reid: 1989, unpublished, held by the authors)

An Aboriginal community radio station, Radio Redfern, broadcasts from their studios with input from a variety of announcers who are usually well-known local identities. Koori and other black music features prominently and all ages and tastes are catered for. An identifiably Koorie, relaxed style sets this radio station apart. Information about current affairs, community events and messages for community members are broadcast regularly. During the Bicentenary in 1988, Radio Redfern was used extensively as a two-way communication channel for locals and visitors.

In the community people spend a lot of time out of doors talking to friends and neighbours and participating generally in the goings on of the street. There is a sense of communal living. There is a vitality and immediacy in Redfern in stark contrast to the often sterile and enclosed environment of much of Australian suburbia which emphasises the inward-looking, nuclear family maintaining its privacy.

> *Because Aboriginal people coming in to Sydney have nowhere to stay, they go into areas where they have relatives. I'm no exception. If some of my people come from Wallage Lake, I put them up. Where else have they got to go? If I haven't a bed, they sleep on the floor. They sleep anywhere. I have up to 15 or 20 people sleeping in my house.*

> *The white man living next door to me is a good friend of mine, but he doesn't understand the Aboriginal way of life. He says to me: 'Why do you have all those no-hopers coming and living with you? When my relations come, I hide!' Now that's his life – it's not necessarily mine.* (Dixon, Chicka. 'Black Viewpoints - The Aboriginal Experience' in Weary, 1984)

Yet one of the most striking features of Redfern today, and often the only one outsiders tend to notice, is that it still has the external appearance of a fringe camp or ghetto, in an area so close to the apparent wealth of Sydney's central business district with its flash architecture and expensive real estate.

Redfern has also become a focus for continuing public and official scrutiny, spearheaded in recent times by the electronic media. This scrutiny has been at all levels and middle-class Australia has viewed 'The Redfern Riots', 'Coon County' (the name given to a controversial '60 Minutes' report on

Redfern in 1989), news footage of police raids and other black issues, from a distance, through the camera lens. And usually through the eyes of whites.

The Redfern community has for decades been subjected to quite extraordinary levels of police surveillance most recently using questionable methods such as the positioning of telescopic cameras on top of the TNT building (referred to by police at a recent community conference for the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody). Constant patrols, raids and other major police incursions (eg. February 1990 dawn raid by the NSW Police Tactical Response Group), verbal abuse and other forms of officially sanctioned harassment also take place (as documented in the National Inquiry into Racist Violence, Human Rights Commission Report: May, 1990).

Redfern was one of the first communities in Australia where Aboriginal people demonstrated to the white community a unique adaptation of Aboriginal culture within an urban environment. The black movement, with self-determination as its basic goal, emerged as a national entity following the establishment of the Tent Embassy in Canberra in the early 70s. Here, the Aboriginal flag was raised for the first time and became a strong national symbol.

One of the most memorable recent occasions which expressed the unity of purpose of Aborigines was the 1988 anti-Bicentenary gathering in Sydney. Representatives from black communities around Australia travelled to Sydney for protests and other important events.

Redfern was a focal point for activities in much the same way Alice Springs and surrounding areas were at the time of the handing back of Uluru to its traditional owners in 1985.

As well as a strong local black culture in Redfern influences are also felt from black movements overseas which have as their common theme resistance to racial and cultural oppression. Interestingly, many white Australians are more comfortable supporting the black struggle overseas, which they are removed from and can easily romanticise, than they are relating to the one going on in this country. This was evident when black South African Nelson Mandela, who spent 27 years in jail as a political prisoner, received a tumultuous welcome in Australia in 1990.

This was in line with a renewed world interest in black issues especially since Mandela's release, and a revival of the philosophies of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King. The songs of Tracey Chapman and other musicians have highlighted some of the sentiments involved.

In Australia the establishment of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and its focus on underlying issues including black rights is having an impact. Broader sections of the general public are becoming more aware of the issues confronting Aboriginal people including police practices, Aboriginal and police relations and the socio-economic conditions of Aboriginal people.

Urban Youth Culture in Redfern

It is estimated that there are between 300 and 500 Aboriginal youths living in the inner city area of Sydney – particularly in the Redfern community and surrounding suburbs such as Waterloo, Alexandria, Erskineville, Newtown, Surry Hills, Chippendale and Glebe.

The majority of these kids have suffered from the child welfare system and corrective institutions. Some live in the Redfern Aboriginal community with their families and relatives. Many are recent arrivals from the bush. Others have come to the inner city from Sydney's outer suburbs to escape housing commission estates and do not have permanent accommodation.

Urban black youth culture in Redfern is also influenced by other youth cultures. Significantly however, the kids in Redfern have adopted particular influences from overseas, especially from black American and British street culture.

The expression of the experiences of black urban communities in the music of overseas bands such as Public Enemy, Tone Loc, Run DMC, and trends such as 'rapping' and 'scratching' in black and other youth music have been responded to enthusiastically by Redfern teenagers in recent years. Strong

themes of resistance to white power and authority and the oppression this causes are especially significant for local kids. Slogans from popular songs such as *Fight the Power, F... the Police*, etc. are popular, and the names of groups like *Niggers with Attitude* have a real meaning for black kids in Redfern.

Other facets of expression of youth street culture such as 'graffiti art' have also inspired local talent in Redfern, with particular kids becoming well-known for their abilities as graffiti artists. A few years ago when break-dancing was popular local street kids became break-dancers, and their performing groups were popular and well-known in the local community.

Black artists are generally popular with the kids – Eddie Murphy of *Beverley Hills Cop* fame and other black comedians like Richard Pryor are widely appreciated.

ABORIGINALITY

Central to an understanding of Aboriginal youth needs in the inner city is the concept of Aboriginality:

> *One of the great myths that you (white people) seem to adhere to is the fact that as people get whiter and whiter in the Aboriginal community you think that they are not real Aborigines anymore – that they are maybe sort of more white than black... it doesn't matter – Aboriginality is relating to a basic set of values and standards which the rest of the Aboriginal community relates to.* (Jackson, B. The First Aboriginal Child Survival Seminar, Aboriginal Child Care Agency, Melbourne, 1979: 8)

Since 1770, there has been continual resistance and a uniquely Aboriginal adaptation to the invading/colonising culture by Aboriginal groups. This adaptation varies from community to community, State to State, and person to person. This is guided by the choices Aboriginal people make to balance their participation in mainstream economic, social and political life with their desire to maintain Aboriginal cultural values and lifestyles.

The European invasion of Australia has had many damaging effects upon its indigenous people. The real history of this invasion and Aboriginal resistance, and the plight of Aboriginal people over the last 200 years has until recently been shrouded in a 'cult of forgetfulness'. The impact of this invasion and successive government policies of 'protection' and 'assimilation' created a 'system of self-righteous, heartless and racist destruction of Aboriginal families that went on well into the second half of this century', the repercussions of which are still acutely felt today. (Malcolm Smith Report, Royal Commission of Inquiry into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. Sydney, 1989). In addition, Aborigines as a group occupy at best, a marginal position in the general socio-economic order of Australian society.

Despite its urban location, Aborigines in Redfern live as a distinct cultural group united by a common Aboriginality. Their lifestyles and material circumstances are significantly different from European Australians. Inland and coastal tribal areas of NSW are represented strongly in Redfern by the Gamilaroi and Bundjalung people – both Murries and Koories. There are also other tribal groups, such as Murries from Queensland and people from other Aboriginal communities in Australia. Urban Aboriginal cultures are unique. The 'fundamental common factors in the history, experience and circumstances of Aboriginal life throughout Australia, are accompanied by important regional differences'. (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody - Preliminary Discussion Paper. Sydney, December, 1989: 3)

The basis of some of these common factors includes an affinity with and respect for the land, spiritual and religious practices associated with sacred sites, the roles of men and women, the dreaming, social, political and economic customs based on tribal law, kinship rules, codes of behaviour and obligations, affiliations and responsibilities. Rich languages and oral traditions have been the means of transmitting stories and songs from generation to generation, often in ritual form, with accompanying art, dance and music.

The extended family has always played a vital role in social relations within which children are cared for and socialised. Within this context of kinship children develop their Aboriginal identity. Only in very recent times have the Federal and State governments begun to recognise these structures as worthy of support and as evidence of a continuing Aboriginal culture and identity (eg. 'Children's Care and Protection Act', NSW). The Aboriginal community values people who contribute to the community. Members are responsible to each other and to the community as a whole. If people do not contribute to the community, especially if they have had the benefit of a tertiary education or other qualifications, they are seen as depriving or taking something away from the community.

The value system of the white society has little or no relevance in traditional Aboriginal culture. In contemporary Aboriginal culture, the value of material things is in being able to share them with others. Material possessions may mean very little to individual Aboriginal people, which is often very difficult for whites to understand.

The Aboriginal community in Redfern lives very much according to these and other features, with their emphasis on kinship and Aboriginal concepts of personal and material values. The main reason for so many Aboriginal youths congregating in the Redfern area is that it is a place where they can be with their people. There is also a perception that, because of its location in the inner city, there is more happening.

On weekends, particularly, there is a large influx from Sydney's western suburbs into the area. However, there are also many problems confronting youths in Redfern – lack of financial support, unemployment, crime, vandalism, alcohol and drug abuse, and family disintegration. A large number of youths tend to use the streets, empty buildings and factories as a 'playground'. Not only are these areas physically unsafe but also there is nothing to repel the temptation to use drugs or alcohol.

Many youths talk about the boredom they experience living in the area. This can be associated with high levels of unemployment and an uninspiring landscape. One way to liven up the day is to abuse some form of substance and this is often a socially acceptable and common pastime amongst young people. Roaming around the streets exposes them to those who supply illegal substances. It has been estimated that at least 60% aged between 15-18 abuse substances to a level where they would be intoxicated once a week or more. In addition it has been estimated that approximately 5% of those aged between 8-11, and approximately 30% of those aged between 12-14 are regularly involved in some form of substance abuse.

Street crime, theft, breaking and entering is a way of survival for many. Unable (or for cultural reasons not willing) to obtain unemployment benefits, they must steal to support themselves. Before long many appear in court on criminal charges and will be committed to an institution where, for a time at least, they will have the benefit of three meals a day and a bed. Upon release they return to Redfern to begin the cycle again. Crime is not only a way of making money but also a way of relieving boredom.

This quote is typical:

> ..the biggest excitement of our day is sitting in an empty house and making a small fire out of paper ...there has to be more to life than this, 'cause this is awful (unemployed female Aboriginal , Redfern.)

Although youth centres in the like the Settlement provide activities after school.and during the school holidays, a major problem for Redfern teenagers is having something to do after hours. Redfern Youth Action Group was set up largely to meet this need:

> I wish Youth Action Group would've been there when I was a kid. I wouldn't have grown up like I did. All we had then was the Settlement, and that was very strict – early hours and things like that. That's the same as it should be with Youth Action Group kids. Now I'm

going to bring my kid there because I don't want him to hang out on the streets. I know these streets and they're not an easy place to survive. (South Sydney Community Aid Annual Report, 1989.)

The unemployment rate of youths in the Redfern area has been estimated to be as high as 90% and employment prospects are very poor. Very few school age children attend school – about 55%. Among those who do, the truancy rate is estimated to be as high as 50%. Consequently, illiteracy is a major problem. (Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the Aboriginal Medical Service Co-op Ltd., *Report on the needs of Aboriginal Youth in the Redfern Area*, 1986:19)

Accommodation in the Redfern area consists of living mainly in terrace houses or rooms and flatettes. Many of these are overcrowded, poorly maintained 2/3 bedroom houses accommodating an average of 4/7 persons. There are often.few, if any 'nuclear' families living in these houses – many families consist of single parent families, elderly people with grandchildren, and extended families including various aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews and other relations.

REDFERN YOUTH ACTION GROUP – A CASE STUDY

Redfern Youth Action Group grew out of an arts program for the youth of Redfern called 'Streetwise'.

A committee was established in June 1987 with the aim of 'de-institutionalising Aboriginal children in corrective institutions through knowledge and understanding of the legal system and their rights'. A dance, drama and video program was devised to develop skills and techniques in media and performance with the projected outcomes of a performance production and a 30-minute video with a theme relating to the following: the law, police court proceedings, institutions and street life.

Members of the Streetwise Committee came from such organisations as the Aboriginal Legal Service, the Redfern Aboriginal Dance Theatre, South Sydney Community Aid, the Aboriginal Children's Service, the Aboriginal Medical Service and The Settlement, and included several community members. The Law Foundation of NSW provided $50,000 for the Streetwise project. The program was in three parts – dance, drama and video workshops. The dance and drama section was to be run from the premises of the Redfern Aboriginal Dance Theatre and the video workshops from a temporary Aboriginal school in Redfern. The target group for this project were youths living in the area immediately around Eveleigh Street, Redfern, and ranging in age from 12 to 18.

Streetwise started in September, 1988 with the appointment of a coordinator for the dance/drama program. A two-week holiday workshop in dance, drama and visual arts was devised. An artist from the Boomali Aboriginal Artists Co-operative was to help the kids devise a poster and letterhead for the project. Dance segments were to be set to popular music and the plan was to start teaching basic skills in dance and video techniques, editing the video material to produce a short music video. A script-writing session with a Koorie writer from Streetwise Comics was also planned. This was to involve scripting drama on the subject of kid's rights when picked up by the police. It was envisaged that some kids would help devise the script while others would be the actors in a short video about this subject. The plan was to also shoot footage and interviews around Redfern.

Despite being publicised in the local community, the workshop failed to attract the target group of teenagers from the Redfern community. Some younger kids showed an interest so the two-week program was quickly adapted to cater for them, rather than not go ahead at all.

The Need to Develop a Relationship of Trust

The need to be flexible and to respond quickly to community needs and circumstances was one of the main features of the early stages of Streetwise. The life of people in Redfern is constantly being disrupted by deaths, police activity, political issues and other events. A lot of energy is expended

by the community in order to survive various crises. This disrupts organised activities and individual schedules and makes it difficult to plan anything with an assurance that it will go ahead.

In addition, the need to develop a relationship of trust between the organisers of the program and the target group became necessary. After some time, it was discovered that the main reason the target group was not getting involved was that a key youth worker (and respected community member) who had also been a vital contributor in the planning of the project was not available to assist in the running of the program. In hindsight, it has also been realised that the appointment of a program coordinator who was not from Redfern was another inhibiting factor. Not enough time had been allowed for the coordinator to get to know the community, and more importantly, be accepted and trusted by the community and the target group.

The Need for a Strong Support Structure

Another major factor not taken into account was that a community-based program for Redfern kids, would be required to take on broader objectives than originally envisaged. In the school system, which most of our target group have opted out of, Aboriginal kids have background problems which are generally either not recognised by staff or not dealt with effectively (due to insufficient resources etc.). Often school-age Aboriginal children suffer from lack of sleep, hunger, emotional problems, substance abuse, poor health and the consequences of juvenile delinquency and family disruption. Essentially for this program to work, even though it was focussed on arts activities, an holistic approach had to be adopted for the program to be effective and maintain credibility.

The following few months saw the evolution of a program which was more appropriate to the needs of youth in Redfern and the development of a support network for the kids involved. This included the relocation of the project to premises inside the community.

The Youth Action Group began to meet monthly at new premises and was attended by adult and youth members. We discussed ongoing issues for youth in Redfern and planned activities for the future. Youth members participated in all meetings. It provided a welcome forum for the target group who gradually became more confident in expressing their ideas which led to an interest in taking on other responsibilities. They were encouraged to take part in administrative procedures such as taking Minutes, distributing notices and agendas. In the early stages of Streetwise it was very rare for a member of the target group to volunteer his or her opinion in an open forum. However, after Youth Action Group had been operating for some time, the younger members of the group consistently participated. We can reasonably conclude this was a direct result of the restructuring of the program. The benefits including a significant increase in the self-esteem of members of the target group related to their growing sense of ownership of the program.

The Need to Adopt Appropriate Teaching Methods

In devising arts initiatives for Aboriginal youth several points must be made about schooling methods and how they relate (or do not relate) to Aboriginal culture and learning experiences. Nearly all kids in Youth Action Group left school before turning 16. Many are functionally illiterate. Their reasons for leaving school are based on negative perceptions of school, lack of desire to continue school, difficulties attending regularly and problems studying at home. Many live in large households sometimes consisting of several families. They are often required to do housework and other duties around the house which must take priority over schoolwork. Often their parents have not had extensive formal education making it difficult for them to offer guidance and support to their children in their schooling. The formal education which Aboriginal children receive at present is often irrelevant to their social life, educational needs and Aboriginality.

Aboriginal adults realise that the long term future of their children depends on their education. Conscious of this, Aboriginal parents want their children to complete their schooling. The fact that many Aboriginal kids are still opting out of the schooling system is largely attributed to its failure to support Aboriginal culture and identity. It is argued that schools are not equipped to adequately

enhance the self-esteem of Aboriginal students even with the introduction of Aboriginal Education Assistants and Aboriginal teachers who are usually overworked and under resourced. Poverty is an everyday reality for many Aboriginal kids. They are often not given any reason to expect a better life than their parents. Their concept of themselves has often been damaged as a result of their education experience and general contact with white society. As a result, they lose confidence in themselves.

Other commentators account for the failure of Aboriginal children at school in terms of cultural differences. The classroom behaviour of Aboriginal children which produces failure is accounted for in the same way. One theory for the lack of enthusiasm for school is their socialisation. Because of their upbringing, Aboriginal children see school as a place where everybody has a set role and where personal effort and individual achievement are unimportant.

Other explanations note that Aboriginal children are brought up relatively independent of their parents. This is seen as an important factor when there is failure at traditional school assessments. Most of the kids in Redfern have grown up in a large family as part of well-defined extended family networks. In the Aboriginal community children are part of the whole community as well as belonging to individual parents. Parents encourage their children to be independent, and emotional and spiritual needs are thought to be much more important than material ones. This independence is in direct conflict with many forms of structure imposed upon them.

Aboriginal children often find it difficult to conform to the timetables and discipline imposed on them at school. Schooling produces a great deal of cultural stress and alienation. However, these problems cannot be explained simply in terms of cultural differences. In some high schools there is open discrimination against Aboriginal students and very little is done by the staff to discourage this. Teachers often fail to respond adequately to the needs of individual Aboriginal students for complex and varied reasons. As a result, responsibility for 'failure' is placed on the student instead of the system.

Aboriginal children and their parents have not been passive in the face of this conflict. Rather, we would suggest they have resisted the world of school. Many Aboriginal students have an act of complicity in their own 'failure' as they reject school. Their 'failure' may be perceived as an act of political resistance. The most effective way to resist school is simply not to attend. This resistance has both positive and negative effects. While it is, in many ways, self destructive, it also constantly questions the relevance of the schooling system and Anglo-European educational methods for Aborigines.

School is essentially a training ground in Anglo-European values. If a child does not assimilate he or she will fail. Those that do get through the system have to learn to carry their Aboriginality in their back pocket.

These and other issues had fundamental repercussions for the Streetwise program. A value judgement about the benefits of the arts for teenage kids had formed the guiding philosophy of the original Streetwise concept. Through video and dance, the kids were supposed to explore issues relevant to their lives, thereby directing their energy into positive rather than self-destructive activities.

From our experience, the problem for the Streetwise program, as originally planned, lay in an assumption that kids would automatically respond to a system based on timetables which required them to be in certain places at certain times. They were also required to participate on a one-to-one level and in small groups and workshop situations with teachers from outside the community without giving them sufficient time to get to know and trust them.

Repeated attempts to encourage target group kids to attend a new dance program at the Dance Theatre failed. The program was framed largely in terms of the ideas of adults in the local community and what they thought would be beneficial to the kids. However, there was and is a large gap between adults' ideas and the ideas of the kids – the challenge was to try to bridge this gap. In the early stages of the program, the boys were involved more than the girls. A dance

program of the kind that was proposed was not something that appealed to them. None of them had been involved in formal dance classes before and they were more interested in other movement skills-based activities such as self-defence and sport. In addition, they did not have the high level of commitment needed for this kind of program. Further groundwork was needed.

About the same time the kids themselves, guided by a local resident who was also a member of the Streetwise Committee, formed their own group and called themselves 'Youth Action Group', in response to problems which had been very prominent at that time, including increased police activity and harassment.

The group aimed to develop a system of accountability and discipline of youth members living in the area through peer pressure. With the consent and voluntary support of its members, young people whose actions brought Redfern under police notice or caused trouble within the community were held accountable. The group would then decide what action should be taken against them. Usually the offender would be warned by the adult and other youth members. This method was proving quite successful in preventing further offences in the community and repercussions against the community. Whenever trouble appeared to be flaring, Youth Action Group members were called in to counsel the kids in how to react appropriately under stressful situations – how to stay cool during a police raid and so on. Essentially the group was helping to develop support and unity in common purpose among the kids.

In late 1988, it was decided that it would be in the best interests of both Streetwise and Youth Action Group to amalgamate. The new group was known as the Redfern Youth Action Group – a name chosen by the kids in the community. By adapting from our previous narrow focus to one which was broader, and community arts-based we successfully incorporated the original Streetwise program into the new group. The kids now had more control over the program. They were now in a position to make decisions affecting themselves under the guidance of people they respected in the community. Generally, these people were close in age to the target group (usually in their early to mid 20s) and were looked upon as role models. These people were trusted and perceived to be genuinely concerned with the well-being of the kids. Some were older brothers and sisters of members. With the support of family structures and the community's extended families, organising activities became easier and more effective.

The Need to Recognise Youth Resistance

One of the most fundamental characteristics of Aboriginal youth culture in Redfern is its resistance to authority and anti-establishment feeling. Unfortunately, this is often expressed in self-destructive behaviour. It was important for the Redfern Youth Action Group to provide the kids with the opportunity to express and explore their ideas within a supportive environment. This was achieved by facilitating maximum input from the kids in the meetings and encouraging a sense of group solidarity.

Associated with the anti-establishment attitude referred to here is a deep suspicion of institutions and organisations, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. Historically, this dates back to suspicions of 'the welfare' – the welfare authorities responsible for removing Aboriginal children from their families under the policies of the Aborigines Protection Board and Aborigines Welfare Board from the early 1900s to the 1960s. A lot of this suspicion also results from the contact which Aboriginal kids have with the various institutions in white society – police, courts, school, social security and other government agencies. Aboriginal culture and Anglo-European culture are virtually direct opposites. Even where Aboriginal organisations are concerned, there is often a suspicion that people who work in them become 'uptown', forgetting their roots and losing their ability to communicate with their own people, considering themselves superior. Kids tend to associate institutions with white middle class society.

It was discovered through consultation with the kids that they opposed associating with established organisations. There have been numerous attempts by well-meaning people to run programs for kids in Redfern but many have not succeeded. The reality is they have seen it all before outsiders have come and gone, but for the kids very little has changed.

Workers are also put in the invidious position of earning money through these programs and seen to be reaping financial and other benefits which may not flow on to the community. Consequently, we made it a priority to employ, where possible, local community members and developed strategies to train and employ members of the target group. Accordingly, local Aboriginal people were employed as tutors for music, art, craft and car maintenance classes. Several youth members also trained in basic computer skills. We visited Reiby Detention Centre to see a Redfern Youth Action Group inmate who is a keen artist. We took art materials which were used to decorate two cupboards for our Redfern office. We felt it was important to keep in contact with jailed members and to provide continuing support.

We also negotiated with South Sydney Community Aid to employ Redfern Youth Action Group members on a community mural project in Redfern. At the beginning of 1990, Redfern Youth action Group members were taken on a tour of NSW to see CDEP employment programs with a view to setting one up in Redfern. The kids reacted enthusiastically and negotiations were started to set up such a scheme.

In August 1989, Redfern Youth Action Group members submitted a complaint to various organisations about a *60 Minutes* program called 'The County'. The Redfern Youth Action Group members were consulted and advised about each step in the processing of their complaint. This process had an empowering effect upon the group. That same month, a number of the Redfern Youth Action Group members spoke of police harassment at the Human Rights Commission Inquiry into Racist Violence., standing up in front of the media and the Commission and relating their experiences was a major personal achievement and did much to increase their confidence and the profile of the group. Later on that year, four boys from the group appeared on an episode of the ABC series *Blackout* which was specifically about Aboriginal kids.

DEFINITIONS OF THE ARTS

The revised program which incorporated new activities of specific interest to the kids (with the eventual approval of the funding body) was that of a broadly defined community arts program and included sports, car maintenance, cultural camps, barbeques, arts and crafts, singing and music, video and dance.

This revision process considered incorporating traditional Aboriginal artforms and contemporary 'youth arts' and cultural forms of expression. The feeling was that the best way to devise a program to include traditional artforms was to ensure they were taught by Aboriginal elders from the local community.

Preliminary discussions took place with Bundjalung elders about organising language, dance and culture classes. Unfortunately, time and funding constraints did not allow these to proceed. A submission was made to the National Aboriginal Languages Program in early 1990 to research, plan and develop a Gamilaroi language and culture-based program for the Redfern Youth Action Group which also incorporated the development of curriculum material for Aboriginal studies units in NSW schools. The rejection of this proposal (on the basis that Redfern is not a Gamilaroi area) indicates a lack of understanding of the needs of traditional-urban cultures in places like Redfern.

OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMS

In gathering information for this discussion paper we have become aware of other arts programs and youth oriented programs running in other parts of NSW, in particular the Coffs Harbour Youth Action Group and the Arilla Centre in Dubbo.

The Coffs Harbour Youth Action Group offers a variety of activities for kids in the area including arts and crafts, cultural camps, Friday night dances and is supported by the local community and local businesses. The Arilla Aboriginal Training Centre was established in Dubbo in August 1989. It

is basically involved with pre-employment and staff training. It has a staff of 13, half of whom are Aboriginal. It is sponsored by the Department of Employment, Education & Training and employs consultants from Brisbane. The Arilla Centre offers courses in arts and crafts, work and lifeskills, video and photography, health programs and literacy and numeracy skills. These courses last for about 12 weeks after which the student obtains a certificate from the Centre.

These courses help local Koories obtain skills and knowledge to return to the workforce and/or improve their current employment opportunities. It has also been noted that the self-esteem of students attending has improved significantly. Arilla also has an office in Moree running different programs to those offered in Dubbo – Koorie art and creative skills training.

The proposed Dubbo Aboriginal Cultural Centre plans to utilise Arilla's training skills and knowledge to manage the Centre.

The Aboriginal Medical Service has long recognised the need for an Aboriginal Youth Centre in Redfern. For some time Aboriginal youth in the inner city have complained that there are no facilities in the area where they can feel welcome, where drugs and alcohol are banned, where support services are available and where they can learn about Aboriginal culture.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We consider the following major issues raised by this paper should be considered in any discussion of Aboriginal youth and the arts.

1. Possibly the most important issue affecting Aboriginal communities is Aboriginal control and self-determination. The experience of the Redfern Youth Action Group illustrates the importance of community control and input for programs for Aboriginal communities to succeed.

2. Any study of Aboriginal youth and the arts or the needs of Aboriginal communities generally must appreciate that each community is unique.

   Evaluation of the effectiveness of programs for Aboriginal communities is usually based on Anglo-European concepts of success and cultural assumptions. There are fundamental differences and conflicts between Aboriginal cultures and the dominant culture of Australian society. Aboriginal societies tend to be more holistic, interweaving all aspects of life, including the arts, the law, religion and politics. In European societies, these areas have been separated and differentiated.

   Until adequate models which take serious account of Aboriginal cultural needs are developed, those responsible for assessing the effectiveness of programs should be aware of these differences and ensure there is adequate community consultation at every stage of the program from planning through to implementation and evaluation. It is preferable that those responsible for this are members of the Aboriginal community involved.

3. Government agencies which fund community projects should demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the project. The experience of Redfern Youth Action Group has been that although initial funding was available from one organisation to establish a basic 'youth arts' project in Redfern, this funding fell short of the needs of the project as they emerged and had to rely heavily (to the ultimate detriment of the project) on voluntary labour and time, resulting in severe burnout of both paid and voluntary workers.

4. Funding bodies should avoid categorising projects such as ours as either arts or welfare or health-based. By doing this they shift responsibility away from their own area and deny the fact that such projects can be essentially integrated and community based.

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Organisers of such programs should be given adequate training and support in the administration of the project.

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RURAL YOUTH AND THE ARTS: BARRIERS AND STRENGTHS

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INTRODUCTION

There is a generally held view that arts activities in rural areas are not given high priority by policy makers, local organisations or community members. A stereotype particularly exists that rural youth have little interest in following cultural and artistic pursuits.

However, evidence suggests that a plethora of activities falling within the arts arena is occurring in country towns, and, where such activities exist, they display innovation, creativity and community involvement. What seems to be lacking is accessibility, recognition, community awareness and coordination.

This paper examines such activities, using the Mallee region as a case study. Information from the Mallee, a large isolated area in rural Victoria, is likely to present a similar scenario to other locations. To supplement the case study approach, emerging literature on rural communities is presented, much of which is from a social and community work perspective. The themes emerging from this literature have relevance to the arts, in terms of the issues raised and the solutions proposed. Although little research and literature exists directly on youth and arts in an Australian rural context, some overseas models are presented, which may be worth further examination in relation to rural Australia.

The study is exploratory and aims to facilitate further research and action. The paper is divided as follows:

SECTION 1

- Definitions and Context

- Examination of Relevant Literature

SECTION 2

- Presentation of Mallee Regional Characteristics

- Regional Case Studies and Consultations

SECTION 3

- Discussion of Issues Arising, Including Strengths and Deficiencies

- Recommendations

SECTION 1

DEFINITIONS

The following descriptions are used:

Rural

When talking about 'rural' it is important to note that the term does not refer to a homogeneous entity. The literature abounds with definitions. An early but useful definition provided by Benson and Landis, defines 'rural' *as areas of low population density, small absolute size and relative isolation, where the major economic base was agricultural production and where the way of life of people was reasonably homogeneous and differentiated from other sectors of society, most notably the city* . (Benson and Landis 1929) However, Johnson points out that 'rural' is a concept which can be defined in many ways, *a state of mind,* and *all communities with a population under 2,500* to specify two. She suggests that it is a term understood in different ways by different persons, and is non-specific. On the other hand, 'non-metropolitan' refers specifically to those communities with a population under 50,000. (1980:66) This latter description falls within the scope of the communities examined within the Mallee region.

Youth

For the purposes of this paper, 'youth' refers to that adolescent period which runs roughly from the ages of 12 to 21, and is the time when many physical, social and emotional changes occur (Paull. 1986:127).

Arts

The description of 'the arts' is taken from the Victorian Ministry of Education's *Arts Framework* which gives particular emphasis to Art/Craft, Drama, Graphic Communication, Media Education and Music (1988:7). However, the authors are concerned not to limit the concept of the arts, and support the Ministry's perception of characteristics of the arts as follows:

> *The arts are, and always have been, part of our life and culture. They have been presented in all known societies, whether in the form of symbol, tribal dance, body painting, a totem pole, a ritual mask, a sea shanty, an opera, a photograph, a play or a film.*

> *The arts provide us with intense pleasure and enjoyment, a deepened insight and awareness of life and consciousness, and a sense of community.*

> *The arts allow us to explore our own feelings and ideas in ways that are not possible in other forms, and of expressing them in ways that can be readily communicated to others.*

> *The arts are a means of developing and establishing our cultural identity. They function as both a mirror and a lighthouse for society.*

> *The arts provide opportunities to appreciate the artistic expressions of other people.*

> *The arts have been used both as a means of preserving traditions and of breaking them.*

> *The arts provide unique ways of seeing, thinking and knowing about ourselves and the world.*

> *The arts contribute to the development of aesthetic awareness and perception.*

CONTEXT

Paull suggests that important needs of adolescents include security, relief from isolation and emptiness, to understand their world, friends and other social supports, a sense of usefulness, a sense of competence, hope and excitement.

The degree to which these needs are met will impinge on the adolescent's transition to adulthood.

Furthermore, there are at least seven major tasks for the adolescent to achieve during this time.

- to come to accept his or her body;

- to learn the appropriate sex roles in preparation for adulthood and family life;

- to learn to get along with peers;

- to achieve independence from parents;

- to prepare for economic independence through vocation and occupation;

- to develop a system of values and ideals; and

- to develop a sense of identity. (1986:126-130)

Along similar lines, Murphy defines adolescence as a time when social education involves taking on small responsibilities, gaining confidence, then taking on more (1985:11).

So, for adolescents, this is a time of great introspection, trying out different roles and values, making decisions that affect the adult they will become. Young people must have the freedom to make mistakes knowing there is a safety net of security from parents, teachers and others in their lives. How young people achieve these tasks within their communities is different for each, although there are some readily identifiable institutions that play a role in the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Many rural communities emphasise the involvement of young people in sporting activities. Indeed, many young people return home, having left for employment or further education, to continue to participate in sport for their communities. Sport is very much a mechanism for conformity and social control. Boys are tough and play football, girls acquiesce, play netball or watch the boys.

In many small towns the hotel and alcohol is also part of this culture – the entertainment and social life of the town is often centered on the hotel.

Schools should challenge young people as a tool of learning, not only to achieve academically, but to leave school with a swag of self esteem and life skills so that they can make their way positively in the world. This is particularly important for those who need to leave home and town to pursue employment or education. While enormous pressure prevails upon young people to achieve their school certificates, it needs to be met with a balance of other activities in their lives. Given that schools aim to provide young people with skills and abilities needed to lead fulfilling lives in this society they do not often offer a forum for young people to question their expected roles and obligations. Nor do they allow young people to try out alternative roles in relative safety.

The arts offer adolescents imaginative ways to express themselves. They allow them to interpret and make sense of their world, to try out new roles, to tell adults about their world, to work through issues of importance to them, to be outrageous and different.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature and research from varying fields of human endeavour apply to this paper.

Such material provides insights into the effects of rural conditions on youth. These need to be considered in the planning and delivery of programs and services, including activities in the arts field. It also reveals the importance of different program models in rural areas, a factor frequently ignored by policy makers and funding bodies. The brief presentation of overseas literature also provides some insights into successful rural approaches which could be adapted to Australia.

One important factor is how specific contingencies, particularly those of isolation and distance, impinge on rural communities.

In a study of regional conditions and local services, the following factors were identified as significant in the Mallee region:

- distance and isolation creates additional costs.

- the cost of basic communication, the telephone call, highlights the effect of distance in the region.

- services provided to rural communities require extensive travel for those providing the service.

- costs incurred are in terms of both vehicle operation and travelling time.

- in a situation where a concentrated population, for example of 3,000 people may require a particular service in a region, because the 3,000 people may be located in three separate communities, three separate facilities or services may be required to meet their needs. (Scott. 1976)

Martinez-Brawley has examined specific environmental and social factors affecting young people in rural areas. (1987:24) Lack of recreation is one of these. Recreation for the young might be abundant but in the country where distances are greater, where leisure, recreation and socio-cultural life are often gender bound, where weather conditions are felt very acutely, it is a different problem.

She asserts that migration of the young out of rural areas can be partly attributed to the individual's desire to control his or her environment. Unbending standards of education, morality and behaviour have encouraged young people to search for alternative environments. Programs for retention of youth in country areas must include efforts to make the adult populations more tolerant and appreciative of the enthusiasm and contributions of youth to the social milieu.

Martinez-Brawley suggests that addressing the problems of rural youth requires scrutinising not only their needs, but also the responsiveness of their communities. Social and community workers are in the business of mediating between people and environments, of building bridges and influencing political will. While bridges built today might not be permanent, flexible structures can be created to respond to the constant re-definition of needs and demands of the countryside.

Referring specifically to the arts, Martinez-Brawley states:

> *Accessibility to libraries, cinemas, theatres and art galleries has always been a problem in rural areas. Research exists documenting rural deprivation through lack of access to cultural facilities. (1987)*

Comments have been made in the literature about lack of employment and recreational options in rural communities.

Peter Fray has examined some issues facing youth in Mitchell, a small town of 1,700 people 600 kilometres west of Brisbane. He suggests that rural youth unemployment and the ensuing social and economic problems is an Australia-wide problem.

Fray quotes a rural social worker who believed that young people with no job prospects often lose self-respect and turn to some type of support – usually alcohol or drugs – to help them cope. He also quotes a 16-year-old girl who states that getting drunk and experimenting with sex are about the two biggest thrills the town offers young people with little else to do.

The most recent addition to bush kids' entertainment is video. Video shops now stand side by side with the local stock agents in almost all country towns and it is not uncommon for a town of 10,000 people to support more than a couple of video shops.

A Office of Youth Affairs spokesperson has argued that to gain independence and a sense of identity, young people in rural areas need their own entertainments, as well as traditional, family-based activities. He suggests that young people in country towns want to participate in the community, but they need to be well organised, and the rest of the community must give them resources and skills.

A study of Victorian small towns looked at rural youth problems in the context of unemployment. Henshall, Hansen and Associates found that the 'overall situation has a number of detrimental effects on small towns with the youth leaving town never to return as residents'. (1988:54) They also comment that some young people cannot leave town because they cannot afford the costs and face difficulties competing for work in the larger cities. Lack of access to public transport was considered to be one of the most pressing requirements in small towns and rural areas.

The situation is not unique to Australia. In the United Kingdom, Tyler quotes one Midland authority:

> *Isolation, the decline in public transport and the loss of rural employment opportunities mean that young people in rural communities suffer multiple disadvantage. There is however, little for them in the way of constructive activities and few opportunities for them to meet with other young people in a social setting. (1987:10)*

Again in the United Kingdom, Sullivan identifies some of the pressures on rural youth that would be applicable in Australia. The picture of young people in his area of study (South West Scotland), was bleak – isolation, lack of facilities and few employment opportunities. (1988:22) He found that in a rural area, many young people respond by ceasing to become involved in their communities. Others cope, getting transported to and collected from facilities in some of the larger villages or towns.

However, many drift into offending and become 'tarred and branded' in their small communities and given little opportunity to become a 'real person' again.

An interview conducted with young women in the Mallee raised drawbacks of living in the country. These included the lack of organised social activities and the fact that young people ran out of things to do 'off their own bat'. Lack of transport in small outlying towns denied access to existing social activities. (van der Stoel 1989:14)

Consumption of alcohol occurred because young people got bored. As well as a lack of social options there were perceived limitations in education and employment.

A community needs study in one Mallee local government area consulted young people in the northern half of the Shire. This identified a lack of recreational alternatives as a concern of 50% of

high school youth. A lack of entertainment in their local community was the least satisfying aspect for 72% of years 11 and 12, 56% of years 9 and 10 and 22% of year 8. The youngest group (year 7) nominated a lack of films, of entertainment and of much else to do as the three recreational aspects of their local community they least enjoyed. (Melbourne Family Care Organisation,1983:166) An essay written by a young student stated:

> *Recreational and entertainment facilities in this area could be improved upon. The recently built community complex has helped with sporting activities, such as squash and night netball, but if you're not particularly fond of sports you may find it harder to enjoy your leisure time.*

At the northern end of the Mallee region, a 1982 youth needs study auspiced by the Mildura City Council, identifed concerns of youth as leisure, recreation and entertainment. Issues highlighted were boredom, lack of facilities outside sport, limited activities for early adolescents, lack of recreational opportunities, lack of activities during school holidays, the expense of existing entertainment, the absence of a common meeting place to encourage involvement or maturation and the lack of stimulating leisure pursuits and facilities. (Krake. 1982:22-23)

In terms of cultural activities, less than 3% of youth had used the arts centre and theatre complex and only 1.6% of respondents identified the need for activities like artistic retreats, art and craft exhibitions, and drama groups. The most frequented leisure activities were cinema, drive-in theatres, discos, pinball parlours and hotels.

Some service coordinators in the area referred to the lack of options for young people outside sporting facilities and alcohol establishments.

Taking a global perspective, the International Federation of Social Workers, in its international policy on conditions in rural communities, asserts that rural communities everywhere are caught up in socio-economic change over which they have little control. This has led to communities being left out of decisions that may effect their well-being and being left out of the mainstream of national development. (1990:44)

The policy document also suggests that because rural communities usually lack the social and economic infrastructure common in urban communities, there is unequal opportunity for rural people – fewer services, limited employment choices and limited recreational facilities. Some groups within society are at particular risk, including the poor, the handicapped, women and indigenous peoples.

Despite the problems presented in much of the literature, rural areas also have much to offer young people. The National Advisory Council for the Youth Service in the United Kingdom said this in a report:

> *Young people living in the country enjoy many advantages – the richness of the countryside, variety in the landscape and space as well as opportunities to benefit from having a recognisable place in small and close-linked communities, and the strength which often comes from long family association with a village or market town.* (National Advisory Council for the Youth Service.1988:15)

In the interview with young Mallee women, five 15-year-olds in Swan Hill discussed what was good about their community:

> *All felt they have more freedom in the country to go out and about. They have a healthier lifestyle; no pollution, less junk food outlets to be tempted by and more sport to play. People are friendlier and you are known in the town. The lifestyle is more casual and there is less pressure to spend money on clothes. All felt that it would be more expensive for them to live in Melbourne with all the entertainment and other options available there.* (van der Stoel.1984:14)

Literature will be cited which builds on these characteristics in a positive manner by proposing appropriate service models. The catch-cry, 'rural is different', is the focus of this section.

The inappropriateness of transplanting urban-based models in rural communities has been well documented. The articles summarised below highlight this issue and give examples of innovative rural practice. Although many do not deal specifically with the arts, the information contained within them has applicability across a broad range of service types.

Johnson, in the United States, has grappled with service provision and states that one of the most frequently encountered observations about the non-urban scene is that there is a dearth of human services. However, what appears to be an absence of services is in fact a difference in resources. (1980:49)

One issue relates to services being located in large centres, making access difficult for people located out of those centres for reason of distance rather than absence. Johnson talks about operating satellite offices in outlying areas, utilising community facilities such as churches and schools, which exemplify the kind of resourcefulness and flexibility required. Another means of expanding accessibility is to make the programs mobile and bring them to the consumer in order to greatly increase utilisation.

Johnson suggests that a noteworthy characteristic of the means by which non-metropolitan communities meet human need is informality, using the informal helping network. An aspect of rural informality is the propensity for using volunteers rather than professionals.

The self-help movement is considered particularly relevant for the rural way of life, particularly in farming communities. There is a great deal of inventiveness and self-sufficiency in many rural neighbourhoods. Churches and service clubs can be useful resources.

Farley, Griffiths and Skidmore, again in the North American context, describe the sense of community in rural areas, with the community endeavouring to take care of its own. Any professional working in a rural environment should know how to capitalise on this 'sense of community' through initiating self-help projects and volunteer programs. (1982:9) They state:

> Volunteerism may be the greatest untapped resource available in local communities. There is a wealth of resources in a rural community if it can be utilised in a productive way.

Also in the United States, Gumpert discusses the need to use community social structures and culturally acceptable settings for service delivery (1985:52).

Providing services to youth has also received attention in the United Kingdom. Tyler refers to the 'Thompson Report' which recommended equitable funding, flexible and mobile resources and policy frameworks should be provided in rural areas. (1987:10)

An example of an innovative model for 'youth arts' activity in the UK is in rural North Nottinghamshire – an area of 130 square miles embracing 25 parishes. A rural youth project developed 25 youth clubs, one in each community. An area arts coordinator is employed and is involved in two youth work sessions each week to coordinate an arts circus. (Murphy. 1985:11-14) This takes the following format:

> She gets together two or three art or craft workers and offers a package on a particular theme to all the clubs. The themes – mask making, face painting and confectionery around Halloween; candles, soft toys and table decorations at Christmas – are changed every six weeks or so, or when all clubs taking up the offer have had a turn.

> In designing a programme for rural clubs it is important to put a strong emphasis on socially educational ingredients. The all-fun-and-games element is very ephemeral, 'consumed' by young people but not valued in the long term.

Recent research on mobile services in rural areas has listed schemes in the United Kingdom including mobile classrooms, nurseries, playbuses and playvans for young children, mobile cinemas and theatres (an outstanding one in Radnore, Wales), and mobile art projects. Most of the schemes described in the literature seem to be the result of partnerships between voluntary and statutory agencies (Martinez-Brawley. 1987:28)

In the UK the distinctiveness of rural life has been recognised, with the youth service calling for special responses and different initiatives. (National Advisory Council for the Youth Service. (1988:15)

Cheers, in referring to rural Australia, similarly suggests that services should mesh with existing support and information networks rather than establishing alternative, perhaps competing ones(1985:9). He states that services should respect and utilise, rather than reduce, the capacity for innovative self-help apparent among many remote area residents and families.

Cheers also suggests that social workers in rural communities should have the ability and humility to work with natural support networks and processes, be flexible and willing to understand the values of remote area residents.

Mobility as a tool in meeting rural needs, has been tested in Western Australia over recent years, and provides a model for other rural demands (Smith and Smith 1987:110).

Martinez-Brawley describes rural youth as organic rural communities.

> *While some young people will choose rural lifestyles and others will not, what must be recognised is that it is important for rural workers to provide balanced perspectives to enlighten those choices. We live in a society dominated by cities. Our stances as urbanites are all pervasive. Choosing a rural lifestyle is always a courageous but frequently a subversive act particularly for the young whose references and cultural role-models tend to be all urban (music, fashions). (1987:30)*

She refers to a Western Australian theatre group which set out to develop a play based on the lives of the Pilbara people by including them in the writing and production of the play.

An approach to rural development in international settings, suggested by Knop and Knop, also applies:

> *Rural development is based on the principle of self- determination and is devoted to the nurture of attitudes of self-confidence, initiative, co-operation and resourcefulness. (1985:15)*

They further argue that rural development is restricted by local conditions and needs voluntary cooperation of the total community. Rural development assumes that through research, consultation and planning with all interested groups, a range of goals which reflects the needs and aspirations of the people can be achieved.

There have been some innovative developments in service delivery in the youth area in Victoria. In a paper prepared by the Victorian Country Youth Affairs Network (VCYAN), reference was made to a joint Department of Agriculture/Department of Labour rural working group statement that highlighted the minimal programs and services directed at young people in small rural towns. (VCYAN 1988:4) VCYAN suggests the reason small communities do not have access to services is the way programs are designed and, consequently needs assessed.

> *Almost all human service programs are designed to operate in and service the needs of large densely populated urban centres. As such these programs are designed to deliver specialist services. Funding may be available for a youth housing worker or a TAFE worker or some other specialist worker. Funding is not available for a multi-functioned worker who would be able to undertake some of each of these functions.*

A second feature of human service programs which also puts rural areas at a disadvantage is that they are designed to operate over a small geographic area and not across two or three quite separate communities.

Often when 'needs' are being assessed, in reality 'numbers' are what are actually being assessed.

VCYAN recommends a Victorian model operating in some areas which is sub-regionally coordinated, multi-funded and has many functions. The advantages are ensuring local control and access, spreading the funding burden and enabling one service to provide many functions in a small locality.

Lynn, referring to research in North Queensland, comments on a study of services that aim to meet local needs in a culturally appropriate manner. The models include multi-function satellite or mobile services, itinerant specialists, multi-skilled workers, community development officers, local volunteers and natural networks. (1990:18)

SECTION 2

MALLEE REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The consultations presented below were held in the Mallee region. The Mallee is the largest region in Victoria, covering 35,000 square kilometres or 16% of the State.

Bordered in the north by the Murray River and South Australia in the west, the area is generally defined by the following municipalities – the City and Shire of Mildura (Pop. 37,755), the City and Shire of Swan Hill (Pop. 20,893), the Borough and Shire of Kerang (Pop. 8,347), the Shire of Wycheproof (Pop. 3,322) and the Shire of Walpeup (Pop. 3,496).

The Mallee has a population of about 74,000 (around 2% of the population of Victoria) with the majority clustered in four major provincial centres. As a consequence, it is difficult to generalise the available demographic data on a region-wide basis.

But it can be argued that the following characteristics are significant:

1. The economy of the region is dependent upon two main industries – primary production and tourism. As a result, the financial well-being of the population is vulnerable to sudden and dramatic 'changes in fortune'. Such things as overseas commodity prices, climate and even Brisbane's Expo 88 have a major impact.

2. These industries have employment instability and lower than average incomes; the seasonal nature of both discourages the employment of many young people.

3. The census data supports the notion that there is a steady migration of youth to larger population centres, especially Melbourne.

4. The trend towards consolidation and mechanisation of dryland farming, is seen to account for the region's internal migration of youth. An important factor identified at the time of the Mallee crisis was the exodus of young people from small rural communities to the region's larger population centres. This accounts for the high incidence of youth unemployment in the City of Mildura and the Borough of Kerang.

5. The high cost of housing poses major problems for families, given the high dependence on pensions and benefits, low average incomes and the inadequacy of public housing. For

example, the 1986 census revealed that the proportion of the population of the Shire of Mildura residing permanently in caravans, was more than ten times the Victorian average.

6.   Other aspects of the region's demography which may have an impact on young people include:

- the influence of European immigration and the finding (Australian Bureau of Statistics,1986) that the proportion of the population of the Shire of Mildura identified as 'poor English speakers' was almost three times the State average;

- the census period 1981 to 1986 saw a marked increase in the number of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in the region. Figures for the City of Mildura suggest a growth rate of more than 300%. However, these figures need to be treated with caution as many of these people may not have been counted prior to 1981. However, the proportion of Aborigines in the 1986 census was almost five times the Victorian average;

- the population's access to social and cultural support services. The size of the region dictates the need for substantial travel for access to many services which metropolitan communities can take for granted;

- the migration of the population to the region's major towns has further undermined many education, health and leisure services whose demise may threaten the basic infrastructure of the communities concerned.

(The Victorian government's response to the plight of farming communities in the mid-80s provides compelling recognition of the need to positively discriminate in support of such communities, if social justice is ever to become a reality in rural Victoria or, for that matter, elsewhere in Australia)

REGIONAL CASE STUDIES AND CONSULTATIONS

The information below was collected through discussions with key people in each of the programs described. It is believed that the activities presented constitute most of the existing programs within the Mallee. Care was taken in collecting the information, that attention was given to a wide geographic spread.

From the audit of existing activities, there appears to be gaps in programs for specific groups. These include activities targeted at young women and ethnic groups, and non-school based programs in small communities. This is not to say they do not exist, but the authors were unable to find evidence of them.

For convenience, the following framework is provided:

1.   GENERALIST ORGANISATIONS

2.   ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS

3.   SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS

4.   COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS

1.   GENERALIST ORGANISATIONS

These are organisations with an arts focus which, although not specifically targeting youth, do provide some youth activities.

Dowling House Arts Centre, Swan Hill
(Sandy Trehar – Coordinator).

Dowling House used to run art and craft classes for teenagers. These were held on Saturday mornings and included oil and water colour painting, marbling and painting on silk. They ceased following a decision of the Committee of Management based on the following reasons:

- Concern about legal responsibility when in 'loco parentis'.

- As an Adult Education Centre, their Constitution was concerned with offering service to those 15 years and over, and as such they were not covered by insurance apart from a general public liability cover.

- The Coordinator was spending too much time on teenagers' activities when the emphasis of the centre was on adults.

If young people wish to participate in any class it is the parent who must enrol and sit alongside their son or daughter in the class.

The Coordinator felt that while there was a need for classes for young people, there was a lack of funding available and it was not a priority of the organisation. Consideration is being given however, to offering after school craft activities aimed mainly at girls. Dowling House has held exhibitions of art by both primary and post-primary school students.

Arts Director/Coordinator – Shire of Swan Hill
Patricia Seabourne

Patricia is based in the Robinvale Community Arts Centre. She acts as Director of the Arts Complex and also coordinates arts activities across the Shire of Swan Hill.

Youth activities tend to be based in primary and secondary schools. Patricia says that schools provide a captive audience, although some teachers and parents have to be convinced of the value of theatre to young people. Patricia believes that drama and other arts activities should be an integral part of the school curriculum.

Patricia receives program funds from the Arts Council of Victoria. Over two years she initiated and organised the following activities:

1988

Three artists-in-residence with skills in performance and music demonstrated circus skills to students of primary schools in the Lake Boga Cluster, Robinvale and Euston. Workshops in the school holidays were held at Manangatang, Balranald and the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement. The artists-in-residence program is a valuable resource in rural communities. It also enables people like Patricia to learn new skills and develop networks in the community arts.

1989

Using the visual arts skills of an artist-in-residence and Patricia's skills in performance, workshops in puppetry were held in the Nyah cluster of primary schools. In conjunction with the shared music specialist, Patricia gave a drama focus to the music program, in the Beverford/Woorinen South Primary Schools. Robinvale Secondary College use the theatre for school band rehearsals. Patricia has also helped bring a photographer into the school.

Patricia acted as advisor to the school production *Music Through the Ages* staged by the Robinvale Consolidated School.

1990

The year's program included plans for a visit from the Far North Queensland Dance Company to provide a workshop for the local ballet and dance guild, a workshop for schools and a performance for the community; plus a dance and drawing workshop with the Murray Valley Aboriginal Co-operative, based at Robinvale. Schools are now beginning to utilise Patricia's program. She sees this as a positive move towards accepting arts activities as an important part of life, with a place for it in the curriculum. Schools receive Patricia's skills and programs for free. She believes that if the money did not come from the Arts Council and if she was not committed to providing activities in schools, then these activities would not occur. Arts are not a priority in schools for either parents or educators.

Patricia believes that funding should be more accessible and available. She feels that without the networks and knowledge of community arts, this sort of information becomes difficult to access. Without someone in this type of position, with the knowledge of community arts networks, communities would have difficulty in accessing and funding resources. According to Patricia, few of the activities for young people or adults would eventuate without the specific focus of a worker.

Mildura & District Education Centre (MADEC)
Peter Greed, Director of MADEC

In Mildura, the Mallee Arts Council acts as an umbrella for a range of groups and has the potential to be the body that resources and facilitates 'youth arts' activities. According to Peter, local organisations need to be pressured to take up youth issues. Families feel that there is a lack of cultural activities for their young people.

Working with young people in isolation is not always the best way to go. A diversity of ages gives greater motivation to change and development. Aboriginal and ethnic groups can find craft and cultural pursuits a non-threatening environment for raising other aspects of concern to them such as health and welfare.

MADEC believes that if governments fund cultural pursuits it will encourage cultural development. Groups traditionally at the cutting edge of arts/cultural activities are being starved of funds because they do not fit into funding guidelines. There needs to be flexibility in funding criteria.

Funding agencies should consider community development needs and support activities operating at a community level. Networking, in the true sense of sharing, should be encouraged by arts bodies. Peak arts organisations need to give community artists recognition for their work. MADEC see themselves as at the forefront of the 'feral arts movement'!

Composer in Residence – Mallee Arts Council
Peter Harris

Peter Harris is a composer, who, in 1978 in Patchewollock, designed a unique community music scheme where he taught music to 56 different groups of children and adults across the 'Mallee Track'. Since leaving the Mallee, Peter has lived in the isolated mountain country of northern New South Wales. The swift advances in music and computer technology, have allowed him to write and produce in his remote valley, using computers and hi-tech musical instruments operated by solar power.

Peter is a consultant to the University of New England Conservatorium of Music and Director of the Rural Music Institute which provides music lessons to people in isolated areas who cannot obtain a music teacher.

Peter has returned to the Mallee to share his enthusiasm for music making and the new music technology. He will conduct workshops and demonstrations in the community and schools, using a

computer and a number of exciting, affordable musical instruments. He plans to establish a Distance Learning Institute in Mildura.

Peter suggests that training in the arts, particularly music, is almost non-existent in rural areas. Music opportunities have tended to be centralised which does not allow city people to gain a rural music perspective. Isolation in this instance is both geographic and technological. However, current developments in technology and the decreasing cost of equipment are conducive to distance learning. The Institute will align with the music industry rather than the education system.

Music is an important part of youth cultures – it allows young people to interpret their lives and they can say things safely, eg. some current Koorie music is hard hitting. The workshops Peter offers allow young people to achieve positive and concrete results quickly.

2. ABORIGINAL (KOORIE) PROGRAMS

Aborigines suffer many disadvantages, especially in health, education and employment. Statistics reveal that a larger percentage of young rural Koories are dependent on alcohol and drugs, unemployed, referred to child welfare agencies and sent to youth remand centres than other groups. Cultural activities are valued by local Koorie groups who want to provide meaningful activities for their young people and to assist in transmitting traditional Aboriginal culture.

Under the auspices of local Koorie organisations, a variety of cultural activities are provided for young people within those communities. Some activities are also made available to the non-Aboriginal community, to facilitate understanding of Koorie culture.

Swan Hill & District Aboriginal Cooperative
Doug Nicholls – Cultural Officer

Doug is currently offering cultural awareness programs to the Koorie and white community by providing schools, community groups, church groups, and others with a range of activities and resources. These may include school and holiday activities and camps. For young Koorie people there have been cultural heritage activities and camps. Some young Koories have produced artefacts as a cultural activity and a tourism venture.

Doug felt that the planned cultural resource centre, to include a museum, resources and activities, would offer more insight into the cultural life of local Koories and inspire greater interest in arts/cultural activities by young Koories.

Sunraysia and District Aboriginal Corporation
Barry Stewart and Sally Sherger - Coordinators

Barry and Sally say that in the Mildura area young Koories are alienated from their culture by a schooling system that does not respond to Koorie cultural and heritage needs within the curriculum. From an historical perspective, the genocide of Aboriginal people has had a devastating impact on the socio-economic and cultural aspects of Koorie life. While collectively there is a movement towards self-determination, individuals still grapple with the inequities in everyday life. Such factors as alcoholism, poverty and low self-esteem often rob the young of the skills of older people. The strengths of families and communities are often not recognised by the bureaucracies in their funding of community programs.

Barry and Sally suggested that there were a number of ways Koorie youth could be involved in arts activities. Local people need exposure to arts of other Koorie communities, such as the batik of the women of Utopia, and to the long term advantages of enterprise outcomes and cultural value to communities. Such activities could then be adapted for local activities, possibly with the help of Koorie facilitators.

Funding is also needed for local Aboriginal cooperatives to run activities and to purchase materials. Young people often do not have the money to spare for equipment.

Latje Latje Dance Group
Craig and Delrae (participants), and Joan Quinlan

The Latje Latje Dance Group started about 12 years ago when a dancer from Arnhem Land came to this district with a group of other dancers and taught a group of young people. The kids were motivated to keep learning and dancing. Joan, with time and a willingness to contribute, became involved. She became the bus driver! Joan has encouraged the young people to take responsibility for rehearsals, bookings, subsequent arrangements and funding.

A highlight for the dancers was to represent Australia in New Zealand at the World Child and the Theatre Conference. Performances have included those at the State Theatre during International Year of Youth, locally, in Melbourne and New South Wales border town schools, FEIPP (Free Entertainment in Public Places) in Melbourne, at Moomba, local shows and festivals, promotions such as openings of shopping plazas, for the Ethnic Community Council and various Koorie communities in Victoria and New South Wales.

The age range is wide, with some starting as young as four or five years. There is no upper age limit. The seniors, those who have been involved longest, pass on skills and abilities to the others at their weekly rehearsals. Dancers do not get paid for their performances.

The group takes advantage of other dance groups willing to pass on skills. The group went to Adelaide to workshop with an American dance group and have had dancers from other Aboriginal dance groups funded to come and teach the Latje Latje Dancers. Two members have gone to the Aboriginal and Islander Dance School in Sydney, the first ones to pursue dance outside the group. Others have left to attend tertiary courses, such as teaching, or to attend Koori Kollij in Melbourne.

Joan says you can tell if a kid has been a Latje kid: they have more confidence and are more willing to take risks. Delrae and Craig say involvement in the dance group leads to greater confidence, pride in yourself and your culture, taking responsibility for yourself and others and having a commitment to the group. Touring in Australia and overseas and performing before an audience have been other rewarding and enjoyable aspects.

Funding issues are of concern. The group believe that funding bodies are not responsive or flexible enough. Some opportunities have had to be passed up because they could not obtain an answer on funding in time to take advantage of them. The turn-around time between submission and notice of funding decision is too long. The process is often too complicated for young people to access without the help of an adult 'in the know'. There is a lack of support by funding programs for the development of skills. For example, the Federal Department of Employment, Education and Training has funding for after school tutors, but the Latje Latje Dancers were rejected because dance was not seen as education. Funding bodies seem reluctant to fund tuition, but are often happy to fund performances !

SCHOOL BASED PROGRAMS

Specifically targeted to young people within the school system, these programs operate under Ministry of Education auspices and staffing.

Mallee Cluster of Secondary Colleges
Andrew Blair, Principal of Murrayville Secondary College

The Mallee cluster includes secondary colleges at Robinvale, Manangatang, Ouyen, Murrayville and Sea Lake.

The arts curriculum frameworks document has not had a great application in the Mallee cluster. The focus of the cluster has been on developing technology. But there is a growing interest in arts

development, including a media technology package consisting of a video camera and other equipment needed to make films. Media studies is included in the arts framework.

It is felt that distance education is limited in presenting the arts in a useful and in-depth way. Although there is interest in technology packages in art and cultural appreciation, there is an understanding that it must be innovative if it is to be of value to students. The Mallee cluster is forming groups of teachers to work as project teams for curriculum development in all Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) areas. This will incorporate work in the arts area and the process will look at ways of delivering the arts curriculum to VCE students.

Robinvale hosts a music camp for all schools in the cluster. It allows teachers and students to share their music, skills and to perform. There is the possibility of a cluster arts week to focus on arts activities in schools and communities.

Murrayville Secondary College ensures one Arts Council of Victoria performance each term. Although not considered sufficient, costs and distance are restrictive. The levy scheme of the Arts Council of Victoria is considered unfair to small schools, where schools or families must pay more than those in larger schools to participate in their arts activities.

Murrayville Secondary College, with a student population of approximately 90, offers year 12 students Group 1 and 2 Art, Textiles, Media Studies, Music, and Creative Art. This is possible because of the philosophy that 'a comprehensive curriculum is the cornerstone of education'. It is also the result of practicalities such as support of teachers, class size not being taken into account and the low priority given to administrative and other tasks. Andrew says that although students do not get the same exposure to arts activities as their metropolitan counterparts, what they do get is good and support for greater development is growing.

Sunraysia School Support Service
Ross Murray – Curriculum Programs Manager

Schools in the Sunraysia District offer a comprehensive but specific art curriculum or program. Schools offer a well-resourced music program. The Support Service funds a music initiative program. This has funded quite creative activities such as employing Ros Bant as an artist-in-residence, involving her with the students at Red Cliffs High School to build a sound sculpture. It also funds more traditional activities such as the purchase of instruments.

Some other initiatives include:

- A shared music specialist in a small primary school cluster of Murrayville, Walpeup and Underbool. (Schools which reach a certain size are allowed extra non-classroom teachers. Clusters of schools can be considered on their joint numbers).

- Mildura Technical School has a comprehensive music program across all year levels and a well established school band.

- Mildura High School began in 1989 to establish a music program in their curriculum.

- Irymple Technical School has a long established school band.

- Red Cliffs and Merbein Primary Schools share a music specialist.

- Werrimul Consolidated School has no music or art program and the students had been negative about the value of music to them. The school invited the Mildura Technical School Band, as a role model, to perform. After the performance the students mixed with the band and tried the instruments. This year they have received funding to introduce the 'UPBEAT' program. This will include teacher training.

- Robinvale and Colignan Schools have received funding for a music program under the disadvantaged schools program (DSP) for sessional tutors. There is concern that when funding has finished, the schools will lose the skills as they often cannot afford a tutor. This year, in a review of the DSP list and in this region it has risen from 7 to 18 schools. There are now two full time DSP consultants , one based in Mildura and one in Swan Hill. This may lead to an increase in arts funding going to these schools.

Most secondary schools have art departments big enough to offer teachers support. Music teachers work in isolation so they tend to network for support and shared projects. Music teachers have worked together on projects such as *Music in the Mall* and performances in the Arts Centre Amphitheatre.

Arts Consultant, Swan Hill School Support Services
Mick Cullin

Mick is arts trained, so within the School Support Services he is helping schools introduce the arts curriculum framework, including the Victorian Certificate of Education (Year 12). This means students will have a wider choice of art areas as the subjects are taken over four semesters. This umbrella of 'arts' includes graphics and media. In 1989, Mick developed workshops for teachers on the arts curriculum framework and the implications for schools, teachers and students. An exhibition of art works from Prep. and Grade One from all district schools was held.

Most secondary schools have art departments which can offer each other support. At Wycheproof, the Arts Coordinator runs a newsletter for arts teachers in that region called *North Central Art, Craft Teachers Under Saturation!* It provides a forum for information exchange, support and feedback. Most schools offer an annual trip to the National Gallery of Victoria and other places of interest.

Primary schools are not so well resourced. Kerang schools share an arts specialist. Swan Hill North Primary School offers art throughout the school and some time ago had an artist-in-residence. Drama is not offered in many schools. Subjects offered are often dependent on the skills of the teachers at the time.

Mick considers the local communities do not value mainstream art. He believes we need to encourage students in 'the arts' and new ways are needed to make people aware of the arts.

COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS

This section describes specific youth programs with community support.

Electric Light Theatre
Mike Saunders – Director

The Electric Light Theatre (ELT) began six years ago as a Christmas School Holiday program. Mike had been involved with the staging of 'Gang Shows' for many years and saw the need for holidays activities for young people. He also saw a need for an outlet for the drama and singing skills many young people had. He put together a variety show. Mike also established a television production workshop for young people in the term two holidays.

The Electric Light auditions to cast its productions. Once young people are cast, they maintain their membership of the group until they decide to leave.

There is a production team, often older, long-standing members of the group who are able to pass on their skills to younger cast members. These people are often away at college and return to Mildura to work in the ELT production team. There are also two specialist dance choreographers and an orchestra is assembled for the production. The administration team is made up of parents.

All involvement in ELT is voluntary. The production is funded by a $20 participant registration, the door takings and some fund raising. The content of the show is negotiated between the cast and the production team.

At the end of November or early December rehearsals begin and continue several times a week until mid-February. Six performances are then staged over two weekends as well as three performances (a shortened version) for school groups. The show is then taken to Murrayville where young locals are invited along to rehearsals and are included in the production that evening.

When asked what was good about being involved in ELT, the responses included:

- Audience feedback is good.

- It fills in the holidays – nothing else to do in Mildura.

- I don't know what I would do without ELT.

- It brings out hidden talents.

- It is good/positive to achieve.

- It's lots of fun to be on stage.

- Kids can pass on skills to younger kids.

- The cast is friendly and lasting friends are made.

- The risk taking and challenge are important.

Robinvale Youth Theatre Group
Judd Lane and members of the Youth Theatre

The Youth Theatre started four years ago. It stages two productions a year and participates in two 'one-act-play' competitions.

The group produces original work based on themes of interest to the participants who believe that using current issues and concerns allows them to express where 'they are at', and how they feel about issues.

These young people believe that being involved in theatre is a positive experience because:

- it is fun.

- enables them to travel and perform before unknown audiences and to have others, who have no 'hometown' bias appreciate their acting.

- it helps their performance at school and gives them confidence in expressing their opinions and helps with literacy.

- it allows them to explore other characters, emotions and motivations which gives them more empathy and understanding of people.

- they meet different people, across all age groups.

- peer response is positive.

- their communication skills are improved.

While some might fantasise about becoming great actors, all are realistic about their prospects. Most believe they will maintain an interest in drama as a hobby.

If the theatre group was not available, participants felt life would be boring with sport as their only alternative activity. They would not have the same opportunity to build confidence, broaden their views and make strong friendships.

Judd Lane, the Director, believes that young people in the country are more sensitive to drama, but have more hang-ups. Drama is an escape hatch for feelings. He says the Mallee has a number of drama groups, but the adults do not make time for young people to become involved. It needs a committed adult to make it happen.

CAREERS FOR FARMING COMMUNITIES

The Murray Mallee Regional Development Board succeeded in obtaining funding under the 'Rural Education Access Program'. The aim was to encourage people aged between 15-35 to examine career decisions and options. Drama was used to involve people in the process.

Not Now, Later - a one-person play was performed to school and community audiences. Its theme was that people need to take risks, to rsue what will fulfill their lives and make their own decisions. One of the characters says: *Failure is not the inability to do something or making a mistake, it is not taking the risk in the first place!*

Principals and teachers were very willing for young people to be involved because opportunities to be involved in a theatre production were rare. The feedback from the participants was that it got the message across in a meaningful and fun way. The response to involvement in a follow-up process has been very positive.

SECTION 3

DISCUSSION

There is little doubt that arts activities, both traditional and non-traditional, have much to offer the youth of rural areas. The potential benefits include:

- the opportunity to pursue cultural endeavours;

- encouragement of innovation and creativity;

- provision of meaningful activity for the unemployed;

- helps provideon a balance of recreational pursuits

- helps reduce the drift of young people from small towns; and

- can contribute to reducing anti-social behaviour, including under-age drinking.

The factors influencing participation of rural youth in the arts process are complex, and related to demographics, local culture, socio-economic realities and the general needs of specific groups including young women and Koories.

The key findings from information collected for this paper are as follows:

1. Young rural residents are disadvantaged by a lack of program choice and inappropriate service delivery models. These occur across a range of service types, including arts programs. Some of these disadvantages arise from isolation and distance, including insufficient transport and the limited infrastructures of small communities. Others occur because of a lack of awareness of rural issues by policy makers and funding bodies, imposition of urban models and the belief that arts activities are the domain of metropolitan communities. The problems are compounded by scarce employment opportunities and inadequate social and recreational outlets which puts young people of being pushed into socially undesirable activities.

2. Rural areas have many strengths, as documented in the literature. Of particular note are close networks, the sense of community, caring and sharing and volunteer support. The Mallee examples revealed innovation and cooperation, capitalising on resource and skill sharing and community pride. In addition, organisations not traditionally associated with the arts such as service clubs, can be utilised. Existing facilities, such as churches, local halls and schools can be extended to provide venues without adding to the costs.

3. In most spheres of activity, urban models are inappropriate in rural Australia. Despite the extent of evidence beginning to be documented, recognition by central policy makers is slow.

4. Bureaucratic constraints have an impact on rural communities. Some organisations consulted referred to the lack of flexibility of funding bodies. These constraints can stifle the initiative and creativity evident in rural areas. For youth, bureaucratic hurdles can be a disempowering process.

5. Rural communities are in the best position to understand their own needs and the ways in which they can best be met. However, the consultative process, important to program development, is frequently lacking. Young people, and specific disadvantaged groups of youth are frequently ignored. A community development approach implies participation and decision making at the local level.

6. At a policy level, the Federal Government and some State governments express a commitment to social justice. Key concepts are access, participation and equity. This is evident in the implementation of some rural services. But there is little evidence of this extending into the 'youth arts' arena. The focus of government attention is on unemployment, young offenders and homelessness.

7. It seems clear that opportunities need to be provided for young people to have access to a wide range of arts activities. Evidence presented in this paper from community studies, revealed little interest of young people in the arts, and an emphasis on such activities as sport, video and hotels. However, it is considered that this could relate to a lack of information and opportunity. It has been demonstrated in regional examples that once young people participate in the arts it is valued by them and their communities. Schools provide opportunities for some young people, but not all. Arts have the potential to be fulfilling, as well as being fun.

8. A lack of equity for rural youth is a drawback resulting in arts activities frequently being 'person-dependent'. They usually occur only when community members are motivated to provide them and can lapse when individuals leave an area.

9. The migration of young people from country areas is an issue of concern. By providing a range of arts activities there is more hope of retaining youth and preventing the drift to the cities.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Organisations involved in 'youth and the arts' should raise their profile to eliminate the impression that young people are not interested in the arts. It would also provide information to others, creating an impetus for the introduction of similar activities.

2. The principle of equity should apply in school-based programs to ensure all school children have the opportunity to participate in arts-based activities.

3. Policy makers should ensure that their guidelines are rurally, regionally and culturally appropriate and that funding policy is flexible, encouraging innovation in both the activities provided and delivery models proposed. Despite the relatively low population density in rural areas, a variety of programs is needed to ensure cultural relevance for specific groups as well as to support the broad range of community interests.

4. The strengths of rural communities should be drawn upon to develop local programs, including local infrastructures and organisations, encouraging self- sufficiency and supporting volunteers.

5. A community development approach should be adopted in developing rurally-based programs. This should include community consultation, participation and management, and strategies to empower rural communities and their youth.

6. Special attention and funding should be given to specific groups within rural communities to ensure they have access to the arts. This should include Aboriginal groups, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, young women and unemployed youth.

7. The arts should not be viewed as the domain of an elite group within rural communities. They do not need to be traditional in focus and can be of a nature that ensures access of as many young people as possible. Unemployment among young people and their often subsequent loss to their communities is a serious problem – activities to encourage their involvement and retention are desirable.

8. Innovative ways of delivering the arts to rural youth used overseas and examples of delivering other services in Australia should be examined. Such concepts include mobile programs, multi-auspiced and multi-functional programs and ways of duplicating programs in different locations. Funding considerations should include the costs of communication and travel. Principles of social justice should apply in developing such models. To give young people the widest choices possible, transport to distantly located activities, including those in the metropolitan area, should also be considered.

9. A policy framework developed by governmental agencies would help to overcome the disparate, ad hoc and unconnected responses existing at the present time.

And to the Australia Council, our appreciation for providing the opportunity for an exploration of this issue.

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NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING BACKGROUND YOUTH AND THE ARTS

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INTRODUCTION

This paper has arisen from the Australia Council's commitment to both multiculturalism and youth. Previous examinations of multiculturalism and the arts have not dealt with issues affecting youth of non-English speaking background.

The issues raised come from discussions/interviews with workers, artists and youth. Some key issues surrounding non-English speaking background (NESB) youth – concepts of culture and cultural maintenance - are identified. It is precisely in this sphere – youth and the arts – that people of non-English speaking background present, in microcosm, issues relating to the 'multi-culturaising' of Australia. It is through youth that the meshing of identities, cultures and images which are Australia in the 90s will emerge.

The paper starts by examining youth of non-English speaking background. It looks at existing policies and what is actually occurring. The barriers to the unique creative potential of young people of NESB are also identified and discussed. Cultural maintenance, contemporary art practices, the role of youth workers, access, participation and process are considered.

It is significant that this paper contains a limited amount of 'hard' data. The target group is among the most disenfranchised in our community, not only in 'the arts' but also in politics and welfare.

The limited scope of this paper does not allow for indepth analysis. Its very limitations reflect the difficulties experienced by its target group.

WHY NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING BACKGROUND YOUTH DESERVE SPECIAL ATTENTION

In the multicultural Australia of the 90s one fact remains strong; wherever possible governments will take the line of least resistance.

Our object changes as we examine it. The variables are not just youth and ethnicity, they are also gender, race, socio-economic background, religion, life experience, language, culture(s), family structure, education, heroes, hopes....

The emergent patterns are difficult to read because this is arguably the first time Australia has experienced a multicultural youth who are articulate, if not in terms of 'power structures', then at least in terms of their needs

In the last decade we have seen the arrival of groups new to Australia, especially from East and South-East Asia, the Pacific Islands, Central and South America and Africa These people bring with them not just their cultures, but their young people (their own and their children's).

Along with the last great wave of post World War II immigrants, the immigrants of the 70s and 80s have experience of the settlement process. The situation and some of the issues have altered. The ethnic lobby of the 70s ensured that better services now exist.

Just as youth in general grapple with economic difficulties, so do immigrants. Their children are neither less dependent on them for survival and education nor experience in any lesser way the rituals and trials of adolescence.

Self esteem is generally thought to be achieved through self expression. Negotiating the cultural landscape takes skill and knowledge. Membership of base cultures which have been defined as different, and 'other', by the host culture, means that a large portion of one's life is, consciously or unconsciously, spent in justifying being here.

From these internal and external conflicts NESB youth deal with pressures from peers, teachers, parents and their own value system. But even these conflicts of identity are not all they have to face. The 'otherness' they experience is reflected in their own base culture – that is the culture from whence they, or their parents, come. The structures established by these cultural groups in Australia are often no more accessible to NESB youth than are those available to youth of Anglo-Australian background.

In practical terms NESB youth are often denied access to decision-making structures and processes, and if their own community structures cannot ensure adequate representation, then it is no surprise that mainstream structures continue to relegate them to the 'too hard' or 'lower priority' basket.

Out of this marginalisation comes individuals with specialist skills. Adept, from necessity, at managing two cultures, two sets of lives, they also have the potential to develop a third – their own. But even their hard-won skills do not appear to overcome barriers.

If policies and programs are to be effective in encouraging the creative potential of these young people, the 'people in power' must recognize the existing barriers to their potential.

The Youth Arts Incentive Scheme (1983-1986), the Multicultural Arts Incentive Schemes (1982-1988) and, subsequently, the 'Arts for a Multicultural Australia' programs of the Australia Council, have attempted to do just that. Little 'hard' data is available on arts funding to persons of NESB, especially in terms of who retained control of projects involving these groups or whether the schemes were appropriate to their needs.

Historically, youth of NESB have been under-represented and under-resourced. They have been struggling with structures which marginalise them and their cultural contributions. Any assistance has often been provided in a manner appropriate to the funding body rather than to the needs or interests of the young people themselves. Within this climate youth of NESB have had to develop their own survival strategies.

UNDERSTANDING THE TARGET GROUP

To formulate policy and programs which maximises any community's potential – in this case youth from non-English speaking backgrounds – it is necessary to understand the target group.

For the purpose of International Youth Year, 1985, the United Nations defined a young person as one between the ages of 12 and 25.

Of Australia's young people, more than one quarter are of non-English speaking background. Given the present practices of collating and recording statistical data, eg., age breakdowns, and collective groupings of ethnic groups, interpretations of available data can lead to misconceptions about the target group.

NESB youth are by no means a homogeneous group. For the purposes of this paper, it comprises young people who are first generation immigrants, refugees and those born in Australia to non-English speaking immigrant/refugee parent(s). Further differences arise from factors related to the time and circumstances of their (and their family's) arrival, socio-economic status, gender (different needs/issues between young men and young women), religious orientation, accessibility to resources and services, cultural backgrounds and experiences in their country of origin, and those experiences related to the process of migration and settlement in Australia.

Public arts policies and funding programs must respond to these variations if they are to be effective.

Despite this diversity, young people of NESB do share broad concerns, common experiences, interests and needs. Some of these issues include racism, discrimination, isolation, equality of access to resources, cultural and generational conflict, language and poverty. Many of the problems/issues faced by NESB youth are shared with all young people. However, the correlation between ethnic background and the degree of the problem must be acknowledged. The alarmingly high rates of unemployment (particularly among newer immigrant communities) and the well known (but not quantified) rate of hidden unemployment (particularly among NESB females) provide ample evidence of this fact. It is also important to acknowledge that the vast majority of young people born overseas do not come to Australia always by their own choice, but as a result of their parents desire – or necessity – to migrate due to war, politics, poor economic conditions or threat to their safety or well being.

Brief history of migration as it affects the composition of the target group.

The population of Australia has more than doubled since World War II. Almost 40% of that increase is attributable to migration. Slightly less than 30% of the natural increase of our population from 1947-1986 is due to children born to immigrant parents.

From colonial times, extensive promotional campaigns have been mounted overseas to attract immigrants to Australia. It is only in very recent years that demand has exceeded planned quotas.

In summary, the number of post-war arrivals peaked in the 1950s. The 1961 credit squeeze forced a decrease in the intake which again increased in the late 60s and early 70s in response to economic growth and an acute labour shortage, only to decrease again in the mid 70s. Positive expectations of the economy and an increase in the intake of refugees in response to international demands gave rise to another increase in the 1980's with numbers becoming static in the mid 80s. Since 1986 intake has again continued to increase.

According to the 1986 census, the overseas born population represented approximately 21% (about 3.2 million people) of the total Australian population, the major source nations being the United Kingdom and Ireland.

More recent figures at June 1989 indicate that 22.2% of Australia's population is overseas born. An increase of 3.2% in the year to June 1989 reveals a growth rate three times greater than the Australian-born population.

The ethnic/racial groups reflected in this growth rate do not reflect the major source countries noted above; rather ethnic/racial representation has become more diversified with large numbers recently arriving from South East Asian and Middle Eastern countries. This major change began in 1973 when the Federal Government adopted a global, non-discriminatory immigration policy. It is important to acknowledge that family migration constitutes the basis of a large portion of Australia's immigration intake (this category peaked in 1985-86 when it constituted 54% of the total settler intake).

In 1988-89 the sex ratio (male per hundred females) of settler arrivals in Australia was 99:100, continuing a trend towards females which started in 1987-88. This is somewhat at variance with previous trends. The sex ratio tended to be high (well in excess of 100 males per hundred females) when the intake was of comparable size to the current intake.

Despite the considerable percentage of immigrants and their children in Australia's population, the total expenditure of the Australia Council for example, in the area of multicultural arts in 1981-82 amounted to only 1.4% of Council funds. This increased marginally to 2.8% in 1983/84. Figures indicate that this level of expenditure remained static for about five years.

A target of 6% was set by the Australia Council and achieved for 1989-90. When compared to the proportion of people from NESB in the population, these targets, and particularly the actual expenditure rates in the area of multicultural arts clearly illustrate the inequity experienced by the target group in accessing arts support.

In 1986, the average age of immigrant settlers was 26.4 years while that of the total population was 31.1 years. There is a relatively high proportion of immigrants in the 0-9 and 20-34 age groups which reflect the large proportion of young families migrating to Australia.

Of the overseas born, the Vietnamese community has the youngest age structure followed by the Malaysian and New Zealand communities. Communities with a high proportion of overseas born people in the 0-19 years age group are the Vietnamese (27.2%), New Zealand (21.8%) and Lebanese (14.4%) communities.

The high proportion of younger immigrants is an effect of government policy which is likely to continue for some time in order to counter the effects of a rapidly ageing Australian population.

Immigration policy bias towards younger immigrants and the subsequent natural population increase establishes this group as an important one in terms of size, potential and impact on Australia's future.

EXISTING AUSTRALIA COUNCIL STRUCTURES & SUPPORT

The purpose of the Australia Council is to foster the cultural life of the nation. During the past decade, the Council has undergone tremendous change through restructuring and cutbacks. In spite of this, progress has been made in terms of youth and the arts and arts for a multicultural Australia.

Youth Arts Incentive Scheme

In response to the identification of youth as a Council priority in the early 1980s, a Youth Arts Incentive Scheme was established in 1983. This aimed 'to provide a focus for innovative projects with an emphasis on access to high quality arts experience for young people in schools and elsewhere'. Each Board and Committee of the Australia Council was encouraged to develop support programs for young people and create conditions for increased youth participation. The scheme was discontinued in 1986 because individual Boards were deemed to have adequately formed a base for ongoing support for youth activities. The actual level of support now varies greatly between Boards and Committees.

Multicultural Incentive Scheme / Arts for a Multicultural Australia

In 1982 the Australia Council adopted multicultural arts as a priority area and appointed a specialist Multicultural Arts Officer. A fund similar to the Youth Arts Incentive Scheme was implemented in various forms until its review and abandonment in 1988.

During 1988, the Australia Council reviewed its 'multicultural arts policy' and subsequently altered related funding procedures. One of the most significant of these changes was the shift in philosophical approach away from the notion of 'multicultural arts', towards the development of a Arts for a Multicultural Australia policy. The Australia Council also designated specific funding targets for each of its Boards and Committees.

A specialist officer was appointed to advise the Australia Council's Boards and the Community Cultural Development Committee and their clients on the program. The officer is also consulted on the assessment of applications for assistance. This function is currently undertaken by the Program Manager–Multicultural working from the Community Cultural Development Unit with a Council-wide brief.

An overall target of 4% was set by the Council for 1988-89; actual expenditure amounted to only 3.7% of funds. The Performing Arts Board (PAB), the Literature Board (Lit.B) and the Visual Arts/Craft Board (VA/CB) were each designated a 3% target, and the Community Cultural Development Committee (CCDU) was designated a 10% target of their overall budgets. The actual expenditure percentage exceeded the established targets; most notably by the Literature Board (variation percentage being 135.3%) and the PAB (82.8% variation percentage).

Following a Council decision in June 1988, all Boards and the Community Cultural Development Committee must appoint people of NESB to their decision – making structures.

It is significant to note that at the time of researching this paper in the first half of 1990 no members of the Council, its Boards or Committees were under 30 years of age.

Despite increases, the percentage of activities and artists supported remains drastically disproportionate to the percentage of people from NESB in the general population.

Young people of NESB have benefited from increased funds and the focus on multicultural arts; however, the degree to which they have benefited has not been measured. Analysis might conclude that NESB youth groups and subgroups (eg. immigrants, refugees, women) are being reached. The review of the Multicultural Arts Program presented to the Australia Council in June 1988 noted that 'there is very little activity supported in this area' (young people of NESB). Yet it is one in which multiculturalism must take root if it is to have any future.

Artistic activity with second and third generation immigrants will be able to avoid the entrenched heritage maintenance position of older immigrants which often militates against interaction and development, but it could mean a loss of valuable creative source material for contemporary practice.

THE ROLE OF THE ARTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE OF NON ENGLISH SPEAKING BACKGROUND

In his introduction to the 1986-87 Annual Report of the Australia Council, the then Chair, Donald Horne emphasised the importance of the development of Australian creativity to overcome uncertainties of the present. He advocated experiment as opposed to timidity, originality as opposed to imitation.

In sum, the creative process incorporated as an integral part of our everyday living/culture may finally deliver Australian culture from its derivative, Anglo-centric base, and encourage a more dynamic response to multicultural Australian inspirations which, in turn, will be reflected in new forms of art and cultural expression.

In regard to NESB youth, the role of the arts is of particular importance. In this sphere, our young people are able to use different mediums which, though restricted to communication through English, provide a variety of avenues for self-expression and the opportunity to introduce new ideas, methods and perspectives to Australian mainstream culture.

In discussions with artists working with young people and young people themselves, Horne's notions about the role of the arts were both confirmed and extended. Common themes emerged largely from the overlapping spheres of learning, liberating and activating:

> Innovation/creation: frees the individual from exterior pressures, allowing them to 'release, explore, make them aware, select, master and apply' (PETA 1989:2). This is in opposition to passive reproduction, or a copying approach. It does not however, undermine the value of learning more traditional skills – rather it can invigorate by re-evaluating them in an Australian context.

Experiment/Risk-taking: by virtue of their age, young NESB artists/ arts participants do not usually have the pressures of maintaining a professional reputation and often do not have commercial demands prescribing the outcome of their work. Their diverse backgrounds mean that they are familiar with experimentation and risktakin

Evolution/Revolution: the cultural roots of young people of NESB are not based solely in the past as is frequently assumed. Culture for NESB communities is just as present and evolving as in all communities. It is the way NESB youth in Australia, live, interrelate and make sense of their own world and Australia at large. Sources of learning and inspiration are drawn from the individual's/ group's cultural history, from the development of that culture since their arrival in Australia, from their interactions here, and from their hopes for the future.

A striking illustration of the potential and artistic excellence of young people from NESB and the innovative, creative, experimental and risk-taking aspects of their work is reflected in the 1989 production of *Ricardi* ('Memories') by Doppio Teatro.

The play focusses on the experiences and images of young second-generation Australian women from Italian background.

Emerging from the play, its content, message and physical manifestation, is a unique linguistic style of performance which combines Calabrian dialectical rhythms of speech with English.

Social Interaction: arts play an important role in bringing people together. The reason for participation of many young people is quite simply because it's fun and it creates opportunities to meet people. Sharing a common aim or purpose – creative interaction and production – often lowers the barriers of expectation and enhances self-confidence/expression/esteem. In addition to personal benefits, the artistic result may be equally exciting.

Each person contributes to the total creation. This type of creative interaction is vividly described in the following: 'one mind, one spirit; one collective burst of power, of creative energy, each one with himself, giving all of himself completely to the group and because of this the group grows. It becomes alive'. (PETA, 1989:10).

Problem solving: arts not only serve to represent what 'is', as perceived by artists, but what 'could be'. The creative process: experimentation, interaction, production and so on lends itself to the process of problem solving. In addition, mutual cooperation and communication, particularly among a heterogeneous group, encourages participants to view issues/situations from more than one angle. The result is the enhancement of informative and creative input and the development of negotiation, conflict resolution and co-operative skills.

A vivid example of interaction and problem-solving and the resulting contribution to artistic excellence may be seen in a project initiated in Auburn, NSW.

Two rival graffiti gangs in Sydney's western suburbs collaborated to produce a recording of the songs written by one of the Auburn gang's members. These members are from various backgrounds, including Samoan, Lebanese, Turkish and Assyrian.

A sixteen year old Samoan girl has composed and performed a number of dynamic, uniquely Australian 'rap' numbers. Her poignant lyrics and acoustic style and rhythm reflect gang life, drugs and youth living in Sydney's western suburbs. A support crew of gang members will be involved in the technical production of the record and accompanying video clip in which they will feature. In addition a mural will be produced by the graffiti artists and photographed for the record cover.

The project will encourage positive interaction between two rival gangs. The artistic merit of the gang members has been recognised. The support of such projects will encourage it to be perceived as a positive contribution to our cultural life.

Consciousness Raising, Participation and Empowerment: in creative terms NESB youth may be described as possessing a unique mixture of experience and innocence. This is where their potential and their power resides – arts play an integral role in developing and activating that potential for the benefit of the individual, group, and society.

The arts are a major source of creativity for people other than being just recreational forms for passive consumption. Paolo Friere's influence in South America and the People's Theatre in the Philippines have been important instruments in rediscovering, liberating and activating 'the spirit' of the people.

The scene is no less exciting in Australia. Arts can be crucial to the empowering groups and individuals who have restricted access to other forms of communication and representation. In terms of process and product, the arts assume an educative role for the audience and the artist. By their nature they expose people to new perspectives, ideas and practices and the acceptance of the need to risk and experiment in order to develop. They encourage action, plant the seeds of change and provide the impetus and medium for the development of Australian images which reflect the multicultural nature of society.

To limit the discussion on the role of the arts and young people from NESB in this way would be misleading. The following discussion on attitudes ansd accessing NESB youth will begin to explore some of the problems and barriers experienced by artists and youth, as well as looking at ways of overcoming these problems.

ATTITUDES

The high representation of people of NESB at the lower end of the socio-economic scale is a deterrent to promoting their participation in 'the arts'.

This observation does not negate the participation and contribution of NESB people to the arts – their contribution to artistic and cultural life is often not acknowledged by the key players in the community or the arts funding agencies.

This highlights the fact that the priorities of this group almost invariably revolve around economic survival and independence.

'The arts' as defined and funded by public arts funding agencies, are still largely perceived as elitist and inaccessible. Success is often seen to be limited to those with 'right contacts'.

Parental andcommunity attitudes which relegate arts to a hobby status or perceive them as unacceptable activities place further constraints on the involvement of NESB youth.

Issues of concern here include - the marginalisation of NESB actors to stereotyped 'ethnic' character roles (this fact witnessed the birth of the King's Bloody Cross Theatre Company which has Australian-born Italian, Greek and Lebanese founding members); the lack of access to mainstream venues which attract audiences from varied ethnic backgrounds and the relatively low attendance of 'mainstream' audiences at 'ethnic' venues; lack of appropriate promotion and lack of confidence in locally produced multicultural material as opposed to the cultural exotica of visiting artists from overseas.

ACCESSING YOUNG PEOPLE OF NESB

Through Schools

The most obvious strategy for accessing NESB youth is via schools and other educational institutions with high NESB populations. Intensive English language units, English as a Second Language courses, ethnic (Saturday) schools, community language classes, arts electives, etc., should be targeted in addition to mainstream classes. Workshops on particular artforms and/or providing students with information on the arts and culture in Australia could be implemented with these groups.

The increased integration of the arts into schooling presents enormous opportunities. Educational institutions are often criticised for their passive approach to teaching. This has been supported in discussions with young people in statements such as 'you just sit there.... it's boring'. Active participation in artistic activity offers the opportunity to be involved in a process in which young people may prescribe the outcome.

Theatre companies such as Sidetrack, for example, have run workshops with young women from NESB in inner city Sydney schools. From the workshops the participants wrote plays which will be performed by the company's actors.

The artist-in-residence programs in schools play a major role in introducing young people from all backgrounds to the skills and perspectives of different cultures.

The benefits of programs such as these include:

- increasing exposure to different cultural/artistic practices and techniques;

- developing skills (creative, technical etc.);

- increasing appreciation of the diversity of artforms;

- encouraging further exploration of art and culture;

- fostering intercultural communication and cooperation; and

- fostering development and innovation through blending different arts practices and cultural perspectives.

A good example of this approach is embodied in *Real Life Rules*, a compilation of student writings from Sydney's inner city schools.

Students from a variety of NESB backgrounds produced works dealing with issues such as racism, their local area, their ethnic backgrounds, Australia, power, etc. The project was funded jointly by the NSW Government and the Australia Council, and employed the talents of artists such as Komninos Zervos (poet), Don Mammouney (playwright/ director), Jose Borghino (editor) and Wendy Fahey (design and layout).

Community Access

Accessing NESB youth outside the school system is a more difficult task, but necessary given the high rate of early school leavers from NESB.

NESB youth participation in community based arts activities is generally limited. The reasons for this are varied and may include:

- lack of awareness of the existence of activities.

- lack of appropriate outreach programs and publicity to promote activities to NESB communities and thereby educate parents and youth about their value.

- lack of 'know how' about how to gain access to, and support of, key people in the community as a means of accessing NESB youth (eg., youth workers, ethnic groups, religious leaders, the ethnic media).

Youth Workers

Youth workers in areas with a high proportion of young people of NESB, or those who work with particular NESB youth groups develop comprehensive networks, not only with NESB youth themselves, but also their families and community figures.

Many of the aims of youth workers are not dissimilar to those of community artists. Both strive to foster self-expression and creativity, both encourage exploration and experimentation in attempting to achieve a 'satisfactory' result. The importance of the creative process is integral to the work of both.

Access to their knowledge and understanding of the target group should be tapped if programs are to be relevant to NESB youth. To achieve this to maximum effect, training workshops must be developed to inform youth workers of the functions and programs of public arts assistance. Reciprocal relations may then be developed and fostered.

Youth/Community Centres located in areas of high NESB population provide another means of accessing NESB youth. However, in many cases these are largely used by males and therefore may be unacceptable to young women.

Discussions with the youth worker at the Marrickville Youth Resource Centre in Sydney's inner west revealed that it was through programs targetting young women (such as health and 'self esteem' workshops) that they ensured that girls became more involved. This involvement then expanded to included participation in some very innovative arts projects. Liaison with parents, workshop hours and safe transport home are some of the tangential issues that need to be addressed to ensure participation.

Ethno-specific and migrant/multicultural agencies are another source for accessing NESB youth. Their reputation and profile in the community, access to individuals and groups and knowledge of cultural backgrounds and issues affecting NESB communities in Australia make them valuable assets in promoting activities and accessing young people from NESB. However, ethno-specific agencies differ greatly from each other. Issues affecting the nature of the organisation and its work include resources, period of establishment, religious, political and cultural orientation and the degree of male domination. The participation of young people in these organisations varies widely. Their access to decision making bodies and their relative autonomy in the running of young peoples' programs must be considered when providing resources for arts projects.

Participation

Parents might encourage their children to participate in artistic activities that give life to cultural practices of their country of origin or to develop related skills.

On the other hand, parents or organisations might prohibit participation if they perceive the activity as being too radical or as creating trouble. Thus the importance of the arts worker.

Young people in Sydney's outer south-western suburb of Villawood participated in a video project dealing with crime and vandalism on a housing estate to educate youth work and other welfare students. The project is a clear example of the use of an artistic activity to produce a work with broad social/educational implications. The problems associated with its production were many. But they are not uncommon experiences when working with youth from this target group (low socio-

economic areas, high unemployment, high rate of early school leaving, few community services/resources, low self-esteem).

Some of the problems associated with such projects include:

- the unrealistic time limit set by the funding agency for the completion of the project.

- the lack of appropriate skills of artworkers for working with the target group.

- the labour-intensive task of encouraging and maintaining participation.

The benefits of this investment are evident in the product. In the Villawood case, the result produced a useful educational resource, exposed some of the frustrations of young people living in poor socio-economic situations and encouraged at least one participant to continue learning the production of videos.

Promotional Activities

Perhaps the most effective way of accessing young people of NESB is through their peers and the celebrities with whom they identify. In 1988, the Office of Multicultural Affairs launched a campaign entitled 'Sharing our Future'. The object was to encourage young people to express how they envisaged Australia in the year 2010.

Schools throughout Australia which participated received a kit from the Office of Multicultural Affairs. This included teaching aids on multiculturalism.

Celebrities such as Vince Sorrenti and Annette Shun Wah and various sporting personalities of NESB were involved in promoting the campaign.

More than 1500 submissions were made. The States which generated the most submissions were those which employed consultants to promote the campaign in schools.

Effective advertising and promotional work must utilise the local ethnic media – radio, TV newspapers – particularly programs with a youth emphasis. Young people themselves should be involved in the production of promotional (artwork, writing, interviewing, technical production).

Acknowledgement and wide exposure of NESB youth's artistic work through the media (eg. SBS Youth Orchestra) has led to more expressions of interest for participation in activities and attendances at concerts.

AREAS OF PROMISE

> *The multicultural arts program is also about the interaction of the various cultural traditions which exist in Australia and about the development of new forms of expression which emerge in an Australian context from the cultural backgrounds that migration has produced. (Multicultural Arts Program: A Review of Objectives and Procedures.* Australia Council, 1988).

When allocating resources and formulating programs for young people, arts funding agencies should consider the following issues:

Cultural maintenance – its role and purpose in the expression of national identity through the arts.

Development of innovative art forms – taking account of arts practices overseas and Australia's cultural diversity.

Wider scope for the participation of youth through advocacy work and emphasising the 'unique' contribution of NESB youth to artistic creativity.

Cultural Maintenance

The term 'cultural maintenance' is commonly perceived as attempts by ethnic communities to preserve their folk art. The images are of brightly coloured costumes and folk dances. Although these images represent an aspect of the different cultures, they are stereotypes which ignore the changes resulting from contact with other cultures in Australia.

Traditional artforms continue to attract large numbers of young people in some communities. The benefits of such participation include the transference of skills including language, dance and movement, textiles, craft (masks, puppetry) and expression of the diverse cultural heritage of the Australian population.

Some of the artworkers and volunteers from various agencies consulted for this paper fear the loss of traditional artforms. They are therefore restricting their time with young people to teaching them so as to ensure their survival. Such is the danger inherent in cultural maintenance if it is to be the sole source of artistic expression. This can reduce the participation of young people to passive learning and re-enactment.

Unless the historical and cultural significance of the artform is conveyed to participants and audience, it is little more than a 'snapshot' or mere celebration of the past or cultural exotica.

On the other hand, to withdraw support from this area would be to dismiss an important part of Australian cultural heritage. Cultural development depends on negotiating traditional and contemporary forms and allowing for future aspirations by virtue of the fact that the 'traditional' artistic product can be re-located, revived or re-interpreted in a contemporary environment.

The artistic work assumes then a dynamic, evolutionary character in the way it is produced and consumed and the way it affects the host culture and its audience and participants.

Contemporary Art and Innovation

In 1987, PETA (the Philippine Educational Theatre Association), toured Australia conducting a series of Basic Integrated Theatre Arts Workshops. The thematic thrust of the workshops considered that 'the participants concrete realm of values, problems, experiences, ideas and situations are the most authentic source for creative expression'. (PETA *Theatre Workshops Manual Series 1*, 1989:4).

Participants were not only encouraged to explore their own experiences and ideas, but also to observe and talk to others to go beyond superficial impressions.

Rediscovery of Filipino tradition and identity and the re-activation of social consciousness suppressed during former President Ferdinand Marcos's reign are the main motivators of the company. The Manual explains: 'a Filipino contemporary theatre artist can throw light upon an ancient Filipino myth by infusing it with present day conflicts – issues, problems, crises – so that it does not remain a myth per se, but a myth alive and meaningful to modern Filipinos.' (PETA *Theatre Workshops Manual Series 1*, 1989:9)

But this example is not only relevant to the Filipino community. South American theatre often takes a similar approach – as do other countries which have sought to establish affinities with the past in order to create freely in the present. Past practices are reconciled and utilised as the source of creative expression, as opposed to being an end in themselves.

The PETA tour and subsequent exchanges between the Philippines and Australia have resulted in the establishment of the Philippines-Australian Cultural Interaction Network. The Network has modified the Filipino approach to suit the Australian context and has run workshops and performances drawing from the sources of a diverse cultural population and dealing with cross-cultural issues.

There are other projects which illustrate the involvement of young people in innovative art activities:

In 1989, the Corrugated Iron Youth Theatre (CIYT) in the Northern Territory, for example, produced a theatrical work entitled *Power*. Through the use of anecdotes, poems, stories, monologues and short scenes, the show explored the relationship between young people and society's power structures. Issues such as domestic violence, alcoholism, racial discrimination, were dealt with in the performance. Real life experiences were recreated. Young people created the script and the performance.

The participants were aged between 11-22 years and were from varied cultural backgrounds.

The theatre group recently embarked on a search for young playwrights in the Territory to contribute pieces for a production exploring the skills, languages, stories and lifestyles of cultures and the differences and similarities of different generations.

The important contribution of young people to the arts is summarised in the following appraisal of the CIYT's production of *Hexen Haute/Heute* – a German play especially translated for the group.

> CIYT's reputation for creating innovative risk-taking theatre continues with the production of Hexen Haute/Heute. The audience will experience a new way of seeing theatre – a theatre of the senses – 3 dimensional – to participate in, smell, touch and hear. Youth theatre was created for and by young people, giving them an opportunity to question societal roles in a theatrical context. This play is a journey for all the actors, musicians, and design assistants, questioning and seeking not solutions but understanding the freedoms and constraints of our society. (Janet Robertson, 'Lightning Times', Brown's Mart Quarterly Journal Sept/Oct/Nov 1984).

Another example is the creation of a mural in Marrickville which involved researching different cultures represented in the local school and extracting signs and symbols from them. This activity, revealed commonalities and opened new lines of communication among the young participants. The mural came to reflect the interrelation of cultures over time. Greater understanding and respect was obvious in the group by the time of the mural's completion. The project brought together youth from Aboriginal, Portugese, Lebanese, Greek, Filipino and Anglo-Australian backgrounds.

In the two preceding examples of NESB youth participation in the arts, there is strong evidence of their significant contribution to Australia's cultural development.

When asked about working with NESB youth, community artsworkers highlighted the following qualities/issues:

- the 'rawness' of young people, their willingness to explore ideas/technique without preconceived ideas.

- the ability to express feelings and experiences that older immigrants have repressed.

- the potent social messages conveyed through their artistic work cross generational as well as cultural boundaries.

Wider scope for participation: Youth Work and Advocacy

Discussion with groups of NESB youth reveal that many do not become involved in artistic activities because they did not consider themselves 'talented'. Participation in creative projects and a broader perception of what 'art' is emerged as a result of the efforts of youth and community artsworkers. Through their contact with such workers, young people who do not regard themselves as 'talented' have become involved in various creative projects. For example, young Muslim women in Arncliffe, NSW communicate through a theatrical medium that wearing a head scarf does not

affect their educational or work performance; young Cambodians, Chileans and Vietnamese in Canberra and South Australia recount their experiences of surviving and escaping violence and persecution – the migration process and the subsequent enforced silence of their experiences on arrival in Australia is partly due to our inability to comprehend such experience.

Participation in these projects is often a 'once-only' experience. Groups of this nature are often extremely volatile, productive (both artistically and socially) and short lived. In such cases the process and the product of artistic creativity is equally relevant.

The preparation requires considerable skill in dealing with people with little self-esteem who may have undergone trauma and suffering related to violence or discrimination. If the creative activity is in a group, still further skill is required in sensitising other group members. It is argued that what is 'produced' by the activity is not confined to the resultant product -a theatrical performance, a piece of music, a painting – rather, various objectives are achieved. These may include – opportunities for self expression, social education, the re-writing of history, as well as the final 'show piece'.

Nurturing artistic creativity depends on concepts of self-determination of expression and craft or technique.

The importance of the approach of community artists or artists-in-residence to acknowledging and nurturing creative activity as determined by the participants cannot be underestimated. Successful participation does not depend on a narrow notion of talent, but on the act of creating from the ideas/experiments of the young people involved.

Similarly, the teaching of technique is of great importance. The skill of creative expression is not confined, for example, to the ability to reproduce a musical piece as instructed by lines and signs on paper. It is also an understanding of the concept, how it is to be conveyed, together with the techniques and trainings involved in the production of the work.

In summary, the effects of artistic activity have an impact beyond that of the final product by providing young people with a powerful tool for expression and advocacy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Data on young NESB artists and NESB 'youth projects' funded by arts funding agencies should be collated and analysed, based on information on both successful and unsuccessful applications.

2. Analysis of 'multicultural youth programs' should consider the migrant status (immigrant, refugee, second generation, sex, ethnic group and length of residency), the involvement of young people in projects, particularly in decision making and networking.

3. Multicultural Youth Arts Worker positions should be established in each State and Territory to:

    •   help develop arts policy and programs for and by NESB youth;

    •   implement training and support for NESB youth to manage arts programs;

    •   foster NESB youth artists and networks; and

    •   encourage NESB youth participation in State and national arts infrastructures.

4. NESB youth should be consulted on arts policies and programs to ensure they are equitably represented in funding allocations and decision making processes.

5.   A commitment should be made to increase the representation of young people from NESB in grant decision and policy making processes of arts funding agencies and specific strategies for the above should be devised and evaulated as a matter of priority and results published in the annual reports of these funding agencies.

6.   The contribution of NESB youth to Australian culture should be highlighted through greater promotion in 'mainstream' and 'ethnic' media.

7.   Organisations with NESB youth participation in their planning and decision making processes should be given priority consideration for arts funding.

8.   Funding criteria should be sufficiently flexible to allow young NESB artists and groups access to skills and resources.

9.   A pool of funds should be allocated for establishment and material costs for young NESB arts and related cultural groups.

10.   Government arts/ethnic affairs officers should devise an advocacy and promotion strategy on 'multicultural youth arts' and target it to schools, youth workers, youth/community centres, and ethno-specific/migrant/multicultural agencies.

11.   Young NESB artists in 'multicultural youth arts' projects should be funded whenever possible and traineeships be established for such artists and the number of such appointments should be reviewed regularly to ensure satisfactory employment rates.

INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS CONSULTED

1.   Mishline Jammal – Multicultural Arts Officer (Trainee), Shopfront Theatre, NSW.

2.   Sue McHattie – Community Arts Officer, Kids Activities, Newtown, NSW.

3.   Niranjala Galghenage – Multicultural Arts Officer, Ethnic Communities Council of WA.

4.   Sue Lee - Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (WA).

5.   Michael Doneman – Contact Youth Theatre, Brisbane, Qld.

6.   Chris Bowen – Brisbane Ethnic Music and Arts Centre, Qld.

7.   Bidisha Ghosh – Ethnic Music Association, WA.

8.   Assistant Coordinator – West End Migrant Resource Centre, Brisbane, Qld.

9.   Stephen Gration – Director, Corrugated Iron Youth Theatre, NT.

10.   Lidia Cesconetto – Youth Worker, Co.As.It. (Italian Welfare) Convenor of the Youth Sub-Committee ECC of NSW.

11.   Josie Spasic – Migrant Resource Centre, Blacktown NSW.

12.   Amanda Buckland – Youth Worker, Marrickville Youth Resource Centre, NSW.

13.   Ken Locking – Outreach Youth Worker, Fairfield Community Resource Centre, NSW.

14.   Jane Packham – Philippines Australian Cultural Interaction Network (PACIN), NSW.

15.   Christian Ramilo – PACIN and the Filipino Youth Theatre Company, NSW.

16.   Matthew Krel – SBS Youth Orchestra, NSW.

17.   Tressa Bremner – Director, Multicultural Youth Theatre Group, ACT.

18.   Barbara Zagora and Marachic Taniavic – Polish Youth Theatre, VIC.

19.   Jan Wawrzynczak –Director, Powerhouse Youth Theatre Inc., NSW.

20.   Don Mamouney – Director, Sidetrack Theatre, NSW.

21.   Marina Antonis – Youth Worker, Bonnyrigg Community Centre, NSW.

22.   Patti-Lee Cook – Multicultural Youth Arts Worker, Bonnyrigg Community Centre, NSW.

23.   Nicholas Bates – Multicultural Arts Officer, Ethnic Communities Council of NSW.

24..   Mary Dimech - Program Manager (Multicultural), Community Cultural Development Unit, Australia Council.

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YOUTH CULTURES - ARTS POLICIES

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INTRODUCTION

This paper canvasses the implications of non-aesthetic arts activities to help develop policies that will promote young people's creativity and artistic innovation.

Non-aesthetic conceptions of the arts are defined as those which include artforms and activities outside the boundaries of the 'high' arts and dispute the value of distinguishing between art-types in terms of traditional hierarchies of the arts.

Rather than making specific recommendations about the objectives of 'youth arts' policies or how to achieve them, this paper focusses on issues that determine the boundaries of a 'youth arts' policy field. Some policy guidelines are proposed later.

The paper's main arguments are as follows:

- When formulating policies and priorities it is important to be sensitive to the artistic interests and needs of young people taking into account such social variables as income, education, gender, ethnicity and marital status.

- Care needs to be taken with the way art is defined. While aesthetic conceptions of the arts cannot alone provide the rationale for arts policy initiatives, their abandonment can produce other problems. The breadth and generosity of extended conceptions can fail to define artistic activity well enough. The need for a definite and limited conception of arts as a means of clearly defining a field for 'youth arts' policies is strongly recommended.

- It is important that no single set of evaluative criteria be used when identifying the limits of a 'youth arts' policy field for funding and support. The promotion of creative and innovative forms of youth involvement in the arts should be a policy objective requiring a pluralist understanding. This should allow for communities with diverse tastes and preferences to interpret the criteria differently.

- Assessments of the potential of young people's artistic activities should consider not only the creative value to the participants but also their role for consumers and users of artistic forms and technologies.

- Theoretical criticisms of hierarchies of the arts will not make them disappear. To avoid 'youth arts' policy processes underwriting their effects, they will need to be sensitive to the ways age hierarchies of the arts intersect with hierarchies of the arts based on relations of gender, class and ethnicity.

THE CATEGORY OF YOUTH

The organisation of a policy field whose key points of reference are youth and the arts is not easy to envisage. This is partly because varying interpretations of these terms make it difficult to see where to limit the ambit of such a policy field. How, for example, is youth to be defined? What are the boundaries of this age-cohort? And what manner of distinguishing groups within this cohort is most likely to assist in formulating 'youth arts' policies?

Similar issues hinge on how art is defined – on whether it is restricted to what are conventionally referred to as the 'high' arts, for example, or whether it is understood more expansively to include activities which might be variously classified as the 'popular', 'folk' or 'mass' arts.

While our primary concern is with the last of these questions, some preliminary remarks on the category of youth are in order. The concept of youth, as a distinctive phase in the life-cycle of individuals, is relatively recent. Although some aspects can be traced back to the 1930s, most accounts argue that the concept of youth acquired widespread currency post World War II, especially in the 1950s when the category of teenager emerged. (Ref. 1)

Youth, then is a social and historical category. But it is no invention or phantom category dreamed into existence independently of, and without consequences for, the living conditions and experiences of those young people the category includes. Our modern understanding of the term is undoubtedly connected to the wide range of changes affecting young people: the prolonging of education and training and the subsequent deferment of marriage and familial responsibilities plus the development of distinctive markets and styles of consumption prompted by youth's increased purchasing power.

If youth is now thought of as a distinctive age-cohort, this is also partly a response to the development of government programs directed specifically at young people. Such programs have, in their turn, been made possible only by the development of new intellectual disciplines and techniques. The influence of both psychology and sociology has been especially important. Their concern with the specific forms of thought and behaviour of young people has helped to make youth a visible entity in the field of knowledge. They have also facilitated the compilation of statistics which allow young people to be targeted as the objects of specific economic, social or cultural policies.

Equally the category of youth has undoubtedly had consequences for how young people behave and see themselves. Its public circulation since the 1950s has played a major role in promoting the development of new forms of generational consciousness. That many young people now see themselves as part of a distinctive age-cohort with their own values, tastes, preferences and experiences is, in part, attributable to these considerations.

Yet caution is called for in the use and interpretation of this category. Certainly, its convenience as a means of identifying a particular age-cohort should not be allowed to cloud the diversity of life conditions, experiences and prospects of those within the age group.

Youth can be differentiated by other social variables such as income, occupation, place of residence, gender and ethnicity. Age itself is also an important force. When, as in the case of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, youth is aggregated as those falling between the ages of 12 and 25, we are faced with a crude statistical category. On age grounds alone, for example, most 25-year- olds have many years experience of work (or unemployment) while some 12-year-olds may still be in primary school.

However much young people share in common, other social factors can powerfully differentiate them from one another – in both objective terms and their own subjective understandings of their social situations. The shared experiences derived from belonging to the same age cohort may be trivial compared to the contrasting social experiences and possibilities of a black female adolescent in Redfern and a white male adolescent in Vaucluse.

To develop appropriate 'youth arts' policies the category of youth should be dissected to reveal its distinct populations with different tastes, artistic involvements and preferences. This may mean some hard options. For if young people cannot be treated as a homogeneous category with a single set of artistic interests and needs, then account must be taken of the possibility that 'youth arts' policies which serve the interests of some may prejudice others.

How options are posed and whether they have social bite by offering contrasts in the formulation of 'youth arts' policies depends on how art is defined. In any final 'policy mix' options will be influenced by how the terms – youth and art – are defined and related to one another.

DEFINING ART

The importance of definitions has been amply acknowledged in recent Australian arts policy debates and inquiries. Tim Rowse's *Arguing the Arts* offered an influential critique of 'high' art assumptions informing the funding priorities and organisational structures of a number of cultural agencies, including the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the Australia Council. (Ref. 2)

The issues raised by Rowse have continued to inform contemporary debates, particularly those concerning the relations between community-based arts and more high status artforms in the determination of funding priorities.(Ref.3) The reports of the McLeay Committee and the Anderson Committee of inquiry into Commonwealth assistance to the arts and folklife in Australia are also aware of policy implications of definitions of arts and a closely related term, culture. (Ref. 4)

There are now few advocates of the view that public arts funding be restricted to the high arts in view of their uniquely civilising value. These days, at least at the level of policy rhetoric, democratic conceptions of the arts prevail while the grounds on which their public subsidy is justified tend to relate more to citizenship rights – to equity, access and social justice considerations, for example, – than to the morally or viritually uplifting qualities of art.

Yet the practical consequences of this more democratic policy environment have tended to be more limited. Although counterbalanced by important correctives, by far the larger proportion of government arts funding supports arts activities whose publics are disproportionately recruited from higher socioeconomic and status groups.(Ref. 5)

Many reasons can account for this. One is the obvious advantage which restricted aesthetic conceptions of the arts have over more open or extended definitions. For where art is defined aesthetically and judged to comprise a restricted range of artistic forms deemed to be of special value because of their uniquely improving qualities (artistic, moral, or spiritual), then public agencies are faced with an already circumscribed policy field and well-defined criteria on which to base funding decisions.

We believe that 'youth arts' policies must avoid the limiting consequences of aesthetic conceptions of the arts. But it is equally important to avoid opting for a definition of art that is so wide and diffuse as to make policy choices indeterminable. To this end, the following issues will be addressed:

- A survey and critique of the policy implications of aesthetic conceptions of the arts considers weaknesses associated with definitional approaches which interpret the concepts of art and culture in such a way as to include virtually all forms of thought, behaviour and creative expression. The needs of 'youth arts' policies will be best served by opting for a practical definition of the arts extending beyond the high arts but encompassing other forms of artistic involvement.

- This argument is then illustrated by considering the limitations of the policy recommendations from a recent inquiry into the cultural activities of young people in the United Kingdom conducted by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. The report of their inquiry,*Moving Culture,* exemplifies the positive policy yield to be gained by thinking outside the confines of conventional aesthetic conceptions of the arts. However, the concept of 'everyday aesthetics ' espoused in this report is too vague and indeterminate to serve any clear policy purposes.

- A summary of evidence of the types of artistic activity in which Australian youth are most involved. This ranges from involvement in artistic production to supportive participation in

group-based cultural activities to creative activities young people manifest in their roles as consumers and audiences.

• We then canvass existing policy rhetoric and rationales which could be referred to in developing policy options within the 'youth and the arts' field.

• In the concluding section, we summarise the major policy guidelines suggested by the issues reviewed in this paper.

YOUTH AND AESTHETICS

There are many accounts of the emergence and development of the modern concept of youth. The history of the formation of contemporary aesthetic conceptions of art has similarly been traced in what is now an extensive literature of commentary and critique.(Ref. 6) Yet the links between the two have rarely received any sustained consideration.

This is surprising as the modern usages of youth and art, by aesthetic definition, are the products of chronologically coincident histories. While itself of more recent origin, the concept of youth, viewed as a period in the age-cycle of individuals encompassing adolescence and early maturity, derives its intelligibility from the 19th century way of categorising populations by age. Aesthetic understandings of art, in which a highly restricted range of cultural artefacts are uniquely valued as art because of the specific qualities attributed to them of being spiritually uplifting or morally improving, date from the same period. (Ref.7)

While 19th century theories of aesthetics viewed art as an educative instrument to be used as part of a civilising process, young people have – then as now – often been thought of as the primary targets and prospective beneficiaries of programs of aesthetic education. (Ref.8)

Aesthetics and Cultural Reform

We take our initial bearings from the ways young people – whether designated as children (as in the 19th century) or as youths (in our own) – have figured as the objects and targets of aesthetic views of art. This provides a corrective to the most common criticisms of such views – that they show a social bias by according artistic value only to those forms of creative expression which conform to the taste-cultures of socially dominant classes, genders or ethnic groups. (Ref.9)

The limitations of such criticisms are their failure to fully appreciate how young people and their culture, far from being neglected by aesthetic conceptions of art, have often been precisely the main point at issue within such conceptions.

The restrictive aspect of aesthetic views of art is less important than the perception that art might serve as a means of transforming the attributes – the ways of thinking, feeling and behaving – of those who are subjected to its influence. Such reviews of art are characterised by an in-built reforming orientation. By accepting absolute standards of taste and beauty which everyone ought to assent to, they imply some kind of deficit on the part of those who fail to do so. (Ref. 10) How this deficit is conceived and accounted for has a crucial bearing on arts policy conceptions arising from aesthetic understandings of the arts. Where it is attributed to a socially deprived background or a lack of education, the solution tends to be policies to overcome this deficit by providing exposure to works of art in, say, an art museum. Those affected can then acquire the prescribed standards of taste. In short, they can become civilised. (Ref. 11)

From this perspective, the stress usually placed on the development, in the 19th century, of an increasingly restricted definition of art can prove misleading. (Ref.12) For side by side with this process there also opened up an enormously expanded field of social activity as art came to be envisaged, beyond its 18th century conception as a means for cultivating elite taste, as a tool capable of raising the level of culture and civilisation of the whole population. (Ref.13)

Paradoxically, art, precisely by virtue of the exceptional qualities attributed to it, was also thought of as an instrument of government – a means of bettering the cultural level of whole societies.

Nor did this remain purely a theoretical idea. The second half of the 19th century witnessed the translation of earlier aesthetic theories into programs of cultural improvement. Through the dissemination of art, forms of thought, feeling and behaviour of specific social groups were to be raised.

Images of the child, and especially of the working-class child, figured prominently in these programs. Regulated exposure to art in its various guises and in various institutional contexts – the school, the museum, the drawing class – was seen as a means for working-class children to be weaned from the brutalising culture of their parents. Ideally, this was to result in the child being set off on a road of self-development which would lead to the voluntary adoption of middle-class standards of taste and behaviour.

In the British context, for example, drawing classes were extolled as instruments of character formation ('Teaching children drawing is practically teaching them to be good children'). While the museum was advocated as a suitable means of taming the boisterousness of working class public manners by teaching children the virtues of gentleness ('It would teach the young child to respect property and behave gently'). (Ref.14)

The development of modern forms of literary education was impelled by similar imperatives, both in Australia and Britain where, as late as 1921, we find similar imagery recurring in the anxious tone of the 'Newbolt Report' in attributing the contemporary lack of social cohesion to the dangerous gulf that opened up between 'the mind of the poet, and that of the young wage-earner'. (Ref.15)

In the 19th century, aesthetic conceptions of the arts, far from neglecting the cultural pursuits of young people, were obsessively concerned with them – or, more accurately, with those of working-class young people. The more the virtues of art as a value in itself were sung, the more art was deployed to achieve practical social objectives.

When we take into account the fact that hierarchies of the arts are often constructed along gendered as well as class lines the programs of cultural management to which art was connected can then be seen to have had different ends in view depending on whether their primary targets were girls or boys. (Ref.16)

Aesthetic theories of art now rarely nominate children as their targets but rather youth. This is in response to the more refined age distinctions produced by developmental psychology and new forms of consumer marketing. If youth is diagnosed as being in cultural danger, this is not because it is held to be exposed to a corrupting parental working-class culture. On the contrary, it is now the new forms of mass culture that are singled out as the villains.

Mass culture has tended to be deplored for its effects on youth because they are seen as lacking access to other cultural resources, and thought to be uniquely susceptible to mass culture's deadening influence. (Ref.17)

The anti-comic campaigns of the 1950s and early 1960s in Australia, Canada, Britain and the United States offer good examples of these concerns. (Ref.18.) While art is not offered as the only means of combating the demoralising effects of mass culture, it has remained among the primary cultural instruments envisaged for this purpose.

Aesthetics and Social Differentiation

The fact that aesthetic conceptions of the arts have given rise to cultural programs in which young people figure as objects for reform is only one part of the story. To plot the full set of coordinates for a 'youth arts' policy, other considerations need to be taken into account.

Foremost among these is the contention that while, theoretically, art may have been thought of as a means of raising everyone to the same cultural level, patterns of its use in both the 19th and 20th centuries suggest it has functioned more as an instrument of social differentiation. Studies of the uses of literature in schools, of cultural institutions such as art museums, and of attendance at theatre, concert and opera testify to their use to draw and maintain symbolic boundaries to separate society's elite from its subordinate classes. (Ref.19)

There has, however, been a change in the social composition of the elite. The most influential work in this area by Pierre Bourdieu stresses that it is no longer the economically dominant class which manipulates cultural resources in this way. He suggests it is the 'dominated fraction of the dominant class' – those whose privileged position depends on their intellectual and cultural capital rather than economic capital – which now commands the sphere of art as a means of symbolising its distinction.

In demonstrating their capacity to appreciate art in a disinterested aesthetic mode – as distinct from the vulgarity of popular taste – Bourdieu contends that such groups manipulate cultural resources in a manner which suggests that their occupational preferment is merited by their cultural distinction. (Ref.20)

The access to and use of cultural resources in secondary schools plays a key role in reproducing these class/cultural distinctions. These perspectives have a crucial bearing on the concerns of any 'youth arts' policy.

Policy Bearings

The purpose of the foregoing remarks has been to identify key issues in developing 'youth arts' policies whose trajectories would be different from those likely to arise from aesthetic conceptions of the arts.

Account needs also to be taken of the fact that aesthetic conceptions of art are not the only factor bearing on the contemporary disposition of the field of arts policies. While elitist and aesthetic conceptions of the arts have fewer advocates than before, the assumptions of such conceptions continue to shape and structure much arts and cultural policy. However, this does not deny that the field of arts policies has also been subject to other pressures.

Chief among these has been the 20th century expansion of democratic concepts of citizenship rights to include cultural rights (Ref.21). These have provided the grit within recent debates on arts funding for the disbursement of restricted funds: namely that funding should equally support cultural activities of different tastes and preference rather than disproportionate support to those activities comprising the apex of the hierarchy of the arts.

The following comments offer some possible directions for 'youth arts' policies.

1. There is surprisingly little evidence to justify the expectation, promulgated by aesthetics, that contact with the high arts in any way makes individuals better persons or citizens. It will make them 'more cultured' but there is no firm evidence of any other benefits.

2. It needs to be recognised that many arguments made for public support for the arts – whether for youth or any other target population – have often been self-serving. To be blunt: they often amount to thinly disguised rationalisations for the public subsidy of social groups who depend on their intellectual and cultural skills to organise and maintain their

differentiation from subordinate social strata. There is increasing evidence to suggest that many public cultural institutions explicitly plan their programs to achieve this. (Ref. 22)

3. The obvious disadvantage of aesthetic conceptions of the arts is that they place undue and arbitrary blinkers on the policy process in devaluing all those forms of artistic creativity which do not fall within a society's official hierarchy of the arts.

4. It is no longer tenable to suppose there is some uniform or agreed calculus that can be applied in such matters. This would require agreement as to which art was most worthwhile and the benefit to society from active involvement in or familiarity with such art. What is needed are policies capable of assessing the relative importance to different taste communities of art activities they prefer, and the degree to which public support could increase their value.

5. There is a need for a conception of a policy field in the sphere of 'youth arts' beyond conventional definitions of the arts. However, limits should be placed on such an expansion and caution should be exercised regarding the tendency to substitute art for expanded views of culture. Since culture is defined as the realm of meaning-producing activities encompassing the 'whole ways of life' of particular classes, groups or communities, it is too indeterminate to give policy considerations adequate focus (Ref.23) 'youth arts' policies should concern themselves with creativity and expression which require the manipulation of a recognised means of artistic expression for a specific purpose – artistic, political – in a definite context which is or can be rendered amenable to definite forms of policy support.

6. It is also important that such a policy field should not limit its attention to involving young people as artistic producers. The promotion of active, creative and innovative forms of use and attention is as worthy an objective.

THE GULBENKIAN INQUIRY: EVERYDAY AESTHETICS

The report of the 'Gulbenkian Inquiry', a national British ethnographic study of the role of the arts in young people's lives, argues that to develop an arts policy which addresses the needs of young people it is essential to identify and support the specific practices young people employ to express their tastes and common interests and the formation of their identities.

Through a combination of fieldwork research, interviews with young people and the commissioning of consultative papers, it surveys the informal artistic practices of young people as expressions of 'cultural significance', forms of contemporary meaning-making.

Commerce, Consumption and the 'Grounded Aesthetic'

The 'Gulbenkian Report' - *Moving Culture* suggests that the cultural institutions associated with the 'official' arts have little part to play in young people's cultures and, furthermore, that they undermine the validity of their activities by protective artistic canons and official cultures that reduce young people to powerless subjects. This may undervalue the agency of young people in finding their owns ways of defining themselves within these and other contexts, often in opposition to such canons and institutional frameworks, but the report goes on to demonstrate the greater importance of commercial cultural forms to young people. Young people's most common cultural experiences take place in their relationship with these 'informal' commercial cultures, in their role as consumers.

Far from being lulled into passivity by these marketing cultures, as conventional approaches to the arts have assumed, this study shows that young people use them to produce 'everyday forms of art', raiding them for material to develop their own symbolic forms of cultural expression. This is the notion, elaborated in the Report, of a 'grounded aesthetic'. It refers to the way young people use their roles as consumers to appropriate, transform and recontextualise popular forms creatively in ways that connect with the needs and functions of their everyday lives. (See Appendix 1 for a review of recent research which reworks conventional distinctions between producers/performers and audiences).

Such a formulation of the relationship of youth to cultural forms has implications for the development of policy frameworks addressing 'youth and the arts'. In this case, the report urges that it is young people's roles as consumers that should determine new directions, with the provision of greater connections between everyday forms of consumption and the practices of performance or production to allow a transition between the two and to reduce the division between informal and professional practices. The development of connections between arts and non-arts bodies and institutions are seen as a key to such a project, where the work of education and training programs and formal youth networks such as youth clubs may allow a point of intersection between funded, commercial and informal artistic practices.

'Informal Cultures' and Their Implications for 'Youth Arts 'Funding Initiatives

The range of informal cultures discussed by the 'Gulbenkian Report' includes music, cultural media (television, video and the use of microcomputers), magazines, style and fashion, and drinking and fighting as activities young people identify as most important and pleasurable to them. Since the criteria for selection are not elaborated they can serve as illustrative and polemical examples only.

It becomes clear that cultural and media activities are central to the ways young people live socially and situate themselves within social, economic and personal relations, manifest aspirations and produce responses to their conditions of living. This is a conclusion supported by the work of the Centre for Local Economic Strategies, also working within the UK context, which examines the role of culture within urban environments and includes a section on 'The Special Needs of Young People'. (Ref. 24)

The recognition that informal creative cultures already operate in young people's lives cannot be directly translated into arts policies. They imply a different relationship between users and institutions from the kinds of artistic activities conventionally assumed to benefit by, and be seen as worthy of, institutional support.

The report implies that funding directions should be instrumental in enfranchising areas of artistic activity normally marginalised so as to validate and encourage their practice. If the point of institutional intervention is to make visible and extend such creativity, enhancing young people's self-esteem within the community, then the relationship of consumers and producers, cultural forms and arts institutions must be examined and re-thought.

This relationship will be addressed by a discussion of the terms established by the Report of the Gulbenkian Inquiry.

Broadening the Terms of 'Culture'

The definitions of cultural activity as 'symbolic work' or the production of meanings relevant to material conditions, modes of living and the articulation of social identities leads to the position that there are potentially limitless forms of activity that could be defined as 'cultural'. The report argues that the consideration of pleasure is vital to understanding the way such forms operate and attract participants.

The reports suggests a need to promote and encourage the informal cultures of young people: 'to create the supportive environmental, economic and social conditions which enable them to do better and more creatively what they do already'.

This implies:

1. That the criteria of 'arts' should be redefined to acknowledge young people as cultural participants of the broader community. This would avoid 'aesthetic' or 'innoculatory' models and would follow an investigation of young people's roles as consumers within commodity cultures. The new criteria would lead to a reassessment of the relation of the traditional arts to newly recognised forms.

2.   That there should then be more accessible and expanded sites, resources, materials and conditions for artistic activities already important in young people's lives.

One of the omissions in the 'Gulbenkian Report' is the consideration that for both of the above to be put into effect, policy-makers would have to develop criteria to select activities that would be practical and desirable to support.

The notion of a 'grounded aesthetic' does not help us much here. The example of bedroom culture – the decoration of bedrooms as a social space – is arguably central in many young people's social lives. It offers cultural expression, but may not be appropriate to arts policy objectives. It indicates the questionable value of the direct appropriation of such a definition of culture for arts policy initiatives that would impact upon program development and funding practices. We need to look for other criteria and frameworks for developing such policies.

A Transformative Project: Questioning the Radicalism of Youth Cultures

The 'Gulbenkian Report' proposes a perception of youth as a category – and of youth activities and cultures – as essentially radical. It suggests a 'natural democracy' whereby if young people living a marginalised existence are left to themselves, they will develop more equitable and empowering forms of organisation.

Recent inquiries, however, have stressed the range of groups within the youth category, showing them to be shaped by different statuses such as gender, class and ethnicity. The discussion of informal cultures in the Report concentrates on demonstrating the plurality of youth activities and forms of involvement and neglects their roles within such power relations. As a result it uses conventional sexual, ethnic and class definitions of youth culture – magazines and fashion for girls; music and hair for black youth, drinking and fighting for boys – without exploring the conditions that give rise to such developments.

The British example of black writing groups has no relevance in Australia. The parallel examples of Aboriginal writing, painting and theatre groups cannot also be considered because they do not slot into the framework of commercial consumption as the motor of young people's cultural involvements. Such absences in the 'Gulbenkian Report' suggest that the connections between youth and other categories that organise social activities should be explored in an arts policy framework.

Without this, 'youth arts' policies may fail to address where young people's cultural activities derive from. For example, the subsidising of st   re ignores the hazards of public spaces at night for girls and therefore favours boys' cultural participation. It also reproduces the assumption that 'sociability' is defined by public participation, excluding family and domestic lives, which again calls upon the historical definitions of masculine leisure activities and overlooks the forms of cultural participation girls develop.

The Report includes interviews with groups about their television viewing and shows a marked commitment to forms of self-definition that have been the focus of feminist critical studies. These have argued that a wider range of gendered characteristics and behaviour should be recognised and supported than those organised around sexual difference. It would therefore follow that valuing young people's preferred activities within present conditions and contexts may not address these culturally significant issues and would not facilitate different patterns of participation and self-definition. A transformative project for arts policy should develop a set of criteria to address these forms of re-evaluation and critical engagement.

The inclusion of 'drinking and fighting' in the 'Gulbenkian Report' as an example of a cultural activity without legitimacy. But it forms an important part in defining young masculinity. It is an example of the way the Report proposes rethinking the terms of evaluating cultural activities. The Report says that if there is evidence of the 'thread of symbolic work and coherent human meaning' even in 'brutalised conditions' and 'degraded materials', and the 'dramatic and moral economic adventure' and 'risk' involved can be seen as elements which aid young people in their self-

definitions in relation to components of young masculinity, then these must be used to indicate ways in which other forms of involvements could function.

Unfortunately, the Report does not specify how such activities might relate to those arising from different conditions and materials. In many respects, this is because it is prevented from doing so by its subscription to the romantic and populist conceptions which have characterised a good deal of British youth studies. If a transformative dimension is to be built into the project of 'support' and 'encouragement', policies must address the preferences young people make without being bound by populist models.

Institutional Intervention

The Gulbenkian recommendations are that a system of 'arms length' funding be established so that institutional models should not impose inappropriate criteria on these existing informal activities. The emphasis of the Report is on devolution of management to small groups and individuals. Again, this is supported by the report of the Centre for Local Economic Strategies, which recommends a model of autonomous or semi-autonomous cooperative workshops.

The recent prominence of young black musicians and writers, dancers and theatrical artists who have emerged through the workshop sector is cited as evidence of the success of such a model .(Ref. 25) This implies a re-evaluation of the role of arts institutions in cultural life to develop forms of intervention appropriate to the specific context of informal 'youth arts'.

The argument that central venues should be used to concentrate arts facilities is mounted with reference to a model of Covent Garden as an entertainment centre. As, in fact, a shopping centre it provides a useful bridge with the notion of cultural activity within a consumption framework.

The analysis of shopping centres as sites of social interaction offering opportunities for self-display, performance and pleasure in occupying public space which has been feminised and domesticated has been widely discussed. (Ref. 26) These are already areas appropriated by young people for their own purposes and, given the increasing prevalence of sports and entertainment facilities within shopping centres as opposed to other civic areas, new definitions of city communities may be developed that are based on commodity cultures.

The basis of resourcing 'youth arts' within such centres in the community would address the division between hierarchically separated artistic forms. Such interventions would allow programs to develop that were not centered solely on catering for youth, but to help bridge the gap between youth and the broader community.

Summary of Report's Analysis

The Gulbenkian Inquiry indicates important departures and developments in debates on youth culture and arts policies. Its emphasis on the needs and experiences of young people, the importance of newly-recognised consumption practices and commercial cultures and the reorganisation of patterns of institutional intervention are welcome contributions to the rethinking of the relations between traditional arts and informal cultures.

There is still a need, however, to develop a diversified model of 'youth'. This would recognise different youth cultures and show how they are produced through the operation of broader forms of social organisation. This would allow for a transformative model of arts support which would avoid reproducing inequalities and limitations currently structuring informal as well as traditional cultures. Such a model may be used to establish a pro-active but facilitative cultural policy for funding support.

YOUTH CREATIVITY, THE ARTS AND THE MEDIA

This section briefly examines the evidence about aesthetic activities of youth. As has been pointed out, the scope of this analysis is restricted, in part by the problem of demarcating youth and by the delineation of the aesthetic.

We have focussed on youth activities outside the boundaries of 'high' art but those which may still be regarded as artistic. We have confined ourselves to forms of expression which may provide a target for funding policy, but are not currently financed or supported by other government organisations.

Once the analysis is restricted to this specific aspect of youth creativity, it soon becomes apparent that very little research has been done. (Ref. 27) Even studies into youth and 'high' culture are scarce, the arts normally gaining mention when tangential to some other form of leisure. This is probably why there is widespread apathy and disaffection shown by contemporary youth towards traditional artforms.

However, this lack of participation does not necessarily suggest that young people are uninterested in creative activity. The 1989 Report of Surveys of Public Opinion for the Australia Council stated that young people voiced a comparatively strong interest in further involvement in the arts. Since untapped potential obviously exists, the question must therefore be: towards what activities should funding and policy initiatives be directed in order to facilitate the further involvement of young people?

Whether by tradition or design, the current policy directives of Australia's arts funding agencies still result in the vast majority of funding being directed towards the 'high' arts. This generally includes areas such as theatre, art, dance and music. Of the overall funding, only a small percentage is directly allocated for 'youth arts'. Again, the involvement is primarily restricted to those activities which might best be located within the realm of 'high' culture.

If the central purpose of the Australia Council's 'Youth and the Arts' project is to extend 'youth arts' assistance beyond the conventions of 'high' art some broad insights into youth cultures are necessary to guide future policy. Limited relevant academic research has been done in this area (Ref.28) so greater insights can be gained through an investigation of evidence of youth creativity. (Ref. 29) This is to be found by examining the leisure habits of young people on their own terrain, including coverage in magazines, newspapers, on television and the radio. It involves an understanding of youth cultures from the home to the classroom, in youth clubs, leisure centres and night clubs, in the coffee shop, the public house, the shopping mall and the street corner.

For these reasons youth culture can only be understood as a plurality. It is within these contexts that youth creativity has its genesis and is given its meaning. Recognisable media of expression lying outside traditional understandings of the arts might include murals, graffiti, poster design, screen printing, fashions and design, club, street and ethnic dancing, making musical tapes, DJ'ing and mixing, playing instruments, jamming and forming bands, busking (whether music, mime, juggling etc), crafts and hobbies, computer graphics and game design, creativity in sports such as surf/skateboard riding and design.

These cultural forms should be placed against a backdrop of everyday leisure activities which are focussed around watching television/listening to music/going out.

Several points become apparent when attempting to structure arts policy in order to take these types of cultural activity into account:

1.   Many aspects of youth creativity are not realistically fundable. It is impossible, for example, to implement policy changes to fund such activities as bedroom decoration, however large its following or cultural significance.

2. Several forms of youth creativity can best be understood in terms of opposition to the dominant order. By supporting and institutionalising these types of activity, they lose much of their meaning.

    For example, by supporting and thereby controlling graffiti, by providing specific walls for painting on and by policing its content, the activity becomes sanitised, thus stripping the original creative action of much of its meaning. Similarly, when break dancing was taken off the streets and away from the gangs and placed in the closing ceremony of the 1984 Olympic Games, it became self-parody. Consequently, those who created it moved on to other, more restricted mediums of self-expression.

3. Activities such as riding a skateboard, while a valid and contemporary form of self-expression, most probably belong under the purview of governmental departments and instrumentalities associated with sport and recreation, and not necessarily those concerned with art. This ambiguity also applies to the issue of funding for arts associated with ethnic youth (Ref. 30), since these activities are also pertinent to the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

4. If arts funding is to be directed at creativity outside traditional boundaries of 'high' art, a knowledge of the meanings given to such activities by their participants is essential. If those meanings are not similar to conventional understandings of creative and innovative involvement in the arts, then arts funding – under existing policies – would seem to be misplaced. Equally, the interpretation youths put on their own creative activity is necessary.

It is not possible to construct a general conceptual framework or overall funding strategy for what are essentially scattered and discontinuous examples of youth creativity. To do so is to homogenise – not only youth itself, but the meanings behind the activities themselves. That is, the same rationale cannot be used when deciding whether to set aside a wall for graffiti, or whether to help with the cost of rehearsal rooms for small bands.

Each instance should be understood within a specific context and addressed on its own terms. There is not the constant theme of spiritual uplift or aesthetic value running through youth creativity, as is normally deemed to be the case in the 'high' arts.

In spite of these reservations, some wider conclusions can be drawn. A recurrent portrayal of youth revolves around the notion of young people as passive consumers, whether this be in popular music, television or fashion. As is demonstrated, elsewhere in this paper, this is an inaccurate depiction of audience/consumer behaviours. Young people buying records and listening to music can be understood as acting creatively. The process of choosing, combing and juxtaposing music, either alone or for friends, is both an aesthetic decision and a statement of self. The mixing/'scratching' of dance music in clubs is one step further along this continuum of consumption/production, extending through the private playing of instruments, jamming, past cover bands, to bands playing original music.

Likewise, the clothes that young people choose to buy, the manner in which an outfit is pieced together and worn, the way in which old clothes and ideas are mixed in with new to create innovative effects, are all judgments and actions. Creativity in fashion is not restricted to creative and symbolic designing. Again there is a continuum between consumption and production.

Since a great deal of the creative and aesthetic energy of young people is directed into these two areas, it would seem logical to make them the subject of arts policy – irrespective of how distant they seem from traditional conceptions of art. This is not to suggest that young people should be able to obtain subsidised clothes and records. Rather, funding should facilitate movement along the continuum, assisting young people in becoming critical and active consumers, thereby to become producers also – whether of fashion or music, or any other form of creative activity.

POLICY RATIONALES AND RHETORICS

Introduction

While aesthetic conceptions of art have significantly influenced arts funding policies in Australia, they have not been the only factors. In this section we consider a selection of non-aesthetic policy criteria to identify their relevance to the concerns of 'youth arts' policies.

It is also necessary to consider how these might differ from a traditional aesthetic set. It will then be feasible to consider how such principles were applied in recent developments, including:

- historic underpinnings to government subvention;

- economic calculation within the field;

- the local political scene;

- protocols of assistance to the film industry; and

- recent proposals for reform

Underpinnings to Government Subvention of the Arts

In 1990, the Arts Council of Great Britain justified its support of the arts on both aesthetic and the following grounds:

- value in generating employment;

- prospects for urban renewal; and

- capacity for assisting and producing a spirit of enterprise. (Ref. 31)

The basic principle of Australian government assistance for the arts is now 'settled policy', embedded in the superstructure of governance, and, at times, immune to the requirement for elucidation of underlying rationales. At a legal level the constitutionality of Federal activity in this area is relatively untested. It presumably depends on Section 81 (which authorises the collection of consolidated revenue for 'the purposes of the Commonwealth') and on the implied national power. This power contains elements of national sovereignty and nationalism. (Ref. 32)

As in the British case, government support for the arts has rested on an amalgam of aesthetic and other criteria. Post-World War II, the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust sought, through a policy of touring overseas productions across Australia, to bring the best of European culture into contact with what it considered to be the Australian populace's 'good-natured and resourceful philistinism', to cater for the universal human needs for culture. (Ref. 33)

There are echoes here of the logic espoused by Matthew Arnold: the best-natured activity of the best-natured people, it is anticipated, will bring out the best in the remainder once they have been sufficiently exposed to it.

In 1969, Sir Richard Eggleston, a member of the Trust's Board, listed his reasons for State support of the arts. They included:

- indicators of quality of life;

- elevation of taste;

- preservation of culture;

- education;

- awakening of a dormant facility;

- preserving a heritage for the future; and

- inspiring the community through the perspective of presentation of excellence. (Ref. 34)

For H.C. Coombs, when Chair of the Australian Council for the Arts, the arts had a priority status outside economic and political calculation. Their worth went beyond this and into the same realm as sport, where a national pride could be encouraged through an identification of self with Australia and art with Australia.

Such views have informed the structuring and interpretation of public opinion surveys on the topic in the 1980s. (Ref. 35)They have received some empirical support, via the observation that artists do not leave their occupation or re-train when prices are in decline, even in the long run. (Ref. 36)And in the 1990 election campaign, the lobby group Arts Action argued for the unique paradox of the arts, as both hugely popular and unable to thrive in a free market. (Ref. 37)

Such all-inclusive logics will not underpin special assistance to particular groups or practices – such as young people and their interests – unless they fit this national formula. A form of artistic calculation acknowledging specificities of interest is required instead.

Economic Calculation

The journal *Australian Director* is aimed at senior business advisors. In 1988, it recommended art as a good buy that would hold and increase its value. The journal explained:

> *Art is certainly an investment for the future and not only in crass commercial terms. One can hardly imagine sitting back in the lounge room and staring at a pile of dollar bills on the table. However, art affords not only a handsome dividend, but unlimited visual and sensual pleasure in the meanwhile.* (Ref. 38).

The first corporate art patronage came from the desire of United States railway companies to have advertising material. They paid artists to depict vistas through which new tracks would pass. This benefit, beyond the notion of satisfaction and resale, remains significant. The *Australian Director* again:

> *The prime motivation to initiate corporate collecting is probably most often generated through public relations consultants, the aim being to establish an image for a company entering the market or to adjust the image of an already existing company.* (Ref.39)

Here, art is divided in its worth between its sale price and the tangibles which can come only through association.

Pension funds in the United States are now considering investment in the area, for reasons clearly not related to aesthetics. (Ref. 40) In its latest annual survey of 'Where to Put Your Money', the *Far Eastern Economic Review's* section on art was entirely devoted to shifts in pricing indices across a variety of commodities. No space was dedicated to 'satisfaction; or 'example'. (Ref. 41)

Such accounts, and those of vendors who provide cultural goods and services, are critical information for any strategy for expanding assistance to 'youth arts'. For in many instances, there already exists a measure of fit between forces of supply and demand in the field. In the absence of government assistance, the market operates in spheres such as skateboarding. It makes sense to build on such arrangements, to offer a pattern of assistance around the margins of market-driven offerings.

It may, for example, be feasible to encourage nationally agreed goals for video games or to alter the direction of video library resources by offering tax rebates to firms encouraging the production of tapes for young people. This might occur via a cultural community exchange where video production facilities could be provided. This is in keeping with standard non-art appreciation justifications for funding the arts, which point to three types of economic benefit:

- the employment of artists, with the multiplier effect flowing from further expenditure by them;

- employment and income generated by tourists drawn by the arts; and

- the attraction of additional businesses to an area because of its cultural ambience.

These are – respectively – direct, indirect and induced benefits. (Ref. 42)

In his survey of economic principles in support of assistance, Withers concludes – on the basis of, in a sense, a political decision – that the principal reasons are to do with the need for an education in the value of the arts in the interest of a knowledgeable choice of work and leisure activities by the populace and the desirability of a developed potential for social critique which is deemed to accumulate at the cultural margin. (Ref. 43)

The Australian Political Scene

The Australian Labor Party's '1986 Platform' devotes considerable space to conjoining the doctrines of cultural rights, personal growth, social renewal through critique and flying signifiers of democracy:

> *All members of the society have the right to participate in and have access to creative experience. Self-determination through artistic expression is a vital component of a free society.*

> *Artistic expression is both a natural form of human communication and a powerful force for social criticism and innovation which should be integrated into all areas of society.*

> *The basis of Australian society lies to a significant extent in the strength of its own artistic and creative expression. Government has a responsibility to encourage the development of an Australian culture.*

The 'Platform's' key funding principles:

- excellence;

- equity;

- employment; and

- international image. (Ref. 44)

This, then, commences as an argument about inalienable rights, an argument which is primarily concerned with the opportunities conferred through citizenship. But it then shifts gear to a pragmatic means of ensuring the renewal of democracy through the circulation of new ideas, the gainful employment of people, and prospects for trade.

In announcing his government's rejection of a user-pays principle for culture, Malcolm Fraser stated that 'art is not something which can be judged by harsh economic criteria. I do not know of any country which pursues an adequate artistic talent and performance merely by adopting the user-pays principle'. (Ref. 45)

The arts are mixed commodities, because 'they confer benefits beyond the immediate participants'; but where is the connection between such logics and that of the ex-Premier who maintained 'that no city of any pretension to international status can lack an orchestra, an opera company, live theatre and performing arts generally'? (Ref. 46)

It is clear from successive governments' proclivities that the latter set of arguments, backed up by powerful interests in the opera and ballet fields, have operated within a different sphere of calculation from the economic or from notions of access. Repeated decisions have been made to give special funding to such areas. This belongs to arguments about aesthetic maturity propounded by, for example, the WA Department for the Arts in its recent advertising campaign, which preceded a list of conventional artistic forms with the following imperative: 'Imagine a world without ...' (Ref. 47)

Even P.P. McGuiness, prominent publicist for marginalist economics, continues to accept that:

> *The creation of a culture in which the arts are valued highly in social terms as distinct from what prices they attract may well be worthwhile; it is obviously important that the arts be measured by other than short-term commercial criteria.* (Ref. 48).

It remains to establish how this shifting amalgam of logics has been applied at particular times. Consideration of the film industry provides an example.

The Film Industry

The 1989 Film Australia documentary *Now You're Talking* includes footage from 1931 of Frank Forde, then the Minister for Trade and Resources, proclaiming that 'It has been truly said that trade follows film'. Forty years later, the Federal Government was beginning its now very developed record of funding fiction feature films because of a call for signs of national maturity. Sixty years later, it is doing so, in part, because of film's role as culture and tourism ambassador.

During the first five years of the 1970s, the Australian Film Development Corporation helped produce such films as *The Naked Bunyip,Stork* and the 'Barry McKenzie' and 'Alvin Purple' series. This was in the context of the 1969 Arts Council report which favoured the idea of forming a 'recognizable Australian genre' that would be demand-driven with small budgets designed to be re-couped within Australia.

As the 'ocker' films emerged, so came the criticism which derided the genre as embarrassing, unrepresentative and vulgar. Questions were asked in Parliament over whether the AFDC should be supporting these projects. Prime Minister Whitlam was accused of being an ocker nationalist.

Film institutions and Government reacted by pushing for an art cinema of 'culture and quality'. (Ref. 49) Hence the acclaim for *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and its subsequent uptake by the Australian Film Commission as a measure of value. With the eventual box-office problems confronted by the costume period drama, this taste brokerage itself fell into question. A division emerged a decade ago that set notions of quality against notions of markets as allocators of funds, with 'culturecrat' and consumer as the respective arbiters. Some of this tension emerged in the AFC's Special Production Fund Guidelines in 1983, which were designed to assists 'films of cultural merit which challenge viewers', versus the logic of 10BA, the section of the Tax Act introduced in the 1980s to give rebates to film production.

Of course, these tax concessions were not open slather. They in turn depended on the films being certified as Australian via a Minister through a series of non-aesthetic off-screen indicators to do with place of production, and nationality of key principals, holders of copyright and financiers. (Ref. 50)

Lastly, special pockets of film assistance such as the Women's Film Fund have been buttressed by the additional logic of affirmative action (Ref.51).

It can be seen, then, that logics of maturity, industry, equity and foreign exchange externalities have been mobilised at different times and places to argue for subvention.

Reforms of Assistance

The emerging power of neo-classical or marginalist economics as a credo in Australian public policy, together with material strictures on government spending, has led to increased scrutiny of structures, processes and results. This has caused problems for community arts funding in particular, where calls for excellence have become a key funding criterion. In 1987, the then Liberal Party spokesperson on the arts, Alexander Downer, said:

> A Liberal government doesn't regard grants for the Builders Labourers Federation's muralist in residence or for the Gay Mardi Gras as being within the bounds of community tolerance and consistent with its aspirations for Australia. (Ref. 52).

How relevant such rhetoric would be in office is another matter, since user-pays and operatic support, for example, do not fare well together, while 'excellence' is an awkward term, dependent in its application on the power of those using it. The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Expenditure's 'Inquiry into Commonwealth Assistance to the Arts' of 1986 addressed the Australia Council's tripartite logic of support: human heritage; acceptance of innovation; and access.

The Committee found that government expenditure on the arts was legitimate when done in the interests of national identity, 'cultural continuity', social critique and economic benefit. (Ref. 53)

In the seminar set up to evaluate the Committee's account of arts funding and its proposals for change, which amounted to a more developed Federalism and greater Ministerial participation in the direction of some funds, its view of art as an industry was criticised on the grounds that the ultimate *raison d'etre* of industries was money and/or power. This was contrasted with the arts as motivated by a desire to spread the truth, although it was acknowledged that money and power enter into that goal as processes. In this sense, it was argued, the arts could be rendered as being adjacent to religion. (Ref. 54)

In Donald Horne's words, 'When we talk about arts support policies we are talking about the meanings given to existence within a society'. (Ref. 55) But the dynamic of the interplay between old and new art is complex. (Ref. 56) Innovation can be alienating, and not only for a public. Underpinning the activities of bodies such as the Waste Watch Committee are principles of 'excellence' and 'relevance' which are rarely compatible.

Public Administration Principles

A combination of marginalist neo-classicism within the economics profession and worries about overloading government services has led to a new force in the formation of public policy: the search for extant or possible future markets. The emphasis has been on users paying for what they receive, based on an environment of which they have perfect knowledge and where pure competition reigns. Resources are allocated through the interplay of consumer preference and the costs of supply.

This global intellectual and policy shift has, in effect, been a shift from the notion of government creating, harnessing and satisfying demand to a model of citizens being – in large part – financially responsible for their proclivities and associated activities. Again, we can discern a shift away from a concept of the victim-like, passive person and towards a more fully achieved and self-determining individual as the fundamental unit underpinning this analysis.

Such a concentration would encourage us to divert policy initiatives into fields in which young people have already indicated some commitment. This builds on both an existing infrastructure and on a willingness to make some contribution towards the cost of a particular endeavour.

'Youth Arts' Policy Implications

To move into a mode that can both encourage new ways of conceiving of 'youth arts' and couch such conceptions in politically pragmatic ways it is necessary to marry them. We have, in this section of the paper, sought to identify some of the existing policy rhetorics and rationales which might need to be taken into account in this process.

So, for example, policies relating to video store and game parlour subvention/direction might need to be couched in terms of and managed by one or more of the following:

- surveying the field of youth cultures;

- assessing the prospects for picking up on extant areas of demand and redirecting them towards accepted goals of educational policy – eg., computer literacy and media experience;

- arguing the principles of such policies in ways that will meet the needs of particular listeners – relevance to/pleasure of young people;

- financial incentives to proprietors; and

- utility to public/cultural critics and educationalists.

GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH AND ARTS POLICIES

While it would be premature to identify clear policy objectives, we offer the following guidelines.

1. The criteria of what constitutes 'youth arts' needs to be reorganised according to young people's uses, attentions and involvements in cultural activity. This would include a reassessment of the relation between traditional arts and newly-recognised forms, either commercial or marginalised, to reduce hierarchical divisions between informal and professional practices and bring within institutional remit valid forms of cultural expression presently overlooked. It would enable a consideration of youth creativity across a plurality of sites, activities and groupings. Such a reassessment would also break down the conventional distinction between activities of performance/production and consumption, giving rise to policy mechanisms that would also reduce the hierarchy of professional and informal everyday practices.

2. 'Youth arts' policies should concern themselves with those forms of creativity and expression which require the manipulation of a recognised means of creative expression for a specific purpose – artistic, political – in a definite context which is or can be rendered amenable to definite forms of policy support.

3. Following from 1., it would be desirable to develop policy objectives and procedures capable of weighing and assessing the relative importance of different taste communities of those artforms and activities they prefer as determined by their own values and increasing the value to those concerned with the artistic activities in which they are engaged. This, however, should only be so where such activities are not oppressive of others or in conflict with the principles of a democratic and pluralist society.

4. Arts activities may be conceived as part of young people's involvement in the processes of citizenship and thus fall within the terms of public interest. This would imply policy objectives being oriented by a consideration of the fields to which young people have already shown their commitment, while considering the ways in which their activities can be treated as part of self-defining democratic citizenships. Such arguments would foreground young people's cultural rights in a context of the development of Australian culture.

5. The relation of arts institutions to the informal cultures practised by young people should be rethought according to the objectives of self-definition and autonomy. A model of arm's length funding should therefore be considered, which would devolve management to small groups, incorporating short term funding for individual projects with risk umbrellas allied to a longer term process of ongoing program support for diversified projects. The management and monitoring of these projects could be undertaken by representatives from youth communities who would act in consultation with funding bodies.

6. Arts institutions should be able to address the context of current commercial provision and its relation to young consumers by intervening in the operation of current market arrangements. This would mean developing a policy containing objectives and criteria for commercial commodity development and its interface with consumer activities. Such objectives could include the provision of educational incentives to commercial operators who encourage and extend autonomous youth participation by the provision of resources and employment in artistic production.

7. Differences between groupings of young people should be addressed and patterns of participation and expression be developed to rework existing relations of access and definition between different social categories so as to work against inequalities, limitations and invisibilities currently structuring informal as well as traditional cultures. For example, the sexual differences in participation in leisure and the arts should be addressed so that the non-public creative activities of young girls can be examined for their amenability to the purview of arts funding.

8. A focus on education in the arts – through formal and informal routes – should be provided in order that young people will have the greatest capacity for making knowledgeable decisions regarding their participation in work and leisure and develop a capacity for an active civic role.

9. As part of a project to recognise and extend the artistic participation of a broad range of youth groupings and to enhance knowledge and understanding of the creative activities of youth in the broader community, it may be desirable to establish central arts venues in existing sites of youth civic activity, eg., shopping centres. This would help to establish vigorous city communities within which the connections between artistic activity and other forms of public engagement could be made more visible. Finally, it is imperative that 'youth arts' policies should start from where young people are. It is clear where they are not. They are not in the art gallery, the art-cinema, theatre, opera or concert hall. Nor should it be assumed that this is a failing on their part or that the only reason to subsidise 'youth arts' is to attract young people to these cultural sites.

Evidence from elsewhere demonstrates the degree to which young people can be drawn into intellectually and artistically creative forms of involvement with their culture by means, for example, of the innovative use of photography. The experimental work of the Cockpit Arts Workshop in London is particularly worthy of mention, demonstrating the wide range of creative artistic involvements that can arise from using photography within the everyday cultural practices of young people. (Ref. 57)

It is, therefore, from initiatives of this kind that 'youth arts' policies should find their initial bearings.

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APPENDIX 1

CONSUMERS AND PRODUCERS: CURRENT RESEARCH ON AUDIENCES

The dividing line between audience and performance has become increasingly less vivid and distinct in recent times, because of a number of interrelated developments:

- the emergence of interactive video and television remote control;

- the resuscitation of market economics as a force in public policy; and

- new research approaches and findings.

These are, respectively, to do with:

- technological innovations with particular applications;

- constructions of rational (aka active) consumers as ideal-types in the formation of public administration principles; and

- concepts of audiences as participants, not passive recipients.

New Technology

The penetration of video cassette recorders into Australian households is well-documented. From a figure of 5% in 1982, something like 69% of people aged between 14 and 17 now live in a household that has a VCR. (Ref. 58) Associated developments of remote controls, blank and hired cassettes, have not only enabled greater viewer versatility in dealing with television programs, but may have altered family relations. The familiarity of young people with new technology often exceeds that of their parents, which makes for a change in the flow of knowledge and amount of use. Date from the United States suggests that the heaviest users are aged between 2 and 17. (Ref. 59)

Similarly, video game applications for computers have lessened the divide between education and entertainment, whilst video game parlours are locations specifically designated as sites of pleasure for young people deploying such technology. The kinds of moral panic associated with such parlours (wasting time, being available for sexual or narcotic seduction, encouraging violence, and anomie and competitiveness) are markedly similar to once-dominant and still-prevalent conceptions of media audiences as passive, vulnerable and impressionable. These vastly popular sites of public gathering do not draw any appreciation or public policy support/guidance for their function as places of youth mastery. They could, for example, perhaps be encouraged to develop interactive educational components or mixed media applications.

This question of mastery, of course, also arises within the issue of viewer versatility alluded to above. Advertisements can be avoided, programs recorded whilst watchers are out in the public domain and channels 'zapped' between in search of satisfactory programs edited together or repeated in slow motion: in short, the plasticity of the media is re-worked still further by the audience in a kind of game with the programs that is like the struggle that goes on within video games.

Audience Research

Paradigms of audience research have gone through many changes over the past fifty years. It is possible to discern particular trends which recur at different times:

- the psychological approach, which concentrates on laboratory testing, devlopmental assumptions about personal growth and, often, concepts of role, gratification of needs and the operation of the subconscious.

- the mass society approach, which views the media as a huge, homogenising entity that appeals to – and in some sense forms – the lowest common denominator or popular taste, intellectual laziness and discouragement of a critical or creative individualism.

- the encoding/decoding approach, which stresses the process of the manufacture and interpretation of meaning, concentrating on what messages are put into a given program, how the medium of transmission in part determines the form and content of that message and how its meanings are rendered by audience members through the deployment of interpretative techniques, beliefs and social influences.

This last model takes the audience to be an active participant in the making of meanings; not just at the stage where senders are encoding information and second-guessing their markets, but also at the points where the 'finished' project is being received.

Many soap operas have been analysed this way. The audience of *Prisoner*, for instance, included teenage working class children who were seen to be 'using it subversively against the role-bound culture and institutions of the school'. In some sense, then, the message is incomplete until it has been received and rendered into a new sense.

Such an approach encourages us to take both the specific content of messages seriously, and the processes and manufactures which audiences produce in making sense of messages.

It also directs us to disaggregate the concept of the audience in terms of different cultural protocols used by audience members as determined by age, gender, ethnicity and other demographic or educative factors. (People may identify and operate along other coordinates than those decreed by their decades of birth.)

This is a powerful trend in research methods, despite the continued taste for a psychological approach to media effects (for example, that pornography provokes rape). (Ref. 60) It is no accident that Britain's News Broadcasting Standards Council, appointed to police screen morals, is dominated in the background of its membership by psychiatry, religion and headmastery.

The tension between that moral panic approach and the active audience one has not only existed at an academic level. TV entreprenuers, for example, have mobilised a free-market logic in arguing that they act simply to meet the needs of a rational consumer.

APPENDIX 2

THE GULBENKIAN INQUIRY: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations flowing from the studies initiated under Gulbenkian Inquiry are organised around a project of developing fully-formed autonomous cultural citizens through the encouragement and development of the informal artistic practices of youth communities. This is to be seen as a 'contribution to the cultural development and emancipation in general' of young people.

This requires that resources be made available for the support of practices, providing 'the widest possible range of symbolic resources and materials through which people can symbolically express their intentions, attitudes and hopes'. The policy imperatives should aim to enhance creative consumption in ordinary common cultures and the performance of aesthetics grounded in the needs and functions of everyday life. This would include the 'provision of general conditions and spaces that can allow young people's cultural practices to flourish', let them see beyond the immediate requirements and contradictions of work, family and the dole', 'to create the supportive environmental, economic and social conditions which enable them to do better and more creatively what they do already'.

1. As commercial cultures are already in place and arts institutions cannot aim to compete with their production, these imperatives should be organised around the address to young people as consumers first.

2. A more 'general lubrication' between everyday forms and formally recognised practices should make the passage from the role of consumers to producer easier.

3. The 'high' arts should be more available 'in practical conditions of material, social and psychological access to informality and to the creative informal meanings of symbolic work'.

4. That a principle of youth representation be adopted for decision making in media institutions across programs for all social groups.

5. That youth policy objectives be adopted by a whole variety of agencies, especially those who are able to provide a series of audio-visual spaces 'in which plural forms of expression and understanding can co-exist'.

6. Educational institutions at all levels should provide cultural centres and resources and integrate cultural activities into the classroom in curricula and other forms.

7. Training programs should recognise the informal cultural productions of young people and their relevance to the culture industries. Musical training should be prioritised for its widespread practice and relevance to young people's cultural activities.

8. Informal educational modes should be used for their 'protected forms of socialisation', 'giving youth autonomy and control of assets and resources by and for young people.'

9. Entertainment zones should be developed where venues and facilities are concentrated to allow greatest access and involvement to sociable forms of communication.

10. Institutional organisations should find more indirect, less structured, more democratic means for their operation. This does not preclude 'some form of formality or organisation', but informal institutional modes should be based in communities and collectivities forming out of patterns in shared symbolic work and creativity.

11. A de-centred form of management should be established, providing protected spaces for sociability and communication, staffed and represented by young people, and including consultation with youth communities on the 'design, organisation, appearance and human reception systems'. They should provide access ('free, guiltless use'), choice and variety in 'activities, space, hardware and software to the limits of practicability'.

12. Informal communities should grow from self-direction, from what gives pleasure, satisfies or promotes desire, from 'fun', from the shared passions of what really motivates and energises individuals.

13. 'Everything that can be reasonably left to the individual or small group should be' to produce a 'multiplicity of providers' of the 'minimum practical' size, enjoying 'no privileged

guarantee of their survival beyond that of expressed popular demand for their services'. A system of risk umbrellas should be established so that no detriment to such groups and practices should be sustained through withdrawal of funding.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

INTRODUCTION

1   On the twentieth century and history and emergence of the modern categories of youth and teenager, see Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (Eds), *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Sub-cultures in Post-war Britain*, London, Hutchinson, 1976, and Thomas Doherty, *Teenager and Teenpics: The Juvenilisation of American Movies in the 1950s*, Boston, Unwin Hyman, 1988. For the longer history of the development of modern forms of age distinction, see Phillippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, New York, Knoff, 1962.

2   Tim Rowse, *Arguing the Arts: The Funding of the Arts in Australia*, Ringwood, Penguin Books, 1985.

3   See Gay Hawkins, 'Reading Community Arts Policy: From Nimbin to the Gay Mardi Gras' *Media Information Australia*, No.53, August, 1989.

4   *Power, Patronage and the Muse: Inquiry into Commonwealth Assistance to the Arts*, The Report of the House of Representatives: Standing Committee on Expenditure, Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Services, 1986 and *Folklife: Our Living Heritag - Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Folklife in Australia*, Canberra, Government Publishing Service, 1987. The implications of these two Reports for 'youth arts' policies are, however, strikingly different. The former raises many issues that would bear close examination in any re-ordering of priorities for 'youth arts' support that might stem from a policy commitment to non-aesthetic conceptions of the arts. This is especially true of its discussion of the mis-match between the funding priorities of the Australia Council's Performing Arts Board (formerly the Music Board) dedicated almost exclusively to classical music, and the actual musical tastes of the vast majority of young people, dedicated almost exclusively to rock 'n' roll. *Folklife: Our Living Heritage* is equally instructive, although largely in illustrating the negative consequences that can result when a governmental inquiry allows its definitional concerns to be tendentially driven by a particular lobby group.

5   See the *Annual Report 1988-1989*, Australia Council Sydney, Bloxham and Chambers, 1989, p. 30 for a breakdown of funding spent on the opera, ballet, theatre and orchestras. Drama received the highest proportion of funding at 23%, whilst the Australian Opera received 19%. The total proportion of funding allocated to the 'high' arts in 1988-1989 was 43% (this figure excludes the funding for drama). A similar pattern can be located in the 1987-88 figures of 59%. See, for example, the allocation graphs, P. 57 of *The Arts: Some Australian Data (3rd Edition)*, Australia Council, North Sydney, 1989. When these figures are placed against the attendance figures, P. 44 of *The Arts: Some Australian Data (3rd Edition)*, a mismatch appears. In 1987 only 3% of people aged fourteen and over attended live theatre, music recitals or the opera. Other sources also point to the fact that a large percentage of the population were unable to attend the opera, theatre or music recitals. See, for example, DASETT's *Recreation Participation Survey October/November 1987*, Department of Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories, 1988. Table 17 states that 22.9% of the population were unable to make use of these facilities because they could not afford to do so, and 48.2% stated that they had not spent time at live theatre, music recitals, or the opera because they were too busy.

YOUTH AND AESTHETICS

6   For brief, synoptic accounts of the development of the modern uses of the terms art and culture, see Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* London, Fontana,

1976. A more detailed historical account and critique of the emergence of aesthetic conceptions of art is Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1990.

7   The first modern use of aesthetics is conventionally attributed to the publication, in 1750, of Alexander Baumgarten's *Aesthetica*.

8   For some remarks on the relations between the development of nineteenth century conceptions of aesthetic education and the emergence of modern notions of youth, see Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*, London, Verso, 1987.

9   The most influential social critique of aesthetics is Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Cambridge Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1984.

10   For a fuller elaboration of this argument, see Tony Bennett, 'Really Useless Knowledge: A Political Critique of Aesthetics', *Thesis 11*, No12, 1985.

11   For examples of the use of these arguments in the nineteenth century British context, see Nicholas Pearson, *The State and the Visual Arts: A Discussion of State Intervention in the Visual Arts in Britain, 1760-1981*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press, and Janet Minihan, *The Nationalization of Culture: The Development of State Subsidies to the Arts in Great Britain*, London, H Hamilton, 1977.

12   This is the aspect of nineteenth century definitions of art and culture stressed in Raymond Williams' various accounts. See, apart from *Keywords*, his discussion of 'The idea of culture' in P Davison, R Myersohn and E Shils (Eds), *Culture and Mass Culture*, Cambridge, Chadwyck-Healey, 1978.

13   For a brief statement of this position, see Ian Hunter, 'Setting Limits to Culture', *New Formations*, No.4, 1988.

14   Cited in, respectively, Pearson, *op. cit*, p. 18 and A S and H L Cole, *Fifty Years of Public Work of Sir Henry Cole... Accounted for in His Deeds, Speeches and Writings, Volume 1*, London, George Bell and Sons, p. 356, 1884.

15   Cited in Brian Doyle, *English and Englishness*, London, Routledge, 1989, p. 54. For critical discussions of the rise of literary education drawing on the perspectives summarised here, see, for Australia, Denise Meredyth, 'Anxiety Over Assessment: A History of the Complaint', *Cultural Policy Studies, Occasional Paper, No. 8*, Institute for Cultural Policy Studies, Griffith University, 1989 and for Britain, Ian Hunter, *Culture and Government: The Emergence of Literary Education*, London, Macmillan, 1988.

16   See, on the question of gendered hierarchies of the arts, Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1981.

17   A classic example of this construction of 'youth in danger' is contained in Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1970.

18   See, for Australia: Mark Finnane, 'Censorship and the Child: explaining the comics campaign', *Australian Historical Studies*, No.92, April, 1989; and, 'Censorship and Conservatism: An Historical Case for Conceptual Divorce', *Australian-Canadian Studies*, Vol. 7, 1989. For Canada: A Brannigan, 'Delinquency, Comics and Legislative Reactions: An Analysis of Obscenity Law Reform in Post-War Canada and Victoria', *Australian-Canadian Studies*, Vol. 3, 1986, pp. 53-59 and 'Crimes from Comics: Social and Political Determinants of Reform of the Victorian Obscenity Law 1938-1954', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 9, 1986, pp. 23-42. For Britain: Martin Barket, *A Haunt of Fear. The Strange History of the British Horror Comics Campaign*, London, Pluto Press, 1984.

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19   Doyle, *op.cit.*, offers an example of this argument in relation to literature and schooling. For a discussion of its bearing on museums, see Tony Bennett, 'Museums and Public Culture', *Media Information Australia*, No. 53, August, 1989.

20   Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *The Inheritors: French Students and Their Relation to Culture*, translated by Richard Nice, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1979.

21   See, for a useful summary of these issues, J M Barbalet, *Citizenship: Rights, Struggle and Class Inequality*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 1988.

22   The phrase 'whole ways of life' is Raymond Williams'. Its influence has, however, been more general – particularly on the development of approaches to the study of youth cultures in Britain and Australia.

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23   *City Centres, City Cultures*, Centre for Local Economic Strategies, London, Comedia, 1988, pp. 22-23.

24   Ibid, p 23.

25   See M Morris, 'Things to do With Shopping Centres in S Sheridan (Ed), *Crafts: Feminist Cultural Criticism*, London, Verso, 1988 and J Fiske, B Hodge and G Turner, *Myths of Oz*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1987.

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26   The research conducted in youth is almost exclusively related to the labour market and to social problems, ie., delinquency, drugs and homelessness. As such, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reports are restricted to demographics of employment, housing and crime, etc., and the main journal on Australian youth, *Youth Studies*, is likewise slanted towards welfare (however, see Youth Studies Vol. 10, No. 2, May 1991 on Youth and the Media).

27   For example, J Walker's *Lotus and Legends* Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1988.

28   This itself is problematic. In the government paper *Ethnic Youth: Their Assets and Aspirations*, Canberra, Australian Government Printing Service, 1987, it is argued that by the time ethnic young people reach school leaving age, they have generally distanced themselves from the parent culture. Few are members of ethnic youth clubs, in which culturally specific creative activities are likely to be fostered.

POLICY RATIONALES AND RHETORICS

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30   Joan Rydon and Diane Mackay. 'Federalism and the Arts', *Australian Cultural History*, Vol. 3, 1984, pp. 87-99.

31   Tim Rowse. *Arguing the Arts: The Funding of the Arts in Australia*, Ringwood, Vic., Penguin, 1985.

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33   *Ibid*, pp. 35, 37, 41.

34   Philip J Grossman and Peter Kenyon 'Artists' Subsidy of the Arts: Comment', *Australian Economic Papers*, Vol. 28, No. 53, 1989, pp. 280-287.

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36   'The Corporate Collector' *Australian Director* March/April, 1988, pp. 28-35.

37   *Ibid*, p. 28.

38   Anise C Wallace, 'Funds Looking at Art as an Investment', *Australian Financial Review*, 27 April, 1989, p. 44.

39   James Bartholomew, 'Pictures of Wealth', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Vol. 147, No. 1, 1990. p. 25

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41   Glenn Withers, 'Principles of Government Support of the Arts', *Australian Cultural History*, Vol. 1, 1981, pp. 53- 58.

42   *Australian Labor Party Platform, Resolutions and Rules*, ALP, Canberra, 1986.

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45   WA Department for the Arts, Advertisement, *The Australian*, 4 August, 1989, 'Special Report', p. 2.

46   Padraic P McGuiness, 'Artists Should be Told to Get Themselves a Real Job, *The Australian*, 25 October, 1989, p. 2.

47   Tom O'Regan, 'Cinema Oz: The Ocker Films' in Albert Moran and Tom O'Regan (Eds) *The Australian Screen*, Ringwood, Vic., 1989, pp. 75-98.

48   Elizabeth Jacka, 'The Industry', in Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka (Eds) *The Imaginary Industry: Australian Film in the Late '80s*, AFTRS, Sydney, 1988, pp. 5-64,

49   Rowse, *op.cit.* p. 20.

50   Anderson, *op.cit.*, pp. 128,142.

51   Anderson, *op.cit.*, pp. 134,136.

50   Philip Parsons (Ed), *Shooting the Pianist: The Role of Government in the Arts*, Currency Press, Sydney, 1987.

51   *Ibid*, p. 50.

52   Sonia S Gold, 'Policy and Administrative Change in the Arts in Australia', *Prometheus* Vol. 5, No. 1, 1987, pp. 146- 154.

GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH AND ARTS POLICIES

53   The work at the Cockpit Arts Workshop in London is especially interesting in this regard. See, for a full account, Andrew Dewdney and Martin Lister, *Youth, Culture and Photography*, London, Macmillan, 1988.

APPENDIX 1

CONSUMERS AND PRODUCERS: CURRENT RESEARCH ON AUDIENCES

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55   Jonathan B Sims, VCR Viewing Patterns: An Electronic and Passive Investigation, *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1989, pp. 11-17.

56   'Pornography Studies: The Second Wave – a Review Essay' by Augustine Brannigan and Sheldon Goldenberg, *Law in Context*, Vol. 5, 1987, pp. 56-72, or Peter Bentley's 'Responding to the Male Violence of our Visual Culture', *National Outlook: An Australian Christian Monthly* ,10:3 1988, pp. 26-28.