

Australian Multicultural Foundation

Ethnic Youth Gangs in Australia
Do They Exist?

Report No. 3
Pacific Islander Young People

by
Rob White
Santina Perrone
Carmel Guerra
Rosario Lampugnani

1999

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the young people who took time to speak with us about their lives, opinions and circumstances. Their participation ought to be an essential part of any research of this nature.

Particular thanks goes to Katrina Bottomley, and to Peter Paa'paa', for making contact with the young people and for undertaking the interviews.

The Criminology Department at the University of Melbourne hosted the research project, and we are most appreciative of the staff support, office space and resources provided by the Department.

Thanks are due to the Australian Multicultural Foundation for financial support, information and advice, and for ensuring that the project was able to continue to completion. We are also grateful to the National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau for financial support.

About the Authors

Rob White is an Associate Professor in Sociology/Law at the University of Tasmania (on secondment from Criminology at the University of Melbourne). He has written extensively in the areas of youth studies, criminology and social policy.

Santina Perrone is a Research Analyst with the Australian Institute of Criminology where she is currently working in the areas of workplace violence, and crime against business. During the period of the present study, she was a lecturer and researcher in the Department of Criminology at the University of Melbourne.

Carmel Guerra is the Coordinator of the Ethnic Youth Issues Network of Victoria. She has been involved in youth affairs for a number of years, with a particular interest in multiculturalism and anti-racist youth work.

Rosario Lampugnani works in the Department of Immigration, and was previously a Senior Researcher with the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research. He has had a long-standing interest in sociological research relating to migrant experiences, multiculturalism and immigration issues.

Contents

Acknowledgements

Part 1: Background to the Research	1
1.1 Introduction	2
1.2 The Study	4
1.3 The Notion of Youth Gangs	8
1.4 Research Contribution	18
Part 2: Pacific Islander Young People.....	16
2.1 Social History	17
2.2 Profile of Youth Interviewed	20
2.3 Sources of Income	21
2.4 Youth Gangs.....	25
2.5 Problems & Solutions	34
2.6 Conclusion.....	37
2.7 Recommendations.....	39
2.8 References.....	42

List of Tables

Table 1:	Sources of Income for Young People Interviewed.....	22
Table 2:	Ways in Which Young People Spend Their Money.....	23
Table 3:	Interviewees’ Perceptions of the Types of Illegal Activity In Which Young People Engage for Money.....	24
Table 4:	Interviewees’ Perceptions of the Types of Illegal Activity (not for the purposes of money) in Which Young People Engage	25
Table 5:	Young People’s Perceptions of What Young People’s Groups Have in Common with each Other.....	26
Table 6:	Characteristics By Which the Young People Defined Gangs	27
Table 7:	Young People’s Perceptions of Why Young People Join Gangs	29
Table 8:	Young People’s Perceptions of the Different Groups that Get Involved in Gang Fights.....	32
Table 9:	Young People’s Perceptions of How Gangs Are a Problem in School.....	33
Table 10:	Young People’s Perceptions of What the Government can Do about Gangs	37

Part 1:
Background to the Research

1.1 Introduction

The present report is one of six reports which present findings from a study of 'ethnic youth gangs' in the Melbourne metropolitan area over the period 1996-1998. The six reports in this series include:

- No.1 Vietnamese Young People
- No.2 Turkish Young People
- No.3 Pacific Islander Young People
- No.4 Somalian Young People
- No.5 Latin American Young People
- No.6 Anglo Australian Young People

In addition to these reports, which deal with specific groups of ethnic minority and Anglo Australian young people, there is also a broad overview report. The latter report presents the overall findings of the study, and involves comparisons between the different groups as well as highlighting common features. The overview report also discusses further the general issues relating to perceptions of, and responses to, 'youth gangs' in the context of a culturally diverse society.

i. Ethnic Minority Youth

For present purposes the term *ethnic minority* refers to non-Anglo Australians who are non-indigenous (Zelinka, 1995). Australia is a polyethnic society, with a population comprised of over 100 different countries and speaking over 150 different languages. While ethnically, religiously and culturally diverse, it is nevertheless the case that Australia remains dominated by the majority Anglo-Australian population and that particular non-Anglo groups thereby have 'minority' status (Guerra & White, 1995). This is reflected in a number of different ways, in terms of culture, economic patterns and institutional arrangements (see Jamrozik, Boland & Urquhart, 1995).

To appreciate fully the situation of ethnic minority young people, analysis also has to be sensitive to the diversity of backgrounds and life circumstances of different young people. It is worth noting in this regard that the migrant experience varies considerably. It depends upon such factors as time period of migration (e.g., job opportunities in the 1950s versus high unemployment in the post-1974 period), place of origin and circumstances of migration (e.g., war refugees, flight from an authoritarian regime), relationship between first and subsequent generations (e.g., conflicting values) and availability of appropriate services (e.g., settlement, English-language courses). Particular groups of ethnic minority young people, such as unattached refugee children, are more likely to experience disadvantage, for example, than young people with well established family and community networks.

The notion of *ethnic youth gangs* has featured prominently in media reports of youth activities over the last few years. Around the country, tales are told of ethnic-based or multi-racial groups of young people being involved in a wide range of illegal, criminal and anti-social activities (see, for example, Healey, 1996). Allegations of a 'Lebanese youth gang' participating in a drive-by shooting of a police station in Sydney in 1998 is but a recent example of the kind of media coverage and public outcry relating to ethnic minority youth in Australia today.

The police, too, have expressed considerable concern over a perceived rise in ethnic youth involvement in crime, and in particular, serious crimes such as heroin and other drug dealing. This is reflected to some extent in figures relating to the increasing number of Indo-Chinese young people held in detention in New South Wales on drug offences (Cain, 1994).

Concern has also been expressed by the police and others that the relationship between ethnic minority young people and the police at the street level is deteriorating. This was reflected in the first National Summit on Police Ethnic Youth Relations held in Melbourne in 1995, and is a topic raised in several recent academic and community reports on police-youth interaction (Youth Justice Coalition, 1994; White, 1996; Maher, Dixon, Swift & Nguyen, 1997).

While media and police concern over 'ethnic youth gangs' has appeared to be on the rise, there has in fact been very little empirical information regarding the actual activities of ethnic minority young people (but see Guerra & White, 1995; Pe-Pua, 1996). Specifically, little is known about the *demographic characteristics* of the ethnic minority people in question – for example, their ages, gender composition, level of education, employment status, socio-economic background and migration experiences. Nor do we know much about what they do with their time, and where they spend it. This is particularly the case with respect to young women of ethnic minority background.

Even less is known about those ethnic minority young people allegedly involved in drug-related activities and other kinds of offending behaviour. Concern has been raised regarding state responsibilities to collect relevant data on these issues (see Cunneen, 1994), but to date there has been a dearth of systematic statistical material regarding welfare, criminal justice and employment trends in relation to these young people. Within the criminal justice sphere specifically, there has, however, been some movement toward analysis of the nature and extent of ethnic minority youth offending (Easteal, 1997), to examine sentencing disparities in relation to the ethnicity of juvenile offenders (Gallagher & Poletti, 1998) and to consider the special requirements of ethnic minority offenders held in detention (NSW Ombudsman, 1996). However, much more study and conceptual work is needed if we are to appreciate fully the place of ethnic minority youth in the criminal justice system, and the reasons for their involvement with this system.

The limited work which has been undertaken in the area of ethnic minority group experiences has nevertheless indicated that there are strong *social reasons* and *economic forces* which are propelling increasing numbers of these young people into extremely vulnerable circumstances (Lyons, 1994; Guerra & White, 1995). A number of factors are seen to affect their social development and integration into mainstream Australian society – including, for example, conflicts between their parents' expectations and their own behaviour and lifestyle choices; lack of parents; homelessness; unemployment; illiteracy and semi-literacy; poor self-esteem; racism; stress and trauma associated with settling into a new country; trying to adjust to a different cultural environment; language difficulties; and so on (Byrne, 1995; Moss, 1993; Pe-Pua, 1996).

ii. Diverse Assumptions

The published material on ethnic minority young people tends to be based upon a number of diverse and at times competing assumptions. For instance, on the one hand, they

themselves are seen as *the problem*. This is usually the substance of media stories and sometimes police reports about 'ethnic youth gangs'.

On the other hand, assumptions are also made regarding the *problems experienced* by these young people. In particular, mention is made of their poor economic and social status, their position as refugees or recent migrants, and difficulties associated with family life.

A third area where assumptions are made relates to the *consequences* of allowing such ethnic youth gangs to exist and operate in the wider community. Much attention, for instance, is given to the need for coercive police methods to rein in gang activity. Issues of police resources, special units and police powers are at the centre of these discussions.

Others argue that much more is needed to support the young people before they are forced into a position of committing crime for either economic reasons, or to establish a sense of communal identity with their peers. Discussion here might centre on changes to immigration settlement policy and services, and the concentration of particular ethnic groups in specific geographical areas.

A further issue which is occasionally raised in relation to 'ethnic youth gangs' are the costs associated with their activities and visible presence in some communities. Reference can be made here to things such as the direct costs of crime (e.g., property damage, losses due to theft, social and health costs); the costs of crime control and security (e.g., policing, private security guards and systems); the costs to business (e.g., negative media attention leading to damaged reputation of some commercial districts); and the costs to specific ethnic minority communities (e.g., the fostering of negative stereotypes based on the actions of a few).

The assumptions made about ethnic minority young people have direct consequences for the *development of appropriate strategies* to deal with issues relevant to their livelihood and lifestyles.

Rather than responding to media images and unsubstantiated assumptions regarding youth behaviour and activity, it is essential therefore to frame policy and service-provision on the basis of grounded knowledge. For example, whether a coercive or a developmental strategy is called for, or a mix of the two, really depends upon what is actually happening in the lives of the specific ethnic minority group in question. Fundamentally, this is a matter of research – of talking with the young people directly.

1.2 The Study

The specific impetus for the present study arose from media and political concerns over 'ethnic youth gangs' in Melbourne in the early 1990s. An informal meeting of youth and community workers, academics, and government representatives was held in 1994 to discuss the rise in public attention on this issue, and to consider whether or not there was in fact such a problem in this city. What emerged from this meeting was a general acknowledgement that there was a lack of systematic research on 'ethnic youth gangs', and thus the moral panic over so called gangs had largely been untested empirically. Nevertheless, there was a generally shared feeling that many of the young people in ethnic minority communities were experiencing major economic and social difficulties. It was also pointed out that there were periodic conflicts between different groups of young people, and that in some instances

criminal or illegal activity was occurring, although not necessarily within a 'gang' setting or structure. It was decided that more research was needed on these issues.

Initially, the instigation for, and organisation of, research in this area was carried out by the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research. The Bureau began to gather information about ethnic minority involvement in gang-related activity and crime, in Australia and overseas. A research advisory team was put together to contribute and oversee the project. However, with the closing of the Bureau's Melbourne office in 1996, the project was forced to go elsewhere for financial and community support. The Australian Multicultural Foundation, and the National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau, met with the research team and after careful consideration of the study proposal, provided the resources necessary for the undertaking of the research.

i. Aims of Research

The *aims of the research* were:

- To develop a workable and precise definition of 'gang' in the Australian context, and to distinguish group and gang activity
- To explore the perspectives of young people regarding youth activities, according to:
 - i) 'ethnic' versus 'non-ethnic' [i.e., Anglo Australian] background
 - ii) gang versus non-gang membership and activities
 - iii) diversity of religious and cultural influences within and between various ethnic minority groups, and how this affects gang membership and activity
- To examine the specific place and role of young women in the context of gang membership and activity
- To develop a description of the social background of gang members, including such things as age, gender, ethnicity, level of education, employment status, socio-economic background and migrant experience
- To identify the types of activities engaged in by gangs/groups of ethnic minority young people, and where illegal or criminal activity fits into their overall activities
- To explore possible underlying causes for gang membership, and any common themes regarding background experiences and difficulties
- To obtain information on how welfare, educational and police officials respond to the needs, and activities, of ethnic minority young people, including gang members
- To provide possible strategies and programme directions which will assist ethnic minority young people and the wider communities dealing with gang-related issues.

Importantly, in devising these research questions, the team was highly conscious that a central question would have to be answered: namely, *do ethnic youth gangs exist?* As the discussion in the following section indicates, the existing material on youth gangs in Australia renders this question somewhat contentious. This is so because of the different definitions used in relation to the term 'gang', and the diverse types of group formation among young people, not all of which may signify gang-like behaviour or social relationships.

The research team was also motivated by a desire to deal with issues surrounding the perceptions and activities of ethnic minority youth in a *socially constructive* manner. For example, given anecdotal and existing academic knowledge about the marginalised situation of some ethnic minority young people, an important consideration of the research was to assist in devising ways to promote policies which are socially inclusive.

ii. Methods of Research

The *research methodology* adopted for the study consisted of:

- Review of relevant Australian and overseas literature on youth gangs and ‘ethnic youth gangs’
- Collection of information and relevant statistical data on ethnic young people in Australia, with a special focus on Melbourne
- Interviews with 20 young people across 5 different areas of Melbourne (for a total of 100 young people) which have reportedly a high incidence of ‘ethnic youth gang’ activity
- The main sample of young people was comprised of youth aged 15 to 25, with the main focus of attention on the ‘dominant’ ethnic groups in particular regions
- Interviews with 20 young people with an Anglo Australian background, in order to make comparisons with the ethnic minority young people
- The utilisation of youth and community workers to contact and conduct the interviews, so as to have the best available knowledge and expertise when it comes to street-level group formations and interactions.

While specific local areas were the initial focus for the research, on the assumption that certain ethnic minority groups tended to reside or hang around in these locales (e.g., Vietnamese youth in Footscray), we discovered early on in the research that a more sophisticated and complex pattern of movement often took place. Indeed, it was often the case that there were certain corridors within the metropolitan area within which the young people moved, and that while these were not suburb specific, they did range in specific territorial directions (e.g., fanning out from the city centre toward the Western suburbs for one group; mainly concentrated along the coastal beaches for another group). In addition, many of the young people spoken with did not in fact live in the place within which they spent the most time.

In recruiting interviewers, care was taken to ensure that, where possible, the person spoke the first language of the target group and/or they had prior contact with or were members of the particular ethnic minority community. To ensure consistency in the interview approach and technique, each interviewer was briefed on the project, and was provided with information kits which described the ethics and procedures of undertaking research of this nature. In some cases, the interviewers were de-briefed about their interaction with the young people.

The research was informed by the basic principles of ethical social research. These include an emphasis on ‘voluntary consent’ to participate, ‘anonymity’ of information sources, and complete ‘confidentiality’ of the participant and their contribution to the research project. Due care was taken to protect the privacy and rights of each participant. In addition, a ‘plain

language' statement was prepared, as well as a 'consent' form, and each participant was briefed fully on the nature of the project and their role in the research process.

There was considerable variation in how the samples of young people were selected, and in the nature of the interviewer-young person relationship. As much as anything this had to do with the contingencies of social research of this kind: the diverse communities and the sensitivity of the subject matter was bound to complicate sample selection and the interview process in varying ways.

The specific sample groups for each defined ethnic youth population were selected and interviewed according to the social connections and research opportunities of each community-based interviewer. The Anglo-Australian young people, for example, were selected at random, and were drawn from local schools, and from the local shopping centre. The Vietnamese sample was based upon prior contacts established by the interviewer, who had had extensive experience in working with and within the community. The Somalian sample was comprised of individuals chosen at random on the street, and recruitment of primarily female respondents through friendship networks (this form of sample selection was influenced by the nature of gender relations within the community, especially as this relates to street-frequenting activity). The Pacific Islander sample was shaped by the fact that two separate interviewers were involved, each of whom tapped into different groups of young people. In the one case, the young people who were interviewed tended to be involved in church-related networks and activities; in the other, the sample was mainly drawn from young people who were severely disadvantaged economically and who had experienced major family difficulties. Two interviewers were also involved with the Latin American young people. Each interviewer had difficulties in obtaining random samples due to the reluctance of individuals and agencies to participate in the project. Accordingly, the sample was constructed mainly through family members and friends who assisted in the process of making contact with potential subjects. The Turkish sample likewise involved two interviewers, reflecting the cultural mores of having a male interview young men, and a female interview young women. Again, family and friends were used extensively in recruitment of interview subjects.

The composition of the sample, and the dynamics of the interview process, were thus bound to be quite different depending upon the group in question. It is for this reason that direct comparisons between the groups needs to be placed into appropriate methodological as well as social contexts. Methodologically, it is important therefore to acknowledge that the prior research background and ethnic background of each interviewer will inevitably play a role in facilitating or hindering the sample selection and information gathering processes. The presence or absence of guardians, the closeness to or distance from the young person's family on the part of the interviewer, and the basic level of familiarity or trust between interviewer and interviewee, will all affect the research process.

So too will the social experiences and social position of the particular group in question. For example, in cases where the interviewer was not known to a particular migrant family, the young people (and their parents) tended to be suspicious about what was going on: suspecting that perhaps the interviewer was a government employee sent by child protection services to determine the fitness of the family to raise children. In another instance, there was longstanding antagonism between the particular ethnic minority young people and Anglo

Australians. Given that one of the interviewers was Anglo Australian, and given the high degree of intervention into their lives by social welfare agencies of various kinds, some of the young people may have been very suspicious of the questions being asked. There were also instances where young people may have been reluctant to speak about certain matters. This was most apparent in the case of some refugees who were deeply suspicious regarding questions about authority figures such as the police. In a similar vein, the notion of 'gangs' was also culturally bounded for many refugees from war-torn countries. In their experience, 'gang' referred to men brandishing weapons, who roam the streets robbing people, pilfering, raping and engaging in all manner of serious offence, including murder. Such 'gangs' clearly do not exist in Australia.

The research process was very complex and required that we take into account a wide range of methodological and social issues. While there was considerable variation in the sampling and interview contexts, nevertheless the research findings indicate strong lines of *commonality* across the diverse groups. In other words, regardless of specific methodological differences and variations, the information conveyed through the interviews proved to be remarkably similar and consistent across the sample groups. The approach adopted for this study has generated important information about the youth gang issues. We also feel that it provides a useful template for future research of this kind, taking into account the limitations and strengths of the present study.

1.3 The Notion of Youth Gangs

The term 'gang' is highly emotive. Yet, rarely does it have a fixed definition in terms of social use or legal meaning. It can be used to cover any group and any kind of activity engaged in by young people, such as 'hanging out' together. Or, in a more specific sense, it may just refer to those young people who combine together on a regular basis for the purposes of criminal activity. It may be associated with groups which act to defend a particular patch or territory from other young people, including the use of violent means. It may simply refer to any type of illegal or criminal activity engaged in by young people acting in groups. The notion of gang can mean different things to different people. Imprecise definitions and perceptions of young people based on stereotypes, however, often feature prominently in media treatments of ethnic minority youth. Drawing upon material presented in a recent major report on young people and public space, the following discussions examine the nature of youth gangs in greater detail (see White, 1999).

i. Criminal Youth Gangs

Much of the public consternation over youth gangs seems to be driven by images of 'colour gangs' in the United States. Close examination of the Australian social landscape, however, makes it hard to substantiate the presence of such gangs in this country. Nevertheless, the presence of large groups of young people on the street, or young people dressed in particular ways or with particular group affiliations, appears to have fostered the idea that we, too, have a gang problem.

There certainly is a long tradition of gang research in the United States (see for example, Miller, 1975; Huff, 1996; Sanders, 1994; Klein, Maxson & Miller, 1995). There appears to be good reason for this. A survey of police departments in 1992 across the USA, for example,

found that (Curry, Ball & Fox, 1994: 1):

- gangs are a problem in the overwhelming majority of large and small US cities surveyed
- gang-related crime is above all a violent crime problem, with homicide and other violent crimes accounting for about half of all recorded gang-related crime incidents
- the proportion of females in gangs and committing gang-related crime is relatively small
- although the overwhelming majority of gang members are black or Hispanic, the proportion of white youth involvement is increasing

While discussions and debate continues over the precise definition of a gang, as defined by different police organisations and by sociologists, the key element in the American definitions is that of violent or criminal behaviour as a major activity of group members. From this point onward, however, the definitions vary considerably. Sanders (1994: 20) provides an example of a contemporary attempt to differentiate different types of groups (such as skinhead hate groups) according to the following criteria:

A youth gang is any transpersonal group of youths that shows a willingness to use deadly violence to claim and defend territory, and attack rival gangs, extort or rob money, or engage in other criminal behavior as an activity associated with its group, and is recognized by itself and its immediate community as a distinct dangerous entity. The basic structure of gangs is one of age and gender differentiation, and leadership is informal and multiple.

Statistically (through recorded incidents of, for example, youth homicide rates), experientially (through visible street presence, such as use of 'colours' as symbolic markers) and in popular knowledge (through media reportage of events and groups, and fictional film accounts), youth gangs have a major presence in the American city. This is regularly confirmed in sociological and criminal justice research. Gangs exist, and they are engaged in violent and criminal activity.

In Australia, while historically there has long been concern with street-present young people, some of whom have been presented as constituting 'gangs' (e.g., the Sydney push larrikins at the turn of the century, the Bodgies and Widgies in the 1950s), the cultural and social environment is quite different to the American case. Unlike the U.S., for example, there is not a strong academic tradition of gang research, in part demonstrating the lack of a need for one in the first place. What research there is, has tended to find that 'gangs' in this country are very unlike their American counterparts.

For instance, a recent New South Wales inquiry received little or no evidence that the overseas style of gangs exist in that State, and commented that a usage of the term, which implies violence and an organised structure, has little relevance to youth activities in Australian communities (Standing Committee on Social Issues, 1995). Furthermore, while the police service reported the existence of some 54 street gangs in 1993, there was no other evidence to support either this or related allegations of extensive memberships.

Nevertheless, there is evidence that certain types of youth gangs do exist, albeit not to the extent suggested in media accounts (Standing Committee on Social Issues, 1995). Even here, it is noted that most gangs limit their criminal behaviour to petty theft, graffiti and vandalism.

Few gangs have a violent nature. Moreover, when violence such as homicide does involve a gang member, it is usually not gang-related.

ii. ‘Gang’ Characteristics

By and large, it can be concluded that most bands of young people in Australia are not ‘gangs’, but groups (Standing Committee on Social Issues, 1995; White, 1996). Social analysis of ‘youth gangs’ in Melbourne, for example, found that while some characteristics of the groups mirror the media images (e.g., the masculine nature of youth gangs, their preferred ‘hang outs’, and shared identity markers such as shoes or clothes), the overall rationale for the group is simply one of *social connection*, not crime (Aumair & Warren, 1994). This is an important observation and worthy of further comment.

In their study, Aumair and Warren (1994) cited five key characteristics of youth ‘gangs’. These included:

- *overwhelming male involvement*, which in turn reinforced certain ‘masculine’ traits (such as fighting prowess, sexual conquest, substance use, minor criminal acts) in the group setting
- *high public visibility*, given the lack of money and therefore a reliance on free public spaces for recreational purposes
- *an outward display of collective identity*, in the form of the wearing of similar styles of clothing, adopting a common name for the group and so on
- *organisation principally for social reasons, and consequently low rates of criminal activity*, as indicated in the absence of formalised gang rules and a social rationale for gathering together, rather than a criminal objective
- *differences between public perceptions of the ‘gang problem’ and the real nature of the problem*, as illustrated by the fact that most criminal activity seemed to be inwardly focused, involving one-on-one fights and substance abuse.

Much of the criminality exhibited by ‘youth gangs’, therefore, is inward looking and linked to self-destructive behaviour such as substance abuse, drinking binges and the like. The popular perception is that gangs seek to violate the personal integrity and private property of the public in general; closer investigation reveals the insular nature of much of their activity (Aumair & Warren, 1994).

Groups of young people may well engage in anti-social or illegal behaviour. But it is a criminological truism that so do most young people at some stage in their lives. The key issue is whether the activity is sporadic, spontaneous and unusual for the group, or whether it is a main focus, thereby requiring a greater degree of criminal commitment and planning. The evidence certainly suggests the former is the case. Likewise, the statistics on youth crime indicate that use of criminal violence by young people in general is relatively rare (Cunneen & White, 1995; Mukherjee, Carcach & Higgins, 1997; Freeman, 1996).

When the available evidence on ‘gangs’ in Australia is weighed up, the picture presented appears to be something along the following lines (White, 1996). Rather than being fixed groups, with formal gang rules, most ‘gangs’ are transient groups of young people, which vary in size and which have informal structures of interaction. Rather than being inherently

anti-social, most of these groups involve 'hanging' out in a manner in which crime is incidental to the activities of the group as a whole. Rather than crime, the basis of activity is social activity, peer support, personal identity and self-esteem, and friendship networks. Rather than being exclusively of one ethnic background, many groups have members from a variety of different ethnic backgrounds. Rather than seeing themselves as 'dangerous' or 'gangsters', the young people speak about things such as 'loyalty', 'fun' and supporting their 'mates'. Rather than seeing themselves as the source of conflict on the streets, groups complain about constant police harassment and unfair treatment by adults.

In the specific case of 'ethnic youth gangs', the activities and perceptions by and of ethnic minority youth present a special case. The over-riding message of most media reports, for example, is that such 'gangs' are entirely negative, dangerous and threatening. Indeed, in recent years the hype and sensationalised treatment of 'youth gangs' have tended to have an increasingly *racialised* character. That is, the media have emphasised the 'racial' background of alleged gang members, and thereby fostered the perception that, for instance, 'young Lebanese' or 'young Vietnamese' equals 'gang member'. The extra 'visibility' of youth ethnic minority people (relative to the Anglo Australian 'norm') feeds the media moral panic over 'youth gangs', as well as bolstering a racist stereotyping based upon physical appearance (and including such things as language, clothes and skin colour). Whole communities of young people can be affected, regardless of the fact that most young people are not systematic law-breakers or particularly violent individuals. The result is an inordinate level of public and police suspicion and hostility being directed towards people from certain ethnic minority backgrounds.

iii. Youth Formations

Confusions over the status of 'youth gangs' in the Australian context stem in part from the lack of adequate conceptual tools to analyse youth group behaviour. Recent work in Canada provides a useful series of benchmarks, especially considering the many similarities in social structure and cultural life between the two countries. Gordon has developed a typology of gangs and groups based on work done in Vancouver (see Gordon, 1995, 1997; Gordon & Foley, 1998). The typology consists of six categories:

- *Youth Movements*, which are social movement characterised by a distinctive mode of dress or other bodily adornments, a leisure time preference, and other distinguishing features (e.g., punk rockers)
- *Youth Groups*, which are comprised of small clusters of young people who hang out together in public places such as shopping centres (e.g., sometimes referred to as 'Mallies')
- *Criminal Groups*, which are small clusters of friends who band together, usually for a short period of time, to commit crime primarily for financial gain (may contain young and not so young adults as well)
- *Wannabe Groups*, which include young people who band together in a loosely structured group primarily to engage in spontaneous social activity and exciting, impulsive, criminal activity including collective violence against other groups of youths (e.g., territorial and use identifying markers of some kind)
- *Street Gangs*, which are groups of young people and young adults who band together to form a semi-structured organisation, the primary purpose of which is to engage in planned

and profitable criminal behaviour or organised violence against rival street gangs (e.g., less visible but more permanent than other groups)

- *Criminal Business Organisations*, which are groups that exhibit a formal structure and a high degree of sophistication, comprised mainly of adults, and which engage in criminal activity primarily for economic reasons and almost invariably maintain a low profile (e.g., may have a name but rarely visible)

An important observation made by Gordon (1997) is that street gangs tend to appear and disappear in waves. This appears to be due to a combination of factors, ranging from effective targeting of key individuals by the police, the maturation of gang members and community development schemes as to why they disappear; and on the other hand, the spawning of new branches from an existing formation, creation of gangs in defensive response to other gangs, and the pressure of youth fashion as to why they may emerge. In a telling comment, Gordon (1995: 318) indicates the importance of social and cultural infrastructures in keeping street gangs as a cyclical, rather than permanent, phenomenon:

Unlike the situation in many American cities, street gangs have not become an entrenched feature of the Canadian urban landscape, and the chances of them doing so are still fairly slim. Cities like Vancouver tend not to have, and are unlikely to acquire, the decayed and disorganized inner urban areas containing large populations of disenfranchised, dissolute, and desperate youths and young adults. There is relatively strict gun control in Canada and not much opposition to making such control stricter. Canadian cities have an educational and social service apparatus that provides an effective social safety net that is staffed by generally optimistic personnel who are concerned to address the issues of youth disenchantment and prevent the entrenchment of street gangs. Every effort should be made to preserve these critical preventative factors.

These are words which need to be well heeded in Australia. So too, we need to learn from the Canadian experience, where again until recently there has been little research on gangs available, and develop models and appraisals of gangs and gang-related behaviour which are indicative of Australian local, regional and national realities and contexts.

iv. Youth in Groups

Meanwhile, what is known about street gangs in Australia seems to confirm that their actual, rather than presumed, existence is much less than popularly believed, and that their activities are highly circumscribed in terms of violence or criminal activity directed at members of the general public. Nevertheless, the image of 'gangs' is a powerful one, and has engendered varying kinds of social reactions.

For example, the social status and public perception of young people in groups very much influences the regulation of public space. Many groups of young people, some of whom might be labelled 'gangs', for instance, tend to hang out in places like shopping centres. Difficulties in providing a precise, or uniform, definition of what a 'gang' actually refers to, and the diversity of youth dress, language and behaviour associated with specific *subcultural forms* (e.g., gothics, punks), means that more often than not young people are treated as 'outsiders' by commercial managers and authority figures on the basis of appearance, not solely actual behaviour.

The combination of being 'bored' and feeling unwelcome in such public domains can have a negative impact on the young people, and make them resentful of the way in which they are always subject to scrutiny and social exclusion. This, in turn, can lead to various kinds of 'deviant' behaviour, as in the case of young people who play cat-and-mouse with security guards for the fun of it. It is unfortunate that the perception of gang membership may lead to exclusion or negative responses from authority figures, and that this in turn may itself generate gang-like behaviour on the part of the young people so affected.

To a certain extent, much of the concern about gangs is really a misunderstanding of the nature of youth subcultures, of how young people naturally associate with each other in groups, and of the material opportunities open to them to circulate and do things in particular places. The diversity of youth subcultural forms, especially the spectacular youth subcultures, has historically been a source of consternation among certain sections of the adult population (Murray, 1973; Stratton, 1992; White, 1993). It has also been associated with conflicts *between* different groups of young people, and youth fearfulness *of* certain young people, based on certain social and cultural affiliations (e.g., Homies, Surfies, Skinheads, Punks). In most cases, however, the presence of identifiable groups is not the precursor to activity which is going to menace the community as a whole.

Having said this, it is still essential to recognise that the pre-conditions for more serious types of gang formation are beginning to emerge in the Australian context. A recent review article of American gangs points out that turf- and honour-based violence are best understood as arising out of particular political economic contexts, marked by patterns of unemployment, immigration and social marginalisation (Adamson, 1998). It is related to both attempts to engage in alternative productive activity (such as the illegal drug economy), and alternative consumption activity (in the form of dealing with lack of consumer purchasing power by taking the possessions of others). It also relates to attempts to assert masculinity in a period where traditional avenues to 'manhood' have been severely eroded for many young men. Given the trends toward ghettoisation and social polarisations in this country (see Gregory & Hunter, 1995), major questions can be asked regarding the potential for such gang formations in Australian cities.

With respect to these developments, it is significant that the increased frequency of involvement with the criminal justice system on the part of some ethnic minority young people, particularly in relation to drug offences and use of violence, has led to heightened media attention of ethnic young people generally. However, the extent of the shifts in criminal justice involvement do not warrant the intensity and universalising tendencies apparent in much media coverage, which tend to provide negative images of ethnic minority people as a whole. **The concern about the propensity of the media to perpetuate negative images of ethnic minority young people is not new.** For example, the 1995 First National Summit on Police & Ethnic Youth Relations recommended the development of a joint project with **the media industry and unions which would help to foster more positive portrayals of youth (National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau, 1995).** The problems associated with police-ethnic minority youth relations have probably contributed to the negativity as well, and forms an important part of the 'image-building' in relation to ethnic youth gangs.

A New South Wales study, for example, found that ethnic minority young people were more likely than other groups of Australian young people (with the exception of indigenous people)

to be stopped by the police, to be questioned, and to be subject to varying forms of mistreatment (Youth Justice Coalition, 1994). Young Vietnamese Australians in Melbourne and Sydney have complained about unfair treatment, and racism, in their dealings with the police (Doan, 1995; Lyons, 1995). This is confirmed in a recent study of encounters between police and young Asian background people in Cabramatta, which found that the young people (who were heroin users) were subject to routine harassment, intimidation, 'ethnic' targeting, racism and offensive treatment (Maher et.al., 1997). Furthermore, there were a number of specific problems relating to cultural issues in that: 'Crucial norms of respect, shame and authority are routinely transgressed by police officers' (Maher et.al., 1997: 3). In the context of police rhetoric about adopting harm minimisation policies in dealing with drug issues, these coercive strategies were viewed by the young people as counter-productive.

More generally, a negative interaction between ethnic minority young people and the police breeds mistrust and disrespect. A minority of people in any community is engaged in particularly anti-social behaviour and criminal activity. The problem in this case is that the prejudicial stereotyping often leads to the *differential policing* of the whole population group (White, 1996). This kind of policing not only violates the ideals of treating all citizens and residents with the same respect and rights, but it can inadvertently lead to further law-breaking behaviour.

For example, as victims of racist violence, ethnic minority young people may be reluctant to approach state authorities for help, when these same figures have done little to entrust confidence or respect. As with similar cases overseas, the lack of police protection can lead some young people to adopt the stance that 'self-defence is no offence' and thus to arm themselves against racist attacks (Edwards, Oakley & Carey, 1987). Concern about the carrying of weapons not only justifies even more intense police intervention, it feeds media distortions about the problem of 'ethnic youth gangs'. Clearly there is a need for concerted efforts to modify existing police practices and to re-think community policing as this applies to ethnic minority young people (see Chan, 1994, 1997). The implementation of the recommendations arising out of the First National Summit on Police & Ethnic Youth Relations would certainly assist in making significant improvements in police-ethnic minority youth relations in Australia (National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau, 1995). To this end, the establishment of State/Territory Support Implementation Teams by the National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau appears to be a step in the right direction. The teams, which are comprised of a police representative in charge of youth affairs in every jurisdiction and a representative from the youth sector, will be the main vehicles for advocating the implementation of the Summit Recommendations (National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau, 1997).

1.4 Research Contribution

The contribution of this research project is to expand our empirical knowledge about 'ethnic youth gangs'. As can be seen from this brief review, there has been very little systematic empirical examination of the phenomenon. There have been examples of critical analysis and interpretation of what little material has been collected (by government bodies as well as academic and community researchers), but quite often this has been ignored by the press and by political leaders as selected events, such as drive-by shootings, come to public notice.

Research projects such as this may be able to provide a better and more informed analysis of the concrete basis for the fear of crime in some neighbourhoods, as well as the extent and nature of existing 'gang' crime. It builds upon other recent studies undertaken on street-frequenting youth of non-English speaking background in Sydney (Pe-Pua, 1996), stories collected about the street youth of Cabramatta (Maher, Nguyen & Le, 1999), and the experience of homelessness among young people from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam in Melbourne (Frederico, Cooper & Picton, 1996). It further develops our knowledge of more recent immigrant youth (such as Somalian young people), as well as considers the experiences of groups which have been established in this country for some time (such as Turkish young people).

It is our hope that the research will contribute, as well, to closer examination of how street-level activity is related to existing service provision, programme development and policy implementation. How federal, state and local government agencies carry out their work, and the policy context within which this occurs, are important variables in the quality of life for young people, and ultimately for the welfare and safety of all citizens and residents.

Finally, given the Melbourne focus for the current project, we would hope that the research opens the door to further work of a comparative nature, particularly in places such as Sydney and Brisbane which have large immigrant populations and diverse ethnic communities. The issues are of national importance, however, and should be responded to with policies and practices which acknowledge the cultural diversity, and changing nature, of Australian society.

Part 2:
Pacific Islander Young People

2.1 Social History

The Pacific Islander community in Australia is culturally and linguistically diverse, coming from a range of cultural groups which live on the relatively sparsely populated islands of the Pacific ocean. The term 'Pacific Islander' in fact refers to a spectrum of communities whose social, economic and cultural organisation differ markedly according to the area of the Pacific in which they live or from where they originate.

While important differences between the communities are evident, there are nevertheless strong cultural themes which cut across the various communities. There are also commonalities in terms of the ways in which members of each community are perceived by and interact with the mainstream institutions of Australian society.

Very little research on the migrant and resettlement experience of Pacific Islanders in Australia has been undertaken (see Francis, 1994). The present research thus constitutes a modest contribution toward enhancing our understanding of the migration and re-settlement processes, and social issues, pertaining to Pacific Islander young people and their communities.

i. Community profile

Pacific Islanders are often incorrectly referred to as being from one community. However, the term generally makes reference to three specific cultural areas of the Pacific ocean: Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. Each cultural group possesses specific and distinctive social characteristics. They also share some broad commonalities. The shared cultural similarities relate primarily to lifestyle and economic structures, for instance they mainly consist of small-scale societies that are farm based, and to social organisation, which is essentially based upon blood and marriage relationships.

Melanesia contains 90 per cent of the land and 75 per cent of the total Pacific Islander population. Culturally and geographically diverse, the main island groups of this region include New Guinea (Papua New Guinea, West Guinea and Irian Jaya), the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and New Caledonia. There are over 5 million people in this group.

North of the equator, Micronesia has a more modest population of about 500,000 people. This group consists of people living among a range of scattered archipelagos and small islands. These islands include Guam, Kiribati, the Maruiana Islands, the Marshall Islands, Nauru and Paulau.

Polynesia is the largest geographic area. It spreads from Hawaii in the north, to New Zealand in the south west and Easter island in the south east. It also includes the Cook Islands, Nue, Samoa, Tahiti, Tokelau, Tonga and Tuvalu. The islands of Fiji, though geographically part of Melanesia, share many social and cultural traits with Polynesia.

The Pacific Islander Community in Australia is predominantly Polynesian, including Cook Islanders, Maoris, Rata Tongans, Samoans, and Tongans. Fijians are the largest single group represented, followed by Maori, if we calculate the number of Pacific Islanders according to 'languages spoken' rather than by 'birthplace'. In using this criteria, there would appear to be over 100,000 Pacific Islander people in Australia (ABS, 1996). There are a smaller number of Melanesians in Australia, mainly New Guineans, and even fewer Micronesians. Due to the predominance of Polynesians in Australia, generally when speaking of Pacific Islanders most people mean Polynesians (Francis, 1994: 37).

These different cultures are linked through the importance attached to the notion that the strength and solidarity of family and community should come before individual need. The extended family is structured in a way that allows members to have access to social and economic supports at all times. Social cohesion is attained through a sense of community, which in turn is based upon the idea of reciprocation. Affluence is measured not in monetary terms, but rather through reciprocity and the ability to meet kinship obligations (Francis, 1995).

The social structures of Pacific Islander communities can be described as “achieved status” systems. In these systems, social organisation is egalitarian, based around the notion that, ideally, from birth each person is given the same chance of achieving a given social status. Emphasis is placed on the idea that someone with ability and ambition can achieve social status through skilful economic manipulation of the system, particularly through trade and the accumulation and distribution of wealth. This is most apparent in the competition surrounding the giving of kinship gifts. These gifts are exchanged between kin at various social occasions such as births and weddings. In these cultures there is a fundamental obligation to reciprocate when a gift is given (Francis, 1994: 37).

Given that the present research is focused primarily on Polynesian-background young people, it is useful to focus in more detail on the specifics of the Polynesian culture and the experiences of re-settlement for young people from those cultures.

The family unit provides the basis for the social education of the young, and is the key structure that determines acceptable behaviour and discipline. It is a highly stratified system, with clear hierarchies of status and control. Great emphasis is placed on maintaining the system, the community as a whole and the extended family network. The extended family is the cornerstone of the community and the network strongly binds people into particular kinds of social relationships between different members of the community and family. Each member comes to know their role and their responsibilities, and how they must perform in order to maintain the system.

The role of the individual is played down, and is only important if you are born into a high status position. Different social classes, based on heredity, and the hierarchical systems of chieftainship, are the norm (Francis, 1995: 182). Power is vested in the hands of those born into a chiefly kinship line. To some people in western societies this stratification may appear strict and inflexible; but to Polynesian people these structures provide a sense of order, purpose and belonging.

The role and social position of the young person is very clearly understood and upheld. The extended family is responsible for the social education of the young person. Young people have ready access to a range of kin and family members in times of crisis, who are expected to provide the support and guidance needed to deal with problems.

ii. Migration and the Re-settlement Experience

There are a number of factors which contribute to the migration of members of these communities. For example, there has been a steady urbanisation of the islands. This has entailed movement from smaller villages to larger villages and cities, further concentration to the larger islands, and further migration from the large islands to countries such as New Zealand and Australia (Francis, 1994: 39).

Other reasons for migration are similar to those of many other migrants to Australia. These include, for example, the promise of economic and employment opportunities, over population in their homelands, and various other environmental, political and lifestyle factors (Cox & Low, 1986).

Migrating to countries like Australia also creates difficulties, as it is an urbanised Western society, with social and cultural values considerably different to those of the communities of origin. Feelings of dislocation and isolation, for example, are not uncommon. Perhaps of greatest significance is the tendency for the extended family network to disintegrate. This places enormous stress on the individual who is familiar with a social structure where community support is readily available to those in need. Problems of settlement are further compounded by attempts to adjust to customs and social systems which may seem quite foreign and unnatural.

For many Pacific Islanders in Australia, the maintenance of kinship obligations (gift giving) remains crucial. In order to satisfy kinship obligations many Pacific Islanders send money back to their homeland. In many cases, a significant proportion of people's income is allocated to this cause. This obligation can place great stress on the migrants, who often live in poor conditions themselves. The rate of unemployment for many new migrants is generally high (depending upon basis of migration and economic resources), and this is particularly so in the case of the Pacific Islander communities.

For young people of Pacific Islander background, the interface of their own culture with Australian cultural expectations and freedoms often leads to further complications and conflicts in the home. These young people are frequently placed in the position of attempting to incorporate some of the cultural norms and expectations of Australian society, while simultaneously trying to conform to parental and family expectations.

Of most concern for these young people is the change in their relationship with extended family members. They tend to integrate more easily into mainstream Australian society, and this is often accompanied by a rejection of parental guidance and the support available from family members, and the church. Yet, in many cases they are not replacing this social cushion by gaining access to mainstream state-provided support services. Creating both a personal and a cultural identity for themselves is a big issue for Pacific Islander young people as well.

The young people from the Pacific Islander communities frequently share common ground in their experiences of migration and dislocation from their family, and will often seek support from each other. It is common, for instance, for groups of young Pacific Islander people to congregate together and to socialise in large numbers. Their peer groups will often take the place of the role of the extended family that they are familiar with, but which is not available or appropriate in the Australian context.

Pacific Islander young people are a highly visible group: their body size, skin colour and physical characteristics are markedly different to those of the majority Anglo Australians. They are also likely to congregate in public spaces. The visibility and overt differences in appearance of Pacific Islander young people has lent itself to a ready identification, labelling and stereotyping process, much of which has been of a negative and stigmatising nature.

2.2 Profile of Youth Interviewed

Twenty young people were interviewed from the Pacific Islander communities, most of whom were residing in the Frankston area of Melbourne. Of these young people, 2 were born in Australia, 1 in Fiji and the other 17 in New Zealand. When asked about their ethnicity, the young people identified themselves as Maori (14), Tongan (2), Samoan (2), Polynesian (1), and Fijian (1). Most of the young people had come to Australia directly from New Zealand, although several also spent some time in the United States, and Fiji.

Eight of the respondents were female, and 12 were male. Their ages varied from 13 to 20, with 8 young people being under 16 years, 8 who were 17 or 18, and 4 who were up to 20 years of age. In terms of religious affiliation, 8 of the young people said they had no religion, 6 were members of a Protestant faith, 4 saw themselves in terms of traditional Maori religious beliefs, and 2 were identified as belonging to the Catholic church.

Eighteen of the young people had migrated to Australia with their families. Most came through the general migrant entry programme, while 2 were offered places under the Family Reunion scheme. Half of the young people who migrated did so in the years 1985 to 1989. Most of the rest arrived between 1990 and 1997.

The experience of migration was accompanied by mixed feelings. However, there was no strong sentiment, positive or negative, concerning the move. Many young people expressed a sense of confusion and disorientation associated with the migration process.

PI4: 'I didn't really want to (leave). But, three or four years down the track I began to like this place. I never thought there'd be that many Maoris down here.'

PI6: 'I didn't know what to expect here. It was just a last minute thing; I got told I was coming out here just a couple of days before coming out here. Everything was paid for and everything, so my dad said "You've got to go. Come on here, it's an opportunity."'

PI11: 'I always thought we were goin' on a holiday. I didn't really want to go. It was alright, I guess I didn't mind; I thought Australia was a grouse place 'cos all I was seeing was Expo '88, every single day.'

'I was a bit confused, 'cos I wanted to go home, but you couldn't go home, so you just had to sorta get used to the idea. I still want to go back home.'

PI16: 'I don't think it was that big a deal – coming to a new place.'

PI18: 'I was unhappy to leave. It was good and bad really. The good bit was moving away and the bad – moving away from my family.'

PI19: 'New Zealand will always be home. I came here for a holiday and ended up staying. (Leaving New Zealand) I was out of it. It was really strange when I first came here . . . I didn't wanna leave. First thing I noticed when I came here – 'cos we moved to Frankston - was all the pale faces and everyone's got straight hair.'

Upon arrival, most of the Pacific Islander young people and their families stayed with relatives or family friends. Only one family spent time in a migrant hostel, and a handful took up lodging in privately rented premises. All of the young people had experienced frequent moves, and 4 of the sample said that they had moved more than 10 times. The reasons for moving included problems in the family, wanting a better house, and simply a parental or family decision.

At the time of the interview, 11 of the young people were living with both parents, 1 with their father, 3 with other relatives, 2 with friends, 2 with their partner, and 1 in a shared house. The majority (15) lived in houses, with the others mainly in flats or units. 14 of the young people had been living in their particular neighbourhood for less than 12 months.

When asked about the language spoken at home, 13 said that they spoke English, 2 Samoan and 1 Maori. Six young people said that they spoke a combination of English and Fijian, English and Maori, or English and Tongan. With their peer groups, they tended to speak English as the main language, and in a small number of cases (5) to use dual languages.

Some indication of the socio-economic background of the young people was provided by a series of questions on the type of income sources and paid work of their parents. Half of the respondents' mothers were engaged in some kind of paid work (2 were overseas at the time, and 1 was studying). Most of this employment was in services and clerical occupations. Four of the mothers were receiving state support in the form of sole parent benefits or an invalid pension. Of the fathers, 15 were in paid employment, 4 were overseas and only 1 was unemployed. The fathers' work was concentrated in the industrial and manufacturing areas, trades, service sector and security industry. The parents of these young people, then, generally had jobs of some kind. Given the nature of the regional labour market and given the range of occupations in which they participated, few of the parents were engaged in high paying or professional types of employment. The families were, however, relatively secure financially, due to the fact that most of the parents had paid work of some kind.

Most of the sample group had completed or were in the process of completing schooling at least to the Year 10 level. Interestingly, when asked what they like about school, the most enthusiastic response had to do with 'friends'. The school was seen as a key site for social connection, a place to see your mates: *'With school if kids aren't doin' well at school, the only reason they go there is for a social life, 'cos once you leave school, if you haven't made friends at school you're stuffed, because you just won't have any when you leave school'* (PI10).

The main criticism of schooling was directed at teachers. Many felt that teachers talked down to them, were too bossy and were focussed too much on discipline. A few of the young people mentioned things such as 'homework' and 'boring subjects'. But overall, it was the teachers who were seen as the major problem.

2.3 Sources of Income

The economic situation of the young people was ascertained by asking a number of questions relating to sources of income and employment experiences. At the time of interview, 6 of the young people were in paid employment, and of these 5 were in full-time work. Their jobs included work in the service sector, the trades (e.g., fitter and turner), and the manufacturing industry.

Just under half of the sample had undertaken paid work of some kind. However, 5 of these young people had never held a job for more than 3 months, while at the other end of the scale 3 of them had held a job for a year or longer. The reasons for leaving particular jobs included being made redundant, being fired, and choosing to because of personal reasons or because the conditions were unsuitable or unpleasant for the young person.

Ethnic Youth Gangs in Australia – Do They Exist?

Almost half of the group had undergone some kind of job training or work experience. This mainly took place as part of the Department of Social Security programmes, and was undertaken in the trades, retail and hospitality, and manufacturing areas. For those young people not presently in school, job training was generally tied to receipt of some kind of government unemployment payment.

Virtually all of the young people said that they did unpaid work at home for their family or friends. As one young person explained: *'In the Polynesian way there's no such thing as paying; you do the work for love and respect and obedience of your parents'* (PI10). Another commented: *'It's usually like that in Frankston anyway; you all sort of stick together. Everyone looks after each other'* (PI12). The kinds of work performed for no pay included child care, domestic chores, gardening and lawn mowing, helping out with car repairs and going general jobs.

Short-term jobs for 'quick money' were also identified. Some of these included babysitting, delivering pamphlets, fruit picking, packing merchandise, and washing cars.

The main sources of income for the sample group are outlined in Table 1. As can be seen, the main income sources consist of state benefits of some kind, family, work and illegal activity. Most of the young people would be mainly reliant upon parents for income. For the older group, and especially those who have left or completed high school, there is greater reliance upon outside income sources.

When asked what other young people in the area do for money, the responses were basically the same. However, greater emphasis was placed upon the taking up of casual and part-time work as a means to gain income, and also on drug dealing and other types of illegal activity. Begging for money on the street was also mentioned as one way in which to get extra income.

Table 1:
Sources of Income for Young People Interviewed

Sources of Income	Response to each category		
	Number	Percent (respondents)	Percent (responses)
Unemployment/DSS benefits	7	35.0	23.3
Austudy	3	15.0	10.0
Family	8	40.0	26.7
Work	6	30.0	20.0
Drug dealing	1	5.0	3.3
Other illegal activities	2	10.0	6.7
Other	3	15.0	10.0
Total	30		100.0

N=20

The ways in which financial resources are used by the young people is shown in Table 2.

Table 2:
Ways in Which Young People Spend Their Money

Ways in which money is spent	Response to each category		
	Number	Percent (respondents)	Percent (responses)
Rent	12	60.0	19.7
Food/bills	13	65.0	21.3
Entertainment	12	60.0	19.7
Travel	2	10.0	3.3
Clothes	5	25.0	8.2
Family	1	5.0	1.6
Save	4	20.0	6.6
Cigarettes/alcohol	6	30.0	9.8
books/school	2	10.0	3.3
Drugs	3	15.0	4.9
Other	1	5.0	1.6
Total	61		100.0

N=20

To interpret this table it needs to be recognised that 6 of the young people are in paid employment of some kind, and only 12 of the 20 young people interviewed were still living with their parents. Nevertheless, regardless of differences in income and accommodation arrangements, a large proportion of the young person's income was spent on items such as rent, food, bills, travel, clothes and school-related materials. Entertainment was a significant item, which is not surprising given the fact that much youth leisure and recreational activity is associated with commercial venues and services.

If the young people experienced money problems, most would turn to their parents in the first instance, or go to other relatives for help. Only one person said that they would ask their friends for assistance. In discussion, one of the respondents also mentioned that they had received assistance from the Polynesian Support Group, which had got them a bed.

The young Pacific Islander people were asked what they thought young people in their area did for money when legal means of attaining it were not available. Table 3 describes their responses.

Table 3:
Interviewees' Perceptions of the Types of Illegal Activity In Which
Young People Engage for Money

Types of illegal activity	Response to each category		
	Number	Percent (respondents)	Percent (responses)
Drug dealing	15	75.0	30.0
Burglary/robbery	11	55.0	22.0
Shoplifting/sale of stolen goods	6	30.0	12.0
Theft (other than shoplifting)	11	55.0	22.0
Mugging/jumping	3	15.0	6.0
Don't know	1	5.0	2.0
Other	3	15.0	6.0
Total	50		100.0

N=20

As can be seen, the main crimes associated with young people were those relating to property (shopstealing, theft, burglary), and drug dealing. In some cases, the stealing of items was not simply for personal use; it was intended as a way to make money: One person pointed out: *'Just stealing things and going to hock shops and selling them. Stealing CD players and stuff out of cars and going to their friends' houses and selling it to them and tools and all sorts of stuff (PI15)*

There were a number of reasons put forward to explain these types of illegal behaviour. As might be expected, the need for money was the most common response. However, a number of the respondents also cited 'drugs' as a rationale for crimes of this nature. Others pointed to peer pressure and the idea of being 'cool' and enhancing one's image as a reason to engage in illegal activities. Fun and excitement were also mentioned. There was a strong link made between socio-economic status and certain types of activity: *'In the end it comes down to we've got nothin' to do and I want drugs, I want alcohol, how do I go about gettin' it? And no-one's got money, so we go get it' (PI11)*. Lack of parental support and general economic disadvantage were viewed as key factors in why some young people might engage in the activity.

The young people were also asked about illegal activities that were engaged in by young people, but not for the purposes of money. Their responses are shown in Table 4.

Table 4:
Interviewees' Perceptions of the Types of Illegal Activity (not for the purposes of money) in Which Young People Engage

Types of illegal activity	Response to each category		
	Number	Percent (respondents)	Percent (responses)
Car theft/joy riding	8	40.0	22.9
Drug/alcohol use	9	45.0	25.7
Fighting/assaults	11	55.0	31.4
Vandalism/graffiti	4	20.0	11.4
Stealing for own use	2	10.0	5.7
Other	1	5.0	2.9
Total	35		100.0

N=20

The main reasons given for engagement in these kinds of activities were fun and excitement, showing off, peer pressure, boredom, problems at home and revenge against other young people. The intensity of feeling associated with fights in particular is indicated in the following quotations:

PI19: 'People might feel angry and go out and beat the shit out of somebody, go out and go and you know, like just little things people consider crimes, like going out and getting pissed at the beach, or you know, or smoking drugs, or doing drugs, or – but that's not, is that a crime? Do you think that's a crime?- um stealing cars, just go for a ride. You know, you feel like going for a ride somewhere, so just walk down the street and get someone's car, steal taxis.'

PI20: 'The teenagers, that's what they get up to (fighting/assaults). Like the Maoris, especially the Maoris. That's why we've got a really bad name down here. They love beating up the white people, because you know, they can't get to them. Even at school, that's what they do – for fun.'

Violence directed against oneself, against property and against others indicates a high level of frustration and alienation. They are also usually linked to typical youth gang behaviour.

2.4 Youth Gangs

A series of questions were put to the young people about the nature and activities of 'youth gangs' in their local area and involving members of the Pacific Islander communities. We started by asking them where young people hung out in the local neighbourhood. The most often referred to locations included the beach, amusement centres, the street, train and bus stops and shopping areas. Most agreed that young people tend to hang around in groups, and that generally speaking it was safer to do so.

Table 5 provides information on what the young people felt were the main reasons why young people hung around with certain other young people.

Table 5:
Young People's Perceptions of What Young People's Groups
Have in Common with each Other

Aspects of group	Response to each category		
	Number	Percent (respondents)	Percent (responses)
Ethnicity/culture	5	26.3	13.5
Same interests/activities	2	10.5	5.4
Image/dress/style	15	78.9	40.5
Music	9	47.4	24.3
Same school	1	5.3	2.7
Same area	1	5.3	2.7
Don't know	1	5.3	2.7
Other	3	15.8	8.1
Total	37		100.0

N=19

Missing Responses = 1 (5%)

While the answers to this question implied that image and style were the key reasons for group connection or association, the issue of ethnicity nevertheless permeated much of the discussion. While specific groups of young people may band together because of shared interests in the same music or subcultural fashion, they also tended to be drawn from very similar ethnic backgrounds. It was frequently stated that young Maoris tend to stick together, although the group as a whole may not be exclusive to Maoris young people: *'The Maoris – the boys – they usually hang out, but they've got girlfriends, and they're usually white'* (PI16). Thus, there were interesting gender divisions in terms of specific group formations.

In latter discussions, the Pacific Islander young people expressed the view that the main differences between the groups which hang out on the streets was based on ethnicity. There was no basic difference between the groups – except that, as one person put it, *'Maybe the colour of the skin, otherwise they're all groups'* (PI16). There was some indication, however, that things might be changing. Another young person pointed out that: *'Now it's mixed, but before it was just all Maoris, Polynesians just hanging in one group... You tend to stick together'* (PI12).

The prominence of ethnicity in group formation was highlighted when the young people were asked about the types of gangs in the area. An equal number of respondents (6) referred to 'troublemakers' as to 'just group of friends'. A further 4 responses used the term 'ethnic group'. There were then some ambiguities in regard to the type and presence of 'gangs' in the local area.

Specific questions were asked on the differences between a 'group' and a 'gang'. Table 6 indicates what the young people saw as the defining characteristics of a youth gang.

Table 6:
Characteristics By Which the Young People Defined Gangs

Attributes	Response to each category		
	Number	Percent (respondents)	Percent (responses)
Organised/rules	3	15.8	9.4
Leader	2	10.5	6.3
Dress/style	3	15.8	9.4
Carry weapons	1	5.3	3.1
Violent	5	26.3	15.6
Drug users	2	10.5	6.3
Do illegal activities	5	26.3	15.6
Just a group of friends	3	15.8	9.4
Other	8	42.1	25.0
Total	32		100.0

N=19

Missing Responses = 1 (5%)

The *boundaries between and definitions of 'youth gangs' and 'groups of young people'* were often blurred in terms of both the perceptions of each formation, and with regard to the activities of each. This was pointed out several times in the discussions with the young people.

PI5: *'People, when they see a group of young people, they class it as a gang. (The) majority of people class people as a gang when they just hang around with each other – they're just a group of people.'*

PI7: *'It depends on the group. They (a group and a gang) would have a lot of things in common. You see a bunch of guys just coming back from school. That's not a gang. These are just guys just coming from school. They just run past the house laughing, doing stupid things. Just the same with a gang, they do similar things. For me, the word gang is just crime. When you hear the word gang, it means crime.'*

PI11: *'It depends, because you've got your group of young people and then you've got your gang, but there's not a whole lot of difference – they're both in the pool hall, which one's the gang? The only difference is maybe 'cos the gang's wearing colours, or something that make them look like a gang. They might go out and commit crimes, but the other group of people go out and commit crime. Gangs are just a little more organised.'*

PI16: *'I suppose you're a gang in your own way. A gang would be, you know, go out, purposely hurt people. A group of friends just hang out. But also, gangs are also just like a group of people, and they give themselves a name; that's all they do.'*

PI19: (Referring to the group interviewee belongs to) *'People on the inside think it's a group of people; people in the group think they're just a group of people. But people that aren't in the group, they look at the group as a gang – like the police. I mean, how many times have I just been walking down the street with my friends, or my cousins and stuff, just walking down the street, and they pull you over, search you, go through your socks and pull off your pants and your top and that. (They) think you've got drugs in your pockets. You know what I mean? They think that you're a gang.'*

Probably the biggest demarcation between a 'gang' and a 'group' was the relative emphasis put on *criminal, illegal or anti-social behaviour*. The types of activities associated with gangs

Ethnic Youth Gangs in Australia – Do They Exist?

included drinking and drug use, stealing, fighting, vandalism and graffiti. In discussions, gangs were particularly seen to be predisposed towards violence.

PI1: 'A group of young people usually go out just to have fun, whereas a gang will have a rotten image and they do things that they shouldn't be doing.'

PI2: 'Gangs go around beating people up. Young people just walk around and then if someone picks on them, then they start beating them up.'

PI15: 'A group of young people just might be hanging out with each other and a gang, they just want to hang out, pick on people or stuff like that.'

PI6: 'A gang go out, drink, smoke, do drugs, fight, be rude to your girlfriends and are dirty. In a group you don't have to go there with your friends. Like, in a group you can go somewhere else and they'll understand. But in a gang, if one person goes, the rest have to follow. There's no leader in a group everyone's all equal.'

PI14: 'People hanging out in a big crowd when they wanna start a fight and that and they like to graffiti and they like to get into trouble.'

Gang membership was also associated with *specific types and styles of dress*, and by a sense of *territoriality*. They would gain reputations based upon appearance, and on where they hung out. Symbolic markers – such as adoption of a name for the group – and a strong sense of ownership over certain 'turf' were identified with particular groups of young people.

PI4: 'A gang would be more known than a group of young people. Just the way a gang would be formed and looks would be different from young people. A gang would look rugged-looking and fierce looking and grumpy looking. I mean, a gang you'd always see a bandanna representing who they are, where they're from, stuff like that. That's how you can pick individual gangs out is by their bandannas; different colours – that's as close as you'll get to a gang in Melbourne. With young people you can just tell. They're looking pretty, going to town all dressed up. Young people take pride in what they wear. They're not like gang members who'll just throw on anything. Gangs hang in a particular area, whereas young people might go there, but don't hang there.'

PI9: 'Gangs tend to hang out in shopping centres I think. My idea of a gang (is that they) hang out in shopping centres and wear big baggy clothes and do lots of stealing, petty crimes and stuff. A gang is a group of people who get together because they don't really care about anything and therefore they're just rebellious. They don't even know what they're rebelling against I don't think. They just want to be cool. If they're in a gang I think they're just too young mentally ... to actually know what really is going on.'

PI10: 'They all get into trouble. A group is the same as a gang. A gang is only a gang if you've got a name. A group is just a group of friends and they just hang out and have fun.'

PI5: 'It's just a group of people who think they've got this territory and that territory and they've got to fight other gangs to keep their territory.' Asians are the ones; they own most of the gangs. There are a few hundred groups, but we just class ourselves as friends.'

The Pacific Islander young people were questioned about the types of street gangs in the local area. Some spoke about the gangs 'back in New Zealand' in great detail. There were also a few specific groups identified as being active at different times in metropolitan Melbourne. Those groups of young people which had specific identifying names included:

- The Station Boys [hang around train stations and whose main focus was stealing]

- MCR [main focus is identity and territorial]
- The Bloods and Crips [Maori membership]
- Skinheads [white membership, particular style of dress]
- Homies [certain style of dress and places to hang out]
- WKS ['we come strapped']
- NIP ['Nips in power']
- SOK ['straight out of counselling']
- RSP ['respect Samoan people']
- Tongan Mafia

This list indicates that 'gang' membership tends to be based upon *ethnic identification* and association in many cases, or on certain *subcultural styles* of dress and activity preferences. This was confirmed in questions regarding what members of gangs have in common with each other. The leading two responses were 'ethnicity/culture', and 'dress/style'.

The importance of a name is that it provides young people with a means of instant recognition by others. A name can be something which is attached to particular groups from the 'outside', as a means of group classification (e.g., to describe different nationalities or subcultures). In this case the naming is done by non-members of an identifiable group. Names can also be devised from the 'inside', as a means for a collective to tell the wider world who they are, in their own descriptive terms (e.g., 'Crips', 'Power', 'NIP'). To a certain extent the naming process itself is indicative of whether or not a group sees itself as a specific 'gang' formation, or simply part of a much larger subcultural grouping which shares similar dress, music and recreational preferences.

The young people were asked why people might wish to join gangs. Their responses are shown in Table 7.

Table 7:
Young People's Perceptions of Why Young People Join Gangs

Common attributes of gang members	Response to each category		
	Number	Percent (respondents)	Percent (responses)
Fun/excitement	4	21.1	12.9
Problems at home	1	5.3	3.2
Protection	6	31.6	19.4
Support/replacing family	7	36.8	22.6
Respect/power	4	21.1	12.9
Rebellion/showing off	4	21.1	12.9
Don't know	1	5.3	3.2
Other	4	21.1	12.9
Total	31		100.0

N=19

Missing Responses = 1 (5%)

Ethnic Youth Gangs in Australia – Do They Exist?

Some people were seen as more likely to join a gang due to family problems (such as being kicked out of home, escaping abusive home situations or rebelling against their parents). Another factor was peer pressures, where to join a gang was seen as 'being cool', especially for younger teenagers. For some, the key reason was basically related to a low social and economic status, and the desire to get money and be part of a support network.

The main reason why young women were seen to join gangs was 'relationships'. Basically, young women were linked into gangs through a boyfriend. Once affiliated with a particular group, the young women were tied into relationships of protection, respect, power and excitement.

The Pacific Islander young people were asked specifically if racism was a reason for belonging to a gang. The issue of racism had a number of different dimensions. In some cases, gang membership was perceived to be due to *direct threats* to particular groups of young people.

PI6: 'Maoris stick together no matter what, because they've all been through a lot of racism in schools and elsewhere. They get called "black cunt" and "sheep fucker." I've had rocks thrown at me at school and everything because of racism. Most Aussies reckon that Maoris, Samoans and Tongans are all the same; when you try to explain it, they just go "what?"'

PI7: 'It could be part of the reason why. Coming to a country like Australia is – I find it a very racist place. Australians are very racist from what I've seen. They've got names for everyone. I didn't know what a "wog" was before I came here. They put everyone into different categories – you've got your "wogs" and you've got your "nips" and you've got your "skips." They don't know respect; a lot of kids seem to not know the word respect.'

PI2: 'They (different gangs) like to fight each other. Australians always fight people from other races.'

Another feature of the discussion over racism was the way in which ethnicity came to the fore, not simply as a response to a perceived or actual threat, but as a form of *confirmation of group identity*.

PI11: 'You ask me why do I become a certain part of a group or a gang. That group or gang's basically my network of friends and family. If you looked at your life, you've got a network of family and then friends and you're in that circle; basically you see 'em like that – you could class that as a gang. Why do people do it? Only because people only associate with certain different people. There are all these other mates on the outside of the circle, they (gang members) spend more time with the people in the immediate circle.'

PI19: 'They usually have the same focus. If you wanna know why Maoris are in gangs, I'll tell you right now. It's because we are tribal people. We've been like tribal people for like thousands of years right, and we, because we group together because that's what tribal people do, right. And because these children that are born here -like the ones that you've been speaking to – they think you know, they identify with culture from America right, because they think: "Oh well, I'm black," you know, "I wanna be cool." They don't know who they are; they're lost. They need their identity.'

In some cases, however, racism was seen more as a *convenient cover for aggressive action* on the part of some gang members. In other words, the anti-social or violent behaviour was justified on the basis of racism, but the primary motivation was not seen to reside in racism per se.

PI4: *'With some nationalities racism can be a reason. But sometimes I feel that certain Maoris and Samoans or Polynesians, they like to use the word "racism" as an excuse and they give somebody a thump and like the police say "why did you do that?" and say "well, he called me a black such and such." I think sometimes people just use that as an excuse and they don't really know what racism is.'*

PI20: *'I don't like the Maoris down here to be honest, even though I'm a Polynesian myself. But they just really, really think that they can boss around the Australians and all that; you know, the white people. And to me, oh, I just get really, really offended, 'cos I know I'm black, but I'm an Australian but, and I hate it when people do that; it really puts you off. But they wanna be, you know, the number one people here in Frankston.'*

The main good thing about being a gang member was 'protection'. Gangs were also seen as good ways to gain support or replace the family (often due to problems within the family); to get partners and make friends; and as a means to engage in fun and exciting activities. Gang membership provides young people with a sense of belonging, and a sense of security through strength of numbers.

However, the bad side of gang membership was that it is often associated with the doing of illegal things, it can engender attacks from other youth gangs, it brings young people to the attention of the police, and it can affect their overall future. Another problem was that the presence of identified 'gangs' can serve to stigmatise a whole community. As one young person commented: *'The worst thing about it is that people associate you with them just because you're Maori, so people think worse things about you'* (PI19). While at a personal level, many of the young people thought that gangs were OK as long as they stick to themselves, the social consequences of gang formation were seen to affect the whole community.

Street fights featured prominently in discussions about the activities of gangs. Aggression between groups was generally seen to be linked to racism or power struggles over territory. Other reasons for the fighting included taking action 'over a woman', some people being perceived as acting or talking smart, drug-related aggressiveness, or simply some young people just wanting to act tough for the sake of it.

The different groups that were seen as getting involved in gang fights are indicated in Table 8. In general, gangs were seen to use weapons such as knives and baseball bats (guns were rarely mentioned). However, the use of weapons was overwhelmingly related to gang fights, rather than criminal purposes such as robbery or mugging.

Table 8:
Young People’s Perceptions of the Different Groups that
Get Involved in Gang Fights

Types of groups	Response to each category		
	Number	Percent (respondents)	Percent (responses)
Anglo against other Ethnic	10	52.6	43.5
One ethnic against ‘different’ Ethnic	5	26.3	21.7
Ethnic amongst ‘similar’ Ethnic	2	10.5	8.7
No particular/many different combinations	2	10.5	8.7
Not based on Ethnicity	3	15.8	13.0
Other	1	5.3	4.3
Total	23		100.0

N=19

Missing Responses = 1 (5%)

When it comes to street fights between groups, rather than simply between individuals or small numbers of young people, there was a strong ‘ethnic’ dimension. This is reflected in the following quotations:

PI4: ‘I find that a lot of Australians, not all Australians, but a lot of Australians, are pretty racist towards Oriental people – Vietnamese, Chinese. I’ve asked a lot of Australians “why would you want to be racist against the Vietnamese?” and they always say something like “they’re always pulling out machetes” and stuff like that and “they’ll chop you up” and stuff like that. They say “They should go back to their own country and chop each other up instead of coming over here and chopping us up.” I can’t see a normal person who’s sober say a racist remark to a Polynesian. I mean if a Polynesian and a Vietnamese were sitting together and there was an Australian guy, I believe that he’d say something racist to the Vietnamese, rather than the Polynesian. Australians think if they say something racist towards a Vietnamese they necessarily won’t do nothing, because they’re smaller – they come in small sizes. That’s why they’ll pick on a Vietnamese rather than a Polynesian first.’

PI9: ‘Asians against Australians I’d say. Australians are very racist against the Asian groups.’

PI13: ‘A few years ago it was Maoris and Australians used to fight each other all the time. But not now; not any more. Vietnamese usually fight against the Cambodians and the Australians (now).’

PI15: ‘It’s mainly, everyone’s onto the Asians. Everyone hates Asians. Doesn’t matter which gang, you know, everyone hates them.’

PI17: ‘The Maoris most; (They fight) anybody.’

PI18: ‘It used to be Aussies versus the Maoris, but it’s not as common any more. There aren’t any skinheads around here, there are too many Maoris. There are some Vietnamese, but not enough to make one gang. You need about one hundred to make one gang.’

Similar types of conflicts and problems were also identified in relation to the school. Table 9 outlines the perceptions of the Pacific Islander young people regarding the activities of gangs within an educational context.

Table 9:
Young People's Perceptions of How Gangs Are a Problem in School

Type of problem	Response to each category		
	Number	Percent (respondents)	Percent (responses)
Scare/pick on students	6	42.9	22.2
Start fights	9	64.3	33.3
Racism	5	35.7	18.5
Bad influence	1	7.1	3.7
Problematic for teachers	1	7.1	3.7
Deal drugs	2	14.3	7.4
Don't know	1	7.1	3.7
Other	2	14.3	7.4
Total	27		100.0

N=14

Not Applicable = 6 (30%)

In the discussions, some distinction was made between 'gangs' as such, and conflict based simply on group membership. Gang-related behaviour tended to be associated with 'troublemakers' and young people who engaged in various kinds of criminal activity such as drug dealing, vandalism and stealing. There were 'toughs' at school who intimidated other students and who made things difficult for teachers.

Some of the conflict, however, was seen as necessarily related to membership of gangs. Here, racism was cited as a problem, and tensions would emerge between different ethnic groups.

PI9: 'Gangs were a problem in my school last year. We've got all these Serbian dudes in there. Big, chunky, old guys that started fighting with the Asians and there were a couple of punch ons and stuff'.

PI15: 'Not mostly gangs though; it's just a group of kids who hang out with each other. (There's) a lot of racism at school. It's always Asians hanging around Asians, the blacks hang around the blacks, Aussies, whites, you know, hang around in a group. The Asians always win; they're crazy - mad. You can't fight one, you've got to fight a thousand of them 'cos they never fight by themselves'.

A common thread which ran throughout the discussions was the way in which nationality or ethnicity was seized upon not only to mark social differences between groups of young people, but also to exacerbate the tensions and conflicts between them as well. It was recognised by the interviewees that if they were not in a gang, then many of the young gang members would be able to take better advantage of school, and would be able to engage in more productive work and life pursuits. Nevertheless, it was also acknowledged that in many cases they would be left with nothing to do but hang out on the streets anyway. Furthermore, given the conflicts occurring between groups of young people in the schools and on the streets, issues of racism and inter-group fighting would still have to be addressed. The need for group support, regardless of the name attached to the group (a 'gang', a 'friendship network', a Maori group), was seen as essential.

2.5 Problems & Solutions

How to respond to youth gangs is a complex question. Part of the difficulty lies with the influence of, and need to dispel, the myths surrounding youth activities and group formation perpetrated in the media.

The young people who participated in this study were very critical of media representations of 'ethnic youth gangs'. They felt that the media was biased and only showed the bad side of young people in groups. The media exaggerated the problem, and as several young Pacific Islander people observed, tended to pick on 'Asians'. Maori youth were likewise seen to be singled out for negative treatment in the local newspapers. Another criticism was that media portrayals and television shows tended to provide images and accounts of youth behaviour which could, in some instances, encourage young viewers to emulate the behaviour being depicted.

From the point of view of the young people themselves, the issues pertaining to gang formation, membership and activity did not warrant a coercive response. Rather, the general feeling was that gang members should be given greater support, assistance and direction. One person made the point that '*You've got to sit down and talk to them, give them a bit of discipline. Violence is not the answer. They don't want to listen*' (PI7). Another commented: '*They need to be helped. You can't just put them in jail 'cos that's not gonna change anything*' (PI19).

On the other hand, while encouraging a developmental approach to the issues, and to enhancing the opportunities of young gang members, many of the respondents felt that it was either hard to do anything, or that the best thing to do was to leave them alone. This sentiment was captured by one young person in the following way:

'There's not really much you can do. If you're feeling like that's where you want to be at, then it's basically the way you're going to go and no matter what anyone tells you, you're not going to change. You have to learn yourself, you have to go through the experience to realise it's not necessarily a good one. And if you can benefit out of it, then you're lucky; chances are you won't'.

The idea of 'learning the hard way' was conveyed several times. But so too was the influence of the local environment on the choices and opportunities available to young people. Most (13) of the young people felt that there were insufficient activities for young people in their area. The feeling was that '*They should make more teenage things for teenagers around*' (PI13). These would include more in the way of recreation and leisure activities, sporting facilities, under-age youth discos, and youth centres.

In fact, most of the young people we interviewed spend most of their time at home or at their friend's places. A majority of the young people said that they were often bored. When they were bored they frequently resorted to drinking or use of illicit drugs such as cannabis.

Many of the young people felt restricted in what they could do due to things such as family pressures, lack of income, being under-age, safety concerns and racism. Young women, for example, tended to stay home more than young men, partly because of parental fears concerning their safety. If they do go out, they are encouraged to be part of a large group.

Lack of money and lack of adequate recreational outlets were seen as a major problem. As one person put it:

PI11: 'Restricted? what are you talkin' about, we're in jail. Everyone says it. In Frankston where can you go to do somethin' without payin' for it? The only thing you can do is walk on the beach or on the streets. You can't go to escape ordinary life. Nearest one, you have to hop on the train and pay for that. Like you go to the schools on the weekend, you see kids there playin' basketball and stuff, half the schools have decided they're takin' down their rings after hours.'

Another big issue was that groups of young people often experienced troubles on the street. Most of the young people complained of police harassment. They were also conscious of 'public disapproval' by other people in public places, experienced harassment from private security guards and had trouble with shopkeepers. Often their experiences with authority figures were related to general perceptions regarding the group as a whole.

PI15: 'Police'll always pull ya up, no matter what you do, no matter who you're with, they'll always pull ya up and check ya, search ya, strip ya. And you don't want that. You want to be able to walk down the street and the coppers just drive past ya and look at ya and look away.'

PI18: 'The public's scared of us. They look at us strangely, call the cops or security guards. The cops are wankers "What's your name? Empty your pockets". They're looking for drugs, for every damn thing. Other groups walk the other way. They fear us.'

PI13: 'The cops – they were arseholes 'cos we were just known in Frankston, that's all. And they'd pull us up, search us all the time for no reason. A few of us walked into Myers. Like, the security guards are on our tail all the time; they just follow you around – even now. They just piss us off 'cos they just follow us around like we're going to steal something'.

Most (17) of the young people had had direct contact with the police. In most cases, this contact was described as 'bad'. The young people spoke of being hassled, searched and threatened by the police. A number (8) said that they had been subjected to physical abuse. Only a few spoke of 'good' experiences with the police, which generally referred to being treated well when being stopped on the street. One mentioned that they had felt good about participating in basketball games which had been organised to improve police-youth relations.

Just over half of the young people had had direct contact with private security guards, mostly in the context of shopping centres. Their experiences with security guards was more evenly mixed. Some of the young people were friends with security guards and were treated OK when questioned by security guards. However, other young people objected to being kicked out or told to move on from areas, and of being hassled or accused of doing things that they were not doing.

The generally antagonistic relationship between the Pacific Islander youth and authority figures such as the police and security guards meant that a constructive role in dealing with gangs on the part of these figures seemed a remote idea. Broadly speaking, they were not seen as being on the side of the young people's, or as someone you could turn to for help. According to the young people, the police should get more accurate information about youth in the area, and get to know the young people better. They should maintain a public presence, but do so in ways which did not infringe upon the dignity, rights and respect of local young people.

The family was seen as important to the Pacific Islander young people. They saw it as the source of support, strength, blood connection and continuity in their lives. However, just over half of the young people reported that they were experiencing family problems. These problems related to arguments, the parents' use of drugs including alcohol, sexual assault and rape within the family and kin network, and the young person's involvement in illegal activity or street conflicts. In the light of these conflicts, problems and tensions, it is not surprising that for most of the young people the first place they would turn to for help was their friends, and other relatives. Some would turn to their parents. Others tended to keep any problems to themselves.

The young people were aware of a number of support services in the local area. They were particularly positive and impressed with the assistance provided by the Polynesian Support Group run by a major religious charity organisation. The kinds of support they received from local school and welfare agencies included advice and information, support and money. However, some welfare agencies were criticised insofar as they could '*dislocate you from your own people*'. Most of the young people had received financial assistance from government departments (such as Social Security), and some had been assisted in looking for paid work, undertaking training programmes and gaining advice and information.

In terms of what schools could do about gangs, the major response was 'not much'. However, several young people argued that schools could do more in the way of talking to gang members and getting to know them. Others spoke about expelling them or separating them from the rest of the student body. In discussion, a number of specific strategies were suggested:

PI7: 'Provide programs. For example, get police officers to come in and talk to them and answer their questions, talk about gangs.'

PI9: 'They have to get really strict with their punishments, because the main problem with schools and gangs is that there's fighting in the school ground, which is just not on. If kids are gonna get violent, then straight away just expel them. Don't let them get away with anything like that.'

PI12: 'Have uniforms. I'd stop the gang look.'

PI15: 'No, unless they kick all gangs out. You know, as soon as someone stuffs up, just kick 'em out, don't give 'em a chance, another chance, 'cos it keeps goin' on.'

PI19: 'With their children that go to school, for Maori kids, it's good if they have, if they got in a Maori worker every now and then to deal with that.'

Even from this brief list, it is clear that the young people themselves have a number of ideas regarding creative ways to deal with gang behaviour in the school environment.

The young people felt that social services, and migrant services, were limited in what they could do, but a strong message was that young people needed more support and guidance, and that they needed help with work, housing, education and money. This theme was also reflected in the Pacific Islander young people's perceptions regarding what government in general can do about youth gangs. Table 10 indicates the kinds of measures which the young people would like to see in relation to these issues.

Table 10:
Young People's Perceptions of What the Government can Do about Gangs

Type of Action	Response to each category		
	Number	Percent (respondents)	Percent (responses)
Education/training	4	20.0	16.7
Provide free hang out places for young people	5	25.0	20.8
Don't close schools	1	5.0	4.2
Provide more funding for young people	2	10.0	8.3
Support/listen to them	2	10.0	8.3
Can't do much	5	25.0	20.8
Other	5	25.0	20.8
Total	24		100.0

N=19
Missing Responses =1 (5%)

Part of the message conveyed by the young people was that government and community agencies need to be in touch with the realities of the street, and the experiences of young people: *'Go out on the streets and find out what it's about. Like that drug booklet, they let out, that's a load of crap; that's only stuff they get from books. They wouldn't know what real drugs and stuff like that do' (PI5)*. Another concern was that positive efforts in working with young people were already in place, but these were being threatened by government cutbacks: *'Don't cut funding to the organisations that are trying to help our society... All the funding for these new services have been cut so much that they're running out of things they can do' (PI9)*. The issue of community resources, and the involvement of young people as members of the community, were central to many of the proposals for constructively dealing with youth gangs.

2.6 Conclusion

This study has been based upon interviews with 20 young people from the Pacific Islander communities in Melbourne. Most of the young people had migrated to Australia at an early age. All of them had a close identification with their ethnic and cultural origins and backgrounds.

The young people came from households where one or more of their parents was in paid employment. Only a few of the young people had employment themselves. Most commented that young people in the area are reliant upon government benefits of some kind, and that some may have to resort to illegal activity (such as shopstealing) to supplement their income.

The young people tended to hang around together in groups which basically shared ethnic and cultural attributes in common. Throughout the study, a number of young people remarked on the centrality of ethnicity in terms of group formation, and in terms of the perceptions of the public and other young people regarding the status and position of certain ethnic minority groups. Physical differences, such as skin colour and body size, were seen to be accompanied by social processes of exclusion and inclusion in the case of group membership.

In the specific area of 'youth gangs', the study reveals several key points. These are:

- There was a *blurring of boundaries* between 'youth gangs' and 'group of young people', and it was often difficult to distinguish between the two given the overlap in membership, how people identified themselves and their friendship networks, and the types of activities in which young people generally engage. The distinction was also made difficult by the fact that fights (usually between groups comprised mainly of young people from specific ethnic and nationality backgrounds), although violent, did not necessarily imply gang formation and organised membership structures as such.
- The strongest definition of a youth gang was reserved for those young people involved in *criminal activity* on a regular, persistent basis. The hallmark of a gang, in this sense, was the relative emphasis placed on illegal and anti-social activity, and, especially, a group ethos which was predisposed toward the use of violence. These young people were made up of 'toughs' who had a visible street presence, and who displayed constant aggression towards others.
- Another related form of group, which was often associated with gang-like formations, was that based upon *certain styles of dress*, and which had a strong *sense of territoriality*. Very often this defence of one's 'turf' was closely linked to ethnic identity. That is, certain areas were seen as belonging to certain ethnic groups. However, in some instances, the mere fact of living in an area was seen as the central connecting point for young people, and ethnic background would not be used as the only basis of exclusion/inclusion for a particular group.

Ethnicity was a major source of social connection for most of the people in the study. There was a familiarity with one another, and a sense of shared experiences.

However, the group nature of youth behaviour also manifests itself in the form of fights on the street, and conflicts between groups and individuals within the school setting. In this context, it is understandable that the young people saw gang formation and membership as a rationale way to protect oneself.

As demonstrated by these findings, the process of gang membership is linked in several ways to racism. For instance, racist violence directed at certain groups, whether on the street or in the school, by other young people or by state police, can be a trigger for collective responses to the threat. Similarly, gang membership can also, simultaneously, be an important way in which to confirm one's group identity, to determine precisely whom one is and where they fit into the wider world.

It needs to be acknowledged as well, that periodically the notion of racism can be used as a convenient cover for the aggression of the victimised group. In other words, it can be used to justify violence which is substantially motivated by a desire to engage in the violence itself, rather than in responding to racism per se. Angry young men lashing out at the world around them is a quite different phenomenon to concerted community action which attempts to foster an anti-racist social environment.

The ambitions of the young people in this study were to achieve some semblance of financial security over the next five years or so. A primary consideration for most of the young people was to find paid employment, and to make enough money to keep them in good comfort.

Basically, the young people had fairly conventional aspirations. They wanted to be economically well-off, and to be free from undue social pressures and hardships. They wanted to take an active role in society. They wanted to have a good life.

2.7 Recommendations

i. Canadian Gangs and Ethnicity

In the study of youth gangs in Vancouver, Gordon and Foley (1998: 127) make the observation that:

while the number of individuals involved in organizations, gangs and groups is small (tiny might be a better adjective) immigrants who are from visible ethnic minorities are significantly over-represented. This may be a function of ethnic and economic marginality. The lack of language, and a lack of both money and the means to obtain money and material goods legitimately may result in individuals clustering in supportive groups where they are understood and can make money, albeit illegally.

The report goes on to note that it appears that settlement services are not reaching some individuals and families, and that there is a need for more social workers who understand the structures, customs, values and norms of particular immigrant cultures and who can speak the languages of newly arrived individuals and families.

The report recommends that the ethnic minority families and young people would benefit from some or all of the following (Gordon & Foley, 1998: 127-128):

- Education about Canada and the Canadian way of life prior to leaving the country of origin
- Opportunities to discuss Canada and the Canadian way of life, and the probable impact on the family unit, before leaving the country of origin
- Access to adequate settlement services immediately upon arrival, and for an extended period thereafter
- ESL [English as Second Language] classes for adults that are free and available during the day, in the evenings and at weekends
- ESL classes for children that are free and available outside regular classroom time
- Access to community kitchens and similar programmes that address the problem of family isolation
- Programmes specifically designed for immigrants from war zones to help reduce the long term effects of exposure to violence
- Access to 'buddy' systems whereby support can be provided for individuals and families during their first few years of life in Canada

It is further recommended that there be additional programming for immigrants aimed at assisting individuals to find rewarding employment, especially young adult males who are at risk of drifting into criminal activity.

ii. Public Spaces and Ethnicity in Australia

The most sustained analysis of how young ethnic minority people actually use public space – which has obvious implications regarding gang-related perceptions and activities – has been a study undertaken in four local government areas in Sydney (Pe-Pua, 1996). A wide range of issues relating to the lives of 100 street-frequenting non-English speaking background young people were investigated. The discussions and interviews covered topics such as family issues, housing and accommodation issues, social and recreational needs, financial needs, employment issues, educational and training issues, physical and mental health, legal issues and youth services.

With respect to the specific issue of public space use, the study found that (Pe-Pua, 1996: 115):

The activities associated with street-frequenting ranged from illegal activities to fun activities, socialising, fighting or stirring up trouble, smoking and others. The reasons for street-frequenting were boredom, family-related, for economic or moral support, because of the freedom it provides, and others. The perceived benefits were: widening one's social network; having fun; learning experience; freedom and a sense of power; escape from problems; economic gains, and others. The perceived disadvantages were related to problems with the police; a negative image or bad treatment received from others, especially adults; getting into trouble or being involved in fights; health or drug and alcohol problems; lack of adequate shelter or food; financial worries; emotional burden; and general safety.

On the basis of the study's findings, a number of recommendations were put forward, some of which are relevant to the present study. These include (Pe-Pua, 1996):

- that different strategies for disseminating information on the background and needs of street-frequenting young people be undertaken, to be targeted at different groups
- that the culture or practice of service provision (e.g., police, youth and community, health) be changed to have a more effective ethnic minority youth focus, while maintaining a high level of customer service and professionalism
- that youth services incorporate a mobile outreach and street-based service delivery model to access street-frequenting young people
- that a multi-skilled, multi-purpose type of structure for a youth centre be set up
- that more street workers be hired, or street and outreach work be strongly encouraged as part of youth work, provided adequate funding support and human resources are made available
- that the recreational needs of these young people be addressed by making alternative forms of recreation available

Pe-Pua (1996) concludes that the key to providing for the needs of ethnic minority street-frequenting young people are education and employment opportunities. Changes to existing services would be a step in the right direction, and assist in developing further these opportunities.

iii. Recommendations Arising from the Present Study

The key issues arising from this study relate to the nature of group formations involving young people from distinctive ethnic minority backgrounds, the tensions between different groups of young people in schools and on the streets, and the difficulties experienced by ethnic minority youth in relation to authority figures and other members of the public based upon group affiliation and physical appearance.

Following from the perceptions of the young people themselves, and the findings of this and other reports, the following recommendations appear warranted:

- It is essential that young people in general be provided with *education in cross-cultural issues* in order that the backgrounds, cultures and patterns of life pertaining to specific ethnic groups be better understood by all concerned
- Attention must also be directed at the provision of *anti-racist education*, so that issues of discrimination, prejudice and unequal power relations be analysed and discussed in an enlightened, informative and empathetic manner
- Following the example of the City of Adelaide (see White, 1998: 47), there should be developed at the local, regional and state levels a series of *youth reconciliation projects*, that will promote the diversity of cultures among young people, aim to reduce violence between them, and give young people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds the practical opportunity to get to know each other at a personal and group level
- Concerted action is needed on the specific issue of school bullying so that appropriate *conflict resolution and anti-violence strategies* be put into place in order to reduce the number of such incidents and to reassure students of their safety and security within the educational institution
- *Special provisions* are needed for those young people who, due to their bullying or gang-related behaviour, might normally be excluded from school, but who still require community support and appropriate educational programmes to ensure that they have the chance to contribute positively to society, rather than to be marginalised even further from the mainstream
- Strategic action is needed in the area of *youth unemployment* and in the creation of jobs for particularly disadvantaged groups and communities, especially given the aspirations and expectations of young people who desire economic security and participation in meaningful paid work
- The levels and types of *income support* for young people needs to be increased and made relevant to the real needs, living costs and spending patterns of young people, as well as taking into account their contributions to the household income
- The police and security guards, as well as shopping centre managers and retail traders, need to be encouraged to develop *positive and constructive methods of public space management* and social regulation, in ways which will include the concerns of young people themselves, and which will reduce instances of unfair treatment and unnecessary intervention as these pertain to young people

If we, as a society, are to tackle issues surrounding 'youth gangs', then, as a society, we must also recognise our responsibilities in creating the conditions which generate the perceptions of, fear of, and negative responses to such phenomenon. In the context of the present report, this means that many more community resources need to be directed toward the youth population. These are needed in order to better educate young people generally about the diverse nature of the Australian population; to provide them with creative leisure outlets, and safe and secure schools and public spaces; and to engage with them about how best to deal with issues of violence, racism and social conflict involving different groups. The time to provide such community resources is now.

2.8 References

- Adamson, C. (1998) 'Tribute, turf, honor and the American street gang: Patterns of continuity and change since 1920', *Theoretical Criminology*, 2(1): 57-84.
- Aumair, M. & Warren, I. (1994) 'Characteristics of Juvenile Gangs in Melbourne', *Youth Studies Australia*, 13(2): 40-44.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (1996) *Pacific Islander Data. 1996 ABS Census Data.* Canberra: ABS.
- Byrne, J. (1995) 'Youth Service', *Footscray Drug & Safer Community Forum Proceedings*, 13 September.
- Cain, M. (1994) *Juveniles in Detention. Special Needs Groups: Young women, Aboriginal and Indo-Chinese Detainees. Information and Evaluation Series No.3.* Sydney: Department of Juvenile Justice.
- Chan, J. (1994) 'Policing Youth in 'Ethnic' Communities: Is community policing the answer?', in R. White & C. Alder (eds) *The Police and Young People in Australia.* Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Chan, J. (1997) *Changing Police Culture: Policing in a Multicultural Society.* Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Cox, D. & Low, M. (1986) *Migration from the Pacific: A welfare perspective.* Melbourne: University of Melbourne.
- Cunneen, C. (1994) *Juvenile Justice and Young People of Non-English Speaking Background: Discussion Paper.* Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.
- Cunneen, C. & White, R. (1995) *Juvenile Justice: An Australian Perspective.* Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Curry, G., Ball, R. & Fox, R. (1994) *Gang Crime and Law Enforcement Recordkeeping.* Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.
- Doan, V. (1995) 'Indo-Chinese Youth: Issues of culture and justice', in C. Guerra & R. White (eds) *Ethnic Minority Youth in Australia.* Hobart: National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies.
- Edwards, J., Oakley, R. & Carey, S. (1987) 'Street Life, Ethnicity and Social Policy', in G. Gaskell & R. Benewick (eds) *The Crowd in Contemporary Britain.* London: Sage.
- Estes, P. (1997) 'Migrant Youth and Juvenile Crime', in A. Borowski & I. O'Connor (eds) *Juvenile Crime, Justice & Corrections.* Melbourne: Longman.
- Francis, S. (1994) 'Cultural transition: Pacific islander Families in Australia', *Migration Action*, volume vi, Melbourne: Ecumenical Migration Centre.
- Francis, S. (1995) 'Pacific Islander Young People: Issues of Juvenile Justice and Cultural Dislocation', in C. Guerra & R. White (eds) *Ethnic Minority Youth in Australia.* Hobart: National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies.

- Frederico, M., Cooper, B. & Picton, C. (1996) *The Experience of Homelessness among Young People from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam*. Melbourne: Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research.
- Freeman, K. (1996) *Young People and Crime*. Crime and Justice Bulletin No.32. Sydney: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.
- Gallagher, P. & Poletti, P. (1998) *Sentencing Disparity and the Ethnicity of Juvenile Offenders*. Sydney: Judicial Commission of New South Wales.
- Gordon, R. (1995) 'Street Gangs in Vancouver', in J. Creechan & R. Silverman (eds) *Canadian Delinquency*. Toronto: Prentice Hall.
- Gordon, R. (1997) 'Gangs in Vancouver', Justice/Immigration Domain Seminar, Ottawa, 27-28 February.
- Gordon, R. & Foley, S. (1998) *Criminal Business Organizations, Street Gangs and Related Groups in Vancouver: The Report of the Greater Vancouver Gang Study*. Vancouver: Ministry of Attorney-General.
- Gregory, R. & Hunter, B. (1995) *The Macro Economy and the Growth of Ghettos and Urban Poverty in Australia*. Canberra: Discussion Paper No.325, Centre for Economic Policy Research, Australian National University.
- Guerra, C. & White, R. (eds) (1995) *Ethnic Minority Youth in Australia: Challenges and Myths*. Hobart: National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies.
- Healey, K. (ed) (1996) *Youth Gangs*. Sydney: The Spinney Press.
- House of Representatives, Standing Committee on Community Affairs (1995) *A Report on Aspects of Youth Homelessness*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.
- Huff, R. (ed) (1996) *Gangs in America* (2nd edition). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Jamrozik, A., Boland, C. & Urquhart, R. (1995) *Social Change and Cultural Transformation in Australia*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Klein, M., Maxson, C. & Miller, J. (eds) (1995) *The Modern Gang Reader*. Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing.
- Lyons, E. (1994) *Youth Gangs in Melbourne: Youth Workers' Perspectives*. (Criminology Department Honours Placement Report). Melbourne: Police Youth Advisory Unit.
- Lyons, E. (1995) 'New Clients, Old Problems: Vietnamese young people's experiences with police', in C. Guerra & R. White (eds) *Ethnic Minority Youth in Australia*. Hobart: National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies.
- Maher, L., Dixon, D., Swift, W. & Nguyen, T. (1997) *Anh Hai: Young Asian Background People's Perceptions and Experiences of Policing*. Sydney: UNSW Faculty of Law Research Monograph Series.
- Maher, L., Nguyen, T. & Le, T. (1999) *Wall of Silence: Stories of Cabramatta Street Youth*. In R. White (ed) *Australian Youth Subcultures: On the Margins and In the Mainstream*. Hobart: Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies.
- Miller, W. (1975) *Violence by Youth Gangs and Youth Groups as a Crime Problem in Major American Cities*. Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office.
- Moss, I. (1993) *State of the Nation: A Report on People of Non-English Speaking Backgrounds* (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission). Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.
- Mukherjee, S., Carcach, C. & Higgins, K. (1997) *Juvenile Crime and Justice: Australia 1997*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.
- Murray, J. (1973) *Larrikins: 19th Century Outrage*. Melbourne: Lansdowne Press.

Ethnic Youth Gangs in Australia – Do They Exist?

National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau (1995) Report of the First National Summit on Police & Ethnic Youth Relations. Melbourne: NPEAB.

National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau (1997) Annual Report. Melbourne: NPEAB.

New South Wales Ombudsman (1996) Inquiry into Juvenile Detention Centres (2 vols). Sydney: NSW Ombudsman.

Pe-Pua, R. (1996) 'We're Just Like Other Kids!': Street-frequenting Youth of Non-English-speaking background. Melbourne: Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research.

Sanders, W. (1994) Gangbans and Drive-Bys: Grounded Culture and Juvenile Gang Violence. New York: Aldine De Gruyter.

Standing Committee on Social Issues (1995) A Report into Youth Violence in New South Wales. Legislative Council, Parliament of New South Wales.

Stratton, J. (1992) The Young Ones: Working-Class Culture, Consumption and the Category of Youth. Perth: Black Swan Press.

White, R. (ed) (1993) Youth Subcultures: Theory, history and the Australian experience. Hobart: National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies.

White, R. (1996) 'Racism, Policing and Ethnic Youth Gangs', *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 7(3): 302-313.

White, R. (1998) Public Spaces for Young People: A Guide to Creative Projects and Positive Strategies. Sydney: Australian Youth Foundation and the National Campaign Against Violence and Crime.

White, R. (1999) Hanging Out: Negotiating Young People's Use of Public Space. Canberra: National Crime Prevention, Attorney General's Department.

Youth Justice Coalition, Western Sydney Juvenile Justice Interest Group and Youth Action and Policy Association (1994) Nobody Listens: The Experience of Contact between Young People and the Police. Sydney: Youth Justice Coalition.

Zelinka, S. (1995) 'Ethnic Minority Young People', in C. Guerra & R. White (eds) *Ethnic Minority Youth in Australia*. Hobart: National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies.