

CHAPTER 6 - RECREATION AND LEISURE

Examines the use of public space by young people as a recreational outlet and recreational options.

KEY RECOMMENDATION 29 - YOUTH PLANNING GUIDELINES

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Planning review state planning provisions to develop guidelines which ensure the needs of young people are considered in:

- public places, parks and recreation areas
 - the planning and development of new housing estates
 - the development of commercial premises involving public access
- to contribute to the safety and enjoyment of the entire community.

Government response:

The needs of young people in relation to these issues are currently considered by the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning in the following ways:

- the development of Regional Environmental Plans and regional strategies which focus on the needs of the region as a whole and issues such as housing, employment, transport and recreation
- working with the Commonwealth Government in the promotion of *AMCORD - A National Resource Document for Residential Development*, during the period from November 1995 and over the next two years. *AMCORD* is a manual of best practice for residential development in Australia. Youth issues are treated as part of the broader social imperatives which guide neighbourhood and housing design
- preparing and promoting good residential design through guideline documents such as the *NSW Performance Code for Multi-Unit Housing*. The code, currently in preparation, will facilitate improvements in the quality and choice of housing and residential environments to suit the diversity of people's needs. It will also ensure that the detailed design of housing considers issues such as safety and security
- funding community organisations and local governments to increase services to disadvantaged groups through the Area Assistance Scheme which aims to improve the co-ordination and planning of services at local and regional levels. Whilst the Scheme is not specifically designed to meet youth needs, a number of youth programs have been funded across the Western Sydney, Illawarra, Hunter, Macarthur, Central Coast and North Coast Regions.

Guidelines are being developed by the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning to assist councils and developers to use s94 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* contributions for community services to provide adequate and appropriate facilities for young people in public places.

Leichhardt and Hurstville Councils are running pilot projects in shopping centres to redesign them to take into account the fact that young people will use the centres. Youth centres and youth workers are located on site and the need for appropriate training for security and police services is recognised.

The Juvenile Crime Prevention Division of the Attorney General's Department has funded a 12 month research project to examine how young people use public space in the Parramatta CBD. The project aims to minimise future conflict between commercial owners of public space and young people.

Discussions are underway between the Youth Action Policy Association (YAPA) and the Government regarding a *Young People and Public Space* research project being conducted by YAPA.

The *Neighbourhood Improvement Program* run by the Department of Housing has been allocated increased resources over the next two years. The program aims to improve both the standard of housing and the living environment of large housing estates by giving tenants more control of their housing and neighbourhoods and improving access to community facilities. There is also a *Good Neighbour Policy* which will ensure better handlings of disputes and complaints and ensure a co-ordinated approach between the agencies dealing with crime, drug abuse and people with serious behavioural problems.

RECOMMENDATION 30 - SCHOOLS AND AFTER HOURS SPORTING AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education encourage principals and School Councils to ensure that school sporting and recreation facilities are available to young people after hours.

Government response:

The Government supports the recommendation.

The Department of School Education facilitates the use of school premises through departmental policies such as *Community Use of School Facilities*. It will actively encourage principals to ensure facilities are made available. Schools meet local demands to use their facilities subject to availability.

RECOMMENDATION 31 - LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND AFTER HOURS SPORTING AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Local Government, in consultation with the executives of the Local Government Association and Shires Association, encourage local government agencies to ensure that sporting and recreation facilities are accessible for extended hours.

Government response:

The Government supports the recommendation.

The *Local Government Act 1993* contains provisions requiring adequate services and facilities to meet the needs of the community. It is intended that all local councils will be surveyed by the Government in the near future in relation to their service provision to young people.

In January 1996, following the release of the Committee's Report, the Department of Local Government included an article in its publication, 'Perspectives in Local Government', noting relevant recommendations of the Committee's report. The publication is distributed to all NSW local councils and to peak local government industry bodies. The Department urged councils to consider making sporting and recreational facilities accessible for extended hours.

RECOMMENDATION 32 - INFORMATION ABOUT LOCAL YOUTH FACILITIES AND RECREATIONAL OPTIONS

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Local Government, in consultation with the executives of the Local Government Association and Shires Association, encourage local government agencies to consult with youth service providers and allocate appropriate resources to developing campaigns informing young people of the range of youth facilities and recreational options available to them.

Government response:

The Government supports the recommendation.

Youth Week is held in April each year to publicise youth services, facilities and recreational options available through local councils and other community organisations. The Department of Training and Education Co-ordination organises and funds Youth Week. In 1996 over \$110,000 was provided to 96 councils for Youth Week promotions.

It is understood that many councils already provide this information through regular reports to the community, local newspaper advertisements and Annual Reports.

In January 1996, following the release of the Committee's Report, the Department of Local Government included an article in its publication, 'Perspectives in Local Government', noting relevant recommendations of the Committee's report. The publication is distributed to all NSW local councils and to peak local government industry bodies. The Department urged councils to target their information campaigns with a youth audience in mind, to increase their awareness of available recreational options.

RECOMMENDATION 33 - PLANNING AND DEVELOPING YOUTH FACILITIES

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Local Government, in consultation with the executives of the Local Government Association and Shires Association, encourage local government to:

- ensure that young people are actively consulted regarding planned youth facilities
- seek sponsorship in developing youth facilities and
- encourage retail shopping centre management to develop youth facilities on their premises.

Government response:

The Government supports the recommendation.

It is currently working on a number of relevant legislative initiatives:

- a proposal to amend the *Local Government Act 1993* to introduce a requirement that councils promote, provide and plan for the needs of children
- a proposal to introduce regulations requiring councils to include in their annual reports details of programs undertaken to develop and promote services and programs which provide for the needs of children. This will highlight the issue for both the community and councils and will ensure that children's needs are incorporated into councils' strategic planning processes

- a regulatory reform proposal to require councils to include in their annual reports details of performance in access and equity for all residents and other users of council services to better focus on the needs of groups such as Aboriginals and people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The Government believes planning for children's needs and access and equity policies should be made an integral part of council management plan requirements in the future.

The *Local Government Act 1993* contains provisions intended to influence councils to undertake community consultation to more accurately gauge service and infrastructure needs. The Local Government and Shires Association's existing policy encourages councils to consult young people and many councils do have consultative mechanisms in place.

It is also increasingly common for youth facilities to be incorporated at the development phase of shopping centres, although there is some developer resistance in this regard. Innovative projects to encourage consultation between local authorities, youth representative organisations and shopping centre management have been initiated by Leichhardt, Hurstville, Baulkham Hills and Parramatta Councils. The Government will also support research by the Youth Action Policy Association on Young People in Public Places.

In January 1996, following the release of the Committee's Report, the Department of Local Government included an article in its publication, 'Perspectives in Local Government', noting relevant recommendations of the Committee's report. The publication is distributed to all NSW local councils and to peak local government industry bodies. The Department urged councils to:

- consult with young people when planning youth and recreational options
- consider if any projects may benefit from sponsorship
- encourage shopping centre management to consider the problem of youth violence when operating their business.

RECOMMENDATION 34 - YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN YOUTH PROGRAMS

Recommendation:

That NSW Government agencies funding youth programs encourage the participation of young people in the planning and operation of these programs.

Government response:

The Government values the continued input and participation of all relevant youth related bodies in the planning and operation of youth programs, including the Youth Action Policy Association (YAPA) and the Youth Accommodation Association (YAA). Regular consultation occurs between senior government officers and these peak youth organisations.

The Youth Advisory Council (YAC) reports direct to the Premier on matters pertaining to youth affairs, with support provided through the Youth Branch of the Cabinet Office. YAC advises the Premier direct on issues affecting young people. In addition, its representatives sit on a variety of Government committees such as:

- the NSW Committee on Underage Drinking
- the NSW Youth Alcohol Strategy Advisory Committee
- the Statewide Health Ethics and Confidentiality Committee and
- the Advisory Group on the Review of the NSW Higher School Certificate.

YAPA representatives sit on a number of Government committees, including:

- the NSW Committee on Underage Drinking

- the Working Party of the NSW Draft Policy for Health Services of Young People
- the Juvenile Crime Prevention Advisory Committee and
- the Evaluation Committee for the *Children (Parental Responsibility) Act*.

YAA is represented on the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program/Crisis Accommodation Program Ministerial Advisory Committee and is regularly consulted with by the Department of Community Services.

Government seeks to liaise with young people across the range of programs and services it provides to them. Examples of this include:

- the *Hunter Region Co-ordination Model* which aims to improve the effectiveness of services and programs for the benefit of young people in the Hunter region of NSW. This program is characterised by consultation with young people and strong community support
- a Government commitment to ensuring that young people are provided with genuine opportunities to participate in health decision making. The Youth Health Discussion Paper, *Caring for Young People*, has recommended that Area and Districts Health Services develop appropriate consultation mechanisms with young people and that consideration be given to appointing a young person to Area and District Boards
- programs for disadvantaged youth funded by the Department of Training and Education Coordination (eg Helping Early Leavers, Circuit Breaker and Time Out programs) which are designed by individual project operators in consultation with participants
- local government Youth Week sponsors are required to consult with, and involve young people in, activities for Youth Week
- programs run from the Outreach section of TAFE NSW emphasise the participation of students in course planning and operation
- youth representatives are being involved in initiatives of the *Police Service Youth Policy*.

RECOMMENDATION 35 - ALCOHOL-FREE EVENTS IN HOTELS

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Gaming and Racing ensure that hotels be permitted to hold alcohol-free events in closed-off areas while allowing alcohol to be served in other areas.

Government response:

The Government fully supports the recommendation.

The Government's *Liquor and Registered Clubs Legislation Amendment (Minors Entertainment) Bill 1996* will increase the availability of entertainment and recreational opportunities for young people across New South Wales.

The current liquor legislation allows hotels to stage alcohol-free entertainment. However, the restrictions over this type of entertainment - including the requirement to stop normal liquor trading prior to, during and immediately following alcohol-free functions - has led to very few hotels being willing to conduct these functions.

The Government's amendments will allow alcohol-free entertainment to be held in a separate and distinct enclosed area of a hotel's premises - subject to strengthened supervision conditions. This will bring hotels into line with the requirements for alcohol-free functions in registered clubs. In addition, the proposed legislative amendments will require authorities granted for alcohol-free entertainment to include provisions to ensure safe conduct of patrons in the vicinity of the premises.

The Bill was outlined in the 1995 Liquor Policy document and, at the date of publication, had passed through the Lower House of Parliament during the Budget Session 1996.

RECOMMENDATION 36 - MEMBERSHIP OF NON-SPORTING CLUBS AS JUNIOR MEMBERS

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Gaming and Racing amend the Registered Clubs Act to allow young people to join non-sporting clubs as junior members.

Government response:

The Government supports the recommendation. The Government's *Liquor and Registered Clubs Legislation Amendment (Minors Entertainment) Bill 1996* will enable a broader range of registered clubs to offer junior membership, where that membership is for the purpose of participating in established and bona fide sporting activities. At the date of publication the Bill had passed through the Lower House of Parliament during the Budget Session 1996.

RECOMMENDATION 37 - DEFINING RESTRICTED AREAS IN CLUBS IN TERMS OF PHYSICAL SEPARATION

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Gaming and Racing ensure that restricted areas can be defined in terms of "physical separation" from the rest of the clubhouse to enable smaller clubs to allow access for junior members and encourage their integration.

Government response:

The Government supports the recommendation and has addressed this within the context of the *Liquor and Registered Clubs Legislation Amendment (Minors Entertainment) Bill 1996*.

The long standing policy of the Licensing Court is to require barriers between restricted and non-restricted areas to consist of material which prevents uncontrolled access between the areas. In 1993 the policy was altered to permit see through barriers, however barriers must still be permanent and provide adequate controls over access to restricted areas. The current requirement for restricted areas is to be physically separated from other areas of a clubhouse.

The Government's Liquor Policy referred to the problem of junior members accessing small, one-room clubhouses for the purposes of participating in sports and prize giving ceremonies associated with those sports.

The Government proposes to change the legislation so that junior members of smaller and one room clubs can gain access to the club premises for the purposes of participating in sports and prize giving ceremonies subject to strict controls. This will provide benefits to young people who are members of small registered clubs and who have, until now, not been legally allowed to be on the club premises. The aim of this is to provide more recreational opportunities for young people - particularly in isolated and rural communities.

RECOMMENDATION 38 - VIOLENCE, SPORT AND THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Recommendation:

That the Attorney General urge the Standing Committee of Attorneys General to request the Federal Government to pressure media organisations to develop tighter controls to reduce violence in the advertising and promotion of sport in the electronic media.

Government response:

The Government acknowledges the importance of ensuring that media organisations exercise tighter controls to reduce violence in the advertising and promotion of sport in the electronic media.

This kind of regulation is, however, a Commonwealth responsibility. The Government considers the Commonwealth effectively regulates television content, through industry self-regulation and control by the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA). Commercial television stations are expected to adhere to the Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations (FACTs) Code which is registered by the ABA.

RECOMMENDATION 39 - SPORTING PROGRAMS

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education and Minister for Sport and Recreation ensure:

- that sporting programs offered to young people encourage the positive aspects of health and team-building
- increased emphasis is placed on non-competitive sport in schools and
- the establishment of a code of ethics to apply to the conduct of contact sports.

Government response:

That Government supports the recommendation.

Various programs and initiatives are in place which implement these goals:

- the Board of Studies develops the K-10 Personal Development Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) curriculum. Syllabuses emphasise the importance of participating in a range of individual and cooperative activities. PDHPE programs emphasise sport and physical activity in terms of positive health and social outcomes
- the Department of School Education's *Sport Policy* requires that schools emphasise participation rather than winning or losing. Schools are also required to avoid placing excessive physical and psychological demands on competitors so that enjoyment, learning and positive attitudes are promoted at all times. The Policy incorporates Codes of Behaviour for school sport which highlight the principles of enjoyment, satisfaction and safe play in sport
- AUSSIE SPORT programs promote the development of sporting skills, fun and enjoyment. They encourage across the board participation, fair play and emphasise 'sport for all' while discouraging a 'win at all cost' mentality. A pamphlet entitled 'Codes of Behaviour' outlines recommended practices of those involved in sport.

RECOMMENDATION 40 - AMATEUR AND PROFESSIONAL BOXING

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Health, in liaison with his federal counterparts, consider a strategy to phase out amateur and professional boxing.

Government response:

The Government does not consider there is a demonstrated need to phase out amateur and professional boxing.

Boxing is a significant sport in the community and an Olympic sport. The *NSW Boxing and Wrestling Control Act 1986* strictly controls and sets conditions to ensure the safest possible conditions exist for boxers, eg medical examination prior to registration and pre and post contest and setting a minimum age for professional boxing of 18 years.

The NSW Boxing Authority controls and regulates professional boxing. Permits from the Department of Sport and Recreation are required for amateur tournaments, subject to any conditions that the Minister wishes to impose.

RECOMMENDATION 41 - KICK-BOXING INQUIRY

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Health conduct an Inquiry into the health aspects of kick-boxing.

Government response:

The Government does not support an inquiry into kick-boxing at this time. Professional kick-boxing is controlled and regulated under the *Boxing and Wrestling Control Act 1986*. Permits from the Department of Sport and Recreation are required for amateur kick-boxing tournaments, subject to any conditions that the Minister wishes to impose.

KEY RECOMMENDATION 42 - VIOLENCE CONTROL ON LICENSED PREMISES

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Gaming and Racing review the Liquor Act to ensure it clearly indicates the responsibilities of licensees to limit the likelihood of violence on their premises by measures including:

- ensuring appropriate hotel management and design practices affecting alcohol consumption and the safety of patrons are a condition of licence renewal
- requiring all licence applicants to undertake a course on strategies to minimise such violence and
- ensuring the Licensing Court can compel attendance at training courses for licensees who fail to meet these standards.

Government response:

The recommendation is supported in principle.

The *Liquor and Registered Clubs Legislation Amendment Bill 1996* introduced a harm minimisation object into the legislation that strengthens provisions relating to the responsible service, promotion and consumption of liquor. The effect of these amendments will be to strengthen the public interest provisions in the licensing laws in recognition of the level of alcohol-related harm in the community and the potential for the licensing laws to be applied to better address alcohol-related harm resulting from alcohol misuse and abuse.

The Bill provides for a regulation making power in both Acts to allow the staged introduction of compulsory training for liquor licensees, secretary managers of registered clubs, and for the relevant staff of those premises, in the responsible service of alcohol. There is no licence renewal in this State. However, the Licensing Court can impose various conditions on licences, including as a result of complaints. The requirement to undertake formal training in responsible alcohol serving practices has been imposed in some instances.

The legislative amendments will require the Court to refuse to grant an application for a new liquor licence unless satisfied that practices will be in place at the premises, as soon as the licence is granted, to ensure as far as reasonably practicable that liquor is sold, supplied and served responsibly on the premises and that those practices will remain in place.

In addition, the *Liquor and Registered Clubs Legislation Amendment (Minors Entertainment) Bill 1996* will require authorities granted for alcohol free entertainment to include provision to ensure safe conduct of patrons in the vicinity of the premises.

At the date of publication, both Bills had passed through the Lower House of Parliament during the Budget Session 1996.

In addition to these proposed legislative amendments, a joint initiative has been undertaken by the Department of Gaming and Racing, the NSW Police Service and the Department of Health to educate liquor licensees, club managers and their staff about the responsible serving of alcohol. The aim of the initiative has been to promote a safer environment on licensed and club premises.

RECOMMENDATION 43 - TRAINING FOR DOORMEN OF LICENSED PREMISES

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Police, together with the liquor industry and relevant trade unions, review the training pre-requisites for the issue of Class 1 Security Licences to ensure that doormen of licensed premises have appropriate training in interpersonal skills, non-violent restraint and conflict resolution.

Government response:

The Police Service Security Industry Consultative Committee has reviewed the training requirements for Class 1 Security Licences and recommended changes in line with competency based standards which have been developed by the industry, including specific training for crowd controllers (doormen).

Action to introduce legislation to allow for these changes has been suspended pending the outcome of the Industrial Commission's Inquiry into the transport and delivery of cash and other valuables expected to be finalised in July 1996.

RECOMMENDATION 44 - ABUSE OF DRUGS & ALCOHOL AND HARM MINIMISATION

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Health ensure that appropriate resources are allocated to:

- prioritise the reduction of alcohol and drug abuse by young people as a primary objective
- continue publicity campaigns on the dangers of steroid use to target young people and
- monitor prescription practices to minimise the abuse of prescription drugs by young people.

Government response:

The Government is strongly committed to the prevention and reduction of the harms associated with drug and alcohol use and misuse, particularly by young people.

It has a wide range of policies and programs across a range of Government agencies which target the problems and harms arising to young people from drug and alcohol use and misuse, involving considerable expenditure.

The Government has commenced development of an overall strategic policy framework for Government policies, programs and projects which addresses the problems associated with the use and misuse of illicit drugs, alcohol and tobacco by young people. An integral part of this

development will involve the undertaking of a comprehensive audit, by each portfolio, of all policies, programs and projects.

Prioritising reduction of alcohol and drug abuse

The NSW Health Department has strategies in place which aim to reduce alcohol and drug abuse by young people.

- *Youth Alcohol Strategy.* This strategy aims to reduce alcohol abuse. It gives examples of strategies for implementation, including community and school-based education on alcohol issues, responsible serving practices, the development and provision of alcohol and other drug services for young people and support for specific local initiatives that prevent alcohol-related harm in young people and further research into the issues around youth alcohol use. The focus of the Strategy is now the *Drink Drunk the Difference is U* campaign (mentioned in the Committee's report). The campaign evaluation indicates that it has achieved some success in modifying young people's attitudes to, and participation in, binge drinking. In 1995/96 the focus of the campaign is on alcohol-related violence among young people and binge drinking among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.
- *Education and Training.* The Health Department funds the development and delivery of drug education programs to school students. The NSW Government in 1995 doubled its commitment to drug and alcohol education in the school system by allocating \$10 million over 5 years to combat drug use by young people. The additional \$1 million this year will go towards:
 - drug education information and awareness materials for parents and care givers
 - evaluation resources for teachers to assist them better measure the effectiveness of the drug education lessons and to determine the drug education needs of students
 - resources support for teachers to ensure they are familiar with and effectively using the resources available to them and to provide a reference and guide on drug issues
 - inservice provision for teachers in harm minimisation (a one day training course will be provided for two teachers from each secondary school in NSW)
 - training courses to ensure effective support to students experiencing problems with harmful drug use
 - provision of culturally appropriate preventative programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and NESB students and
 - a wide range of other activities to target special groups.

Funding is allocated for school based drug education through the Department of School Education, the Catholic Education Commission and ancillary services which provide education to schools on drugs such as the Life Education Program and the Peer Support Foundation. Drug education forms part of the mandatory Personal Development, Health and Physical Education Key Learning Area for years K to 10 in NSW Schools.

- *Community education.* Funding is also provided to organisations providing community education and information resources, including the Centre for Education and Information on Drugs and Alcohol (CEIDA), the Alcohol and Drug Information Services (a 24 hour telephone information and counselling service) and the Health Education Unit at Sydney University. CEIDA and the Health Education Unit produce information resources for youth people and parents. Health provides nearly \$3m through the Drug and Alcohol Directorate to 16 non-Government organisations which run drug and alcohol programs specifically targeting young people.
- *Prevention Grants.* The Department's Prevention Grants Program funds health sector and community organisations to provide innovative projects to prevent drug-related harm, some specifically targeting young people.
- *Other Inter-Agency projects.* Recent and ongoing activities of the Drug and Alcohol Directorate include: assessing the provision of drug and alcohol services to young people, implementing relevant recommendations of the Alcohol and Violence Task Force, working with the Commonwealth Government's National Initiatives in Drug Education project and working with

other government departments on policies and strategies aimed at addressing problems arising from the misuse of alcohol and other drugs (eg Gaming and Racing, Roads and Traffic Authority and the NSW Police Force).

- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.* The Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee (AJAC) has resolved that an independent review be established to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of existing and prospective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander substance abuse and rehabilitation programs in New South Wales, whether community based or within custodial detention facilities (adult or juvenile). This proposal is under consideration.

Publicity campaigns on steroid use dangers

The 1992 School Survey of Drug Use by NSW Secondary School Students, conducted by the Drug and Alcohol Directorate, found that fewer than 4% of young males (aged 12 to 17) have ever used steroids and that the rate of regular use is even lower. The Directorate has developed, or is supporting, a number of strategies to address the issue of steroid use:

- education on steroid use is included as part of the mandatory Key Learning Area Personal Development, Health and Physical Education in schools
- a Steroid Clinic at St Vincent's Hospital gives health advice to steroid users
- a 24 hour telephone advisory service for health professionals requiring expert advice on drug and alcohol issues can assist health professionals dealing with steroid users
- funding the production of a resource booklet on steroid use, targeted particularly at General Practitioners. Information from the booklet has been distributed to population groups at risk of harm from steroid use, including young people, and has been included in educational material produced by the Australian Sports Drug Agency for use in schools
- an education campaign for doctors on the provisions of the *Poisons Act* which regulates the supply of steroids for reasons of body image or sporting performance
- funding a Drugs in Sport Education Project, run by the NSW Academy of Sport, which deals with steroid use and sporting performance
- working with the Commonwealth Government to reschedule testosterone products normally used in veterinary practice to ensure that they will be available only to primary producers on a veterinary prescription.

The Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy, consisting of all Australian Health and Police Ministers, endorsed a National Anabolic Substances Strategy in June 1995 with young people one of the Strategy's three priority groups.

Monitoring prescription practices to minimise abuse by young people

The Pharmaceutical Services Branch of the Health Department regularly prepares articles to be published in the professional press to alert doctors and pharmacists to the inappropriate prescribing of drugs liable to abuse. These articles alert pharmacists to be aware of forged prescriptions. Pharmacists are encouraged to check with a prescriber that prescriptions are genuine. Narcotic drug supplies are randomly monitored to detect excessive prescribing. Sales of other drugs known to be abused may be checked when necessary, to assess the need to start an investigation into the prescribing of those drugs. Where a practitioner is found to be over prescribing, education and counselling to correct the practice is undertaken. Where this is not successful, a medical practitioner may be referred to the Health Care Complaints Commission.

CHAPTER 7 - MEDIA VIOLENCE

Explores the relationship between violence in the media and youth violence.

RECOMMENDATION 44* - COMMISSIONING OF A NATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT

Recommendation:

That the Attorney General urge the Standing Committee of Attorneys General to commission a national research project to examine the effects of television, film and video game violence on the learning outcomes and behaviour of Australian children.

Government response:

The Government notes the recommendation.

The NSW Government, together with all other Australian jurisdictions, has enacted legislation to establish a national approach to the issues of censorship of films, video tapes, publications and computer games.

A revised national censorship regime came into operation on 1 January 1996. All jurisdictions agreed to enact legislation setting out offence provisions enforcing classification decisions made under the Commonwealth *Classification (Films, Publications and Computer Games) Act 1995* and the *National Classification Code* set out in the Act. The Act also establishes classification authorities such as the Classification Board and the Review Board. The NSW Act giving effect to the Federal Act is the *Classification (Films, Publications and Computer Games) Enforcement Act 1995*.

The national classification system is subject to ongoing monitoring and review by all Governments through regular meetings of Censorship Ministers which are held as part of the Standing Committee of Attorneys General.

The Office of Film and Literature Classification, within its role of monitoring community attitudes, has commissioned a number of studies which look at attitudinal aspects of this issue. They include:

- regular research sessions to provide feedback to those making classification decisions and to gauge current community standards and attitudes to film and video material (1994/95 sessions focused on the views of parents with children under 15 years)
- a nationwide survey to investigate community awareness and attitudes towards R classifications for films and video
- a research project investigating how families use electronic entertainment at home
- a literature review on interactive computer games and their effect on young people
- a project on computer games and Australians today, including an investigation of young players' perceptions and experiences of aggressive content during gameplay.

The Government appreciates the concern that exists about the correlation between media violence and violent behaviour. However it also notes that research empirically determining the effects of media violence on children presents methodological problems. It is very difficult to isolate the effect of one particular phenomenon on a group of children.

The National Committee on Violence undertook studies on the impact of violence shown on film and television, with inconclusive findings. The Committee's report, the *National Committee on Violence Report (1990)*, noted that there was no direct causal link between television behaviour and aggressive behaviour. The Committee concluded that in terms of investing limited resources for the prevention

* Numbering error in original report. There are two Recommendations 44.

and control of violence, media depictions of violence are a relatively low priority and can be substantially neutralised by family support initiatives.

In the circumstances, the Government considers that it is appropriate that the National Classification Code has taken a precautionary approach in relation to depictions of violence in the media, film and related technologies by attaching appropriate restrictive classifications limiting or refusing access to portrayals of violence.

The Government understands that the Federal Government has established a Committee of Ministers on the Portrayal of Violence to examine studies on links between violent behaviour and the availability of violent material on television, film, video, and video and computer games. The findings of this Committee will be carefully considered, when provided, by the NSW Government in the context of the National Censorship Scheme and by the Standing Committee of Attorneys General.

RECOMMENDATION 45 - RESTRICTED ACCESS TO MA AND R-RATED MATERIAL

Recommendation:

That the Attorney General consider legislation requiring video outlets to prevent access to MA (Mature Accompanied) and R-rated (Restricted) material by underage children by displaying such material in restricted areas.

Government response:

The Government notes the recommendation.

The sale or hire of these videos is already legally restricted, with offences for their sale or hire to young people. Video outlets also commit an offence if they do not obtain satisfactory proof of age.

R and MA videos may be sold anywhere (eg video stores, supermarkets, newsagents and petrol stations). It simply may not be feasible to impose a requirement to store these videos separately when total stocks may be very small in number.

RECOMMENDATIONS 46, 50 AND 51- CENSORSHIP LAWS AND POLICE MONITORING

Recommendation 46:

That the Minister for Police act to:

- monitor cinemas to ensure that they adhere to the law and not admit underage children to MA and R rated films and
- monitor video outlets in regard to access and hiring of R-rated material by underage children.

Recommendation 50:

That the Minister for Police act to monitor retail outlets selling classified video games and computer software to ensure that the demonstration and sale of games and software rated MA is restricted to adults and children under 15 who have parental or guardian consent.

Recommendation 51:

That the Minister for Police act to monitor video game parlours to ensure that access to games rated MA (15+) is appropriately restricted.

Government response:

The Police Service regularly conducts a combination of high profile and covert policing operations around major cinema complexes and video game parlours. Priority is given to prevention and detection of street crime as well as monitoring unaccompanied minors for welfare purposes (truancy, unsolicited approaches by strangers etc).

High profile policing by Beat Police ensures a suitable response to specific complaints regarding patrons of cinema outlets, retail outlets and video parlours.

RECOMMENDATION 47 - PROMOTING NON-VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA

Recommendation:

That the Attorney General encourage the Standing Committee of Attorneys General to call on the Federal Government to:

- pressure television networks to eliminate television violence during children's viewing hours
- monitor the televising of MA material after 9.00 pm and consider extending it to 9.30 pm
- pressure the media to review its code of conduct to ensure that material that condones, glorifies or promotes violence is appropriately recognised and restricted
- review the effectiveness of the complaints process in responding to community concerns
- levy a fee on commercial television networks to be allocated to the Australian Children's Television Fund for the production of prosocial programs encouraging non-violence and
- develop programs to educate parents and other adults to assist children to become more discerning media consumers.

Government response:

The Government notes the recommendation.

As recognised by the report, television content does not fall within the ambit of responsibility of the State. It is a Commonwealth matter. The television industry is self-regulated and is oversighted by the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA).

Commercial television stations are expected to adhere to the Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations Code (the FACTS Code), which is registered with the ABA. It is understood that the FACTS Code is due to be reviewed and revised later this year.

All material shown on television, other than news, current affairs and live sport, must be classified and shown in a suitable timeframe, under the FACTS Code guidelines. It is understood that extensive research commissioned by the Office of Film and Literature Classification indicates that the current classification guidelines and decisions reflect general community standards.

Censorship Ministers raised a number of concerns with the Federal Government about the content of television, including the elimination of television violence during children's viewing hours, in late 1995. The Australian Broadcasting Authority responded by detailing, for example, how the Authority is monitoring community responses to MA material and the time at which it is shown.

RECOMMENDATION 48 - MEDIA STUDIES

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education review the K-6 syllabus and Year 7-10 English syllabus to ensure that students are equipped with adequate media criticism skills to facilitate a responsible approach to their media diet.

Government response:

The Government considers that the K-6 syllabus and Year 7-10 English syllabus are appropriate to ensure that students are equipped with adequate media criticism skills to facilitate a responsible approach to their media diet.

Students of English K-6 develop skills in reading, writing, talking and listening and in the process explore media texts to which they are taught to respond and critically evaluate. K-6 students, therefore, are taught not only to read literature and information books but also the media. The Years 7-10 English syllabus has a section dealing explicitly with the mass media which aims to provide students with media criticism skills. In addition, the Board of Studies is currently developing the senior English syllabus (Years 11-12). Media studies is a core activity and optional studies are planned for an indepth study of media and multi-media.

RECOMMENDATION 49 - INFORMATION CAMPAIGN ON RATINGS AND PENALTIES

Recommendation:

That the Government develop a campaign explaining ratings and penalties for retailers selling classified video games and computer software.

Government response:

The Government supports the recommendation in principle and undertakes to carefully examine the issue to assess the need for such a campaign. It notes that because of the two tiered system that exists for the classification and enforcement of material subject to the revised national censorship regime there is no central agency formally responsible for dissemination of information on the classification system and the penalties retailers incur for non compliance.

The Government understands, however, that there is a general high awareness that a classification scheme exists in Australia and that certain obligations exist to adhere to the scheme. With particular reference to this recommendation it notes the following:

- during the development of the new classification regime the Office of Film and Literature Classification consulted widely with the video and computer game industry to alert them to the inclusion of computer games under the new scheme. The industry was also notified of the penalties that would be incurred for non-compliance
- distributors of video and computer games must submit material for classification. Once a game is classified, the distributor must properly label all material with the classification code given, before it is distributed to retailers. It is through this requirement that retailers are provided with information on classification codes and obligations on them to comply
- the Australian Software Distributors Association liaises with the Australian Video Retailers Association to widely inform those they respectively represent about the operation of the classification scheme.

RECOMMENDATION 52 - LIMITING OF GAME MACHINES

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Local Government, in consultation with the executives of the Local Government Association and Shires Association, encourage local government agencies to limit the number of game machines in local business establishments where this is considered appropriate for the community.

Government response:

The Government notes the recommendation and is acting to encourage a response from local government agencies.

In January 1996, following the release of the Committee's Report, the Department of Local Government included an article in its publication, 'Perspectives in Local Government', noting relevant recommendations of the Committee's report. The publication is distributed to all NSW local councils and to peak local government industry bodies. The Department urged councils, as part of their obligation to local communities, to consider the possible social implications of allowing these machines on premises when exercising their planning powers.

RECOMMENDATION 53 - VIOLENCE AND THE ELECTRONIC VISUAL MEDIA

Recommendation:

That the Attorney General urge the Standing Committee of Attorneys General to develop national strategies to reduce violence in the electronic visual media, including Bulletin Board Systems accessed through computers.

Government response:

The Attorney is actively pursuing the regulation of the content of on-line information services through the Standing Committee of Attorneys General. Model offence provisions for inclusion in censorship legislation are presently being developed and the Attorney is promoting liaison with the industry with the aim of establishing an industry code of conduct and an independent complaints mechanism.

The Government plans to create an offence for the transmission and retrieval of objectionable material on the Internet, including matters which 'promote, incite or instruct in matters of crime and violence'.

RECOMMENDATION 54 - VIRTUAL REALITY TECHNOLOGY

Recommendation:

That the Attorney General urge the Standing Committee of Attorneys General to review interactive virtual reality technology and assess policy options that could ensure appropriate restrictions on violent materials are introduced and enforced.

Government response:

'Interactive virtual technology' comes under the current censorship regime and is regulated accordingly, as it falls within the definition of computer games (usually) or films (depending on the format). Classification of computer games currently only goes up to MA 15+. This means that a computer game that would attract an 'R' rating if it was a film would be refused classification and could not be sold.

RECOMMENDATIONS 55 - POWERS TO RESTRICT AUDIO AND COMPACT DISC SALES

Recommendation:

That existing powers to restrict the sale of audio and compact discs that contain violent lyrics be investigated by:

- the Commissioner of Police reporting to the Attorney General on the reasons police are reluctant to act on complaints relating to the sale and distribution of such materials considered by the Attorney General's Department to be indecent articles under the provisions of the

Indecent Articles and Classified Publications Act and, if considered necessary following this report

- the Attorney General reviewing the provisions of the *Indecent Articles and Classified Publications Act* to ensure that provisions relating to indecent articles extend to audio tapes and compact discs.

Government response:

The *Indecent Articles and Classified Publications Act* was repealed by the *Classification (Publication, Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Act (1995)*. Section 578C of the Crimes Act makes it an offence to publish 'indecent articles', which include audio tapes and compact discs.

RECOMMENDATION 56 - CLASSIFICATION OF AUDIO MUSIC

Recommendation:

That the Attorney General urge the Standing Committee of Attorneys General to

- support and encourage the introduction of State and Federal legislation to classify audio music
- prohibit the sale of restricted material to minors and
- refuse classification to material that promotes violence.

Government response:

The Standing Committee of Attorneys General (SCAG) has considered the issue and has decided not to legislate for the compulsory classification of audio material. It considers it not justified because of the small volume of problematic material.

SCAG has requested the industry, through the Australian Record Industry Association (ARIA), to develop an effective system of self regulation for offensive audio material. At the SCAG meeting of March 1996 ARIA gave a progress report on a regulatory code. ARIA has received submissions on the draft code and has consulted with retailers who have agreed to co-operate with the code. ARIA's proposal includes the establishment of a public complaints handling function and publicising the code's existence.

The code is due to be presented to Ministers for approval at the next SCAG meeting of 11 July 1996. If the industry response is inadequate the Government undertakes to consider legislating in the area.

RECOMMENDATION 57* - PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN ON ILLEGALITY OF INCITEMENT TO VIOLENCE

Recommendation:

That the Attorney-General develop a public education campaign outlining the illegality of incitement to violence, as provided in the Crimes Act and anti-vilification legislation.

Government response:

The Government notes the recommendation which is designed specifically to respond to the issue of violent lyrics in music that young people may identify with.

* Numbering error in original report. There is no Recommendation 58.

There is no legislation in NSW which makes incitement to violence illegal, although it is so at common law.

The Government notes that the industry is currently developing a regulatory code for offensive audio material. (See the Government's response to Recommendation 56).

CHAPTER 8 - DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION: SCHOOLS, STAFF & STUDENTS

Reviews the Department's policies and actions on violence.

RECOMMENDATION 59 - USING SCHOOLS FOR COMMUNITY BASED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education encourage the extension of the use of schools for community-based programs and services, especially for initiatives providing support, training and leisure activities for young people.

Government response:

The Government supports the recommendation.

Schools are encouraged to make their facilities available to community groups and organisations. The Department of School Education has a policy statement and implementation procedure for this purpose called *Community Use of School Facilities (1994)*. Initiatives include:

- the establishment of Community Centres located in schools in Redfern, Curran (Macquarie Fields), Chertsey (Central Coast) and Coonamble as part of the Inter-Agency School Community Centres Pilot Project
- parenting programs run from various schools (parent meetings, video reference libraries on child development, toy libraries)
- schools working with the Department of Training and Education Co-ordination to refer students to community based programs such as the *Time Out* and *Circuit Breaker* programs
- community languages schools having free access to school facilities from 1996.

RECOMMENDATION 60 - YOUTH WORKERS AND SCHOOL BASED STRATEGIES

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education authorise and encourage school administrators and teachers to involve youth workers in the development of school based strategies to prevent and respond to violence at school.

Government response:

The Government notes that NSW schools are at liberty to involve youth workers in the development of school based strategies to prevent and respond to violence at school, if considered appropriate.

The Department of School Education Welfare Directorate and the Department of Community Services work together as necessary to ensure schools have access to Department of Community Services resources.

RECOMMENDATION 61 - SCHOOLS AND PARENTING PROGRAMS

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education continue and extend the Department of School Education's involvement in parenting programs, both within the Department and in conjunction with other government departments.

Government response:

The Department of School Education is actively involved in the management and developing parenting programs, both within the Department and in conjunction with other government departments.

Initiatives include:

- the *Parents and Teachers* program, expanded in 1995 and now operating in ten schools across NSW. The program is designed for families with children from 0 to 3 years of age
- joint collaboration between the Departments of School Education, Health and Community Services to fund a two year pilot project to establish four community centres as part of the *Inter-Agency School Community Centres Pilot Project*. The project will develop and trial models of inter-agency coordination to support families with children under 5 years of age, with a view to promoting a positive start to school and to prevent disadvantage on school entry
- the *Talk to a Literacy Learner (TALL)*, which 23 schools implemented in 1995, designed to provide specific training sessions to raise parent participation in children's literacy activities and to change the nature of the interaction parents have with children as they read and write
- HAYSS (Helping All Young Students Succeed) focuses on prevention and early intervention for students at risk of developing conduct disorders
- TAFE NSW also offers specially designed parenting programs, run through Outreach, and a range of Child Studies modules which would be of assistance to young people.

RECOMMENDATION 62 - SCHOOL VIOLENCE POLICIES, PROTOCOLS AND RESOURCE MATERIALS

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education, in consultation with other relevant agencies:

- develop interagency policies and protocols on dealing with school violence and violent students and
- produce resource material outlining the roles and responsibilities of all agencies that have a role in confronting and addressing youth violence.

Government response:

The Government supports the recommendation.

Examples of existing interagency initiatives include:

- a protocol for the provision of educational services to students in substitute care developed by the Department of School Education and the Department of Community Services
- several interagency programs being established as part of the *Juvenile Justice White Paper*, including cross agency training and development programs and an Education Advisory Committee (comprising Departments of School Education, Community Services and Juvenile Justice) that supports the introduction of a new model of education and training in Juvenile Justice Centres
- the development of Crime Prevention Workshops by NSW Department of School Education and the Police Department, for students in Years 9 and 10, aiming to develop a better understanding between the school community and police. The Workshops bring together students, police, teachers and community members to establish constructive relationships, discuss how to prevent and reduce juvenile crime and to implement mutually agreed strategies. The program was launched in August 1995 and is being actively implemented in NSW schools

- liaison by the Board of Studies with agencies and organisations such as the Anti-Discrimination Board to ensure a shared understanding of this area
- instituting of a process of collaboration by the Minister for Police and the Minister for Education, at both policy and operational levels, to ensure better co-ordination between portfolios
- an inter-departmental taskforce which is working on a report on *Services for Children and Adolescents with Psychiatric Illness and Mental Health Problems* which seeks to optimise existing mental health services offered by government departments.

RECOMMENDATION 63 - INVOLVING OUTSIDE EXPERTS ON VIOLENCE

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education encourage education regions to consider the involvement of outside experts working in the areas of youth programs, youth education and violence prevention in the development and implementation of programs addressing youth violence.

Government response:

The Government supports the recommendation.

Outside experts already make a significant contribution through input on committees, working parties, research projects and so on. For example:

- the Department of School Education and the Police Department work together on Crime Prevention Workshops. They also jointly chair a Police and Schools Working Party which is developing contact protocols and policies to encourage liaison between schools and the Police Service
- the Department of School Education's Welfare Directorate and the Department of Community Services co-operate as necessary
- the Government's new Police Youth Crime Intelligence Unit will develop an information package on youth crime for schools, to be delivered by local police.

For further details see the Government's response to Recommendation 62.

The development of strategies should also include consultation with and the involvement of disability organisations, families and carers and the Government will consider how to better facilitate this access.

While acknowledging that outside expertise has much to contribute to programs within schools the Government also considers that care must also be taken to ensure that programs are not fragmented and that they remain consistent with Department of School Education priorities.

RECOMMENDATION 64 - SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education ensure that schools establish and disseminate procedures for decision-making, with clearly delineated areas of responsibility and with a view to improving opportunities for teacher, student and parent input.

Government response:

The major vehicle for encouraging teacher, parent and student input into decision-making and school governance is the school council and student representative council. Departmental guidelines have been issued which clarify the role of school councils in school governance and decision-making and the mechanisms by which the various components of the school community can contribute to school decision-making.

Revised school discipline codes and student welfare policies will make clear the nature of student, parent and teacher input in these areas of school policy.

RECOMMENDATION 65 - INCREASING SCHOOL HOMEWORK CENTRES

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education increase the number of homework centres in schools.

Government response:

Consistent with the NSW Government commitment to provide additional homework centres for disadvantaged students, the equivalent of an additional seven full-time teaching positions will be allocated to schools with significant Aboriginal enrolments. This will enable schools to provide coaching for students preparing for the HSC, either during school time or after school hours.

RECOMMENDATION 66 - PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS LINKING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education ensure that the Department of School Education support, encourage and extend peer support programs linking Year 6 students to secondary schools for all Year 6 students.

Government response:

The Government notes that support, encouragement and the extension of peer support programs linking Year 6 students to secondary schools is consistent with the direction already taken in many NSW schools where peer support programs during transition years are being implemented. A module on transition programs is planned for Phase 3 of *Strategies for Safer Schools*, a professional development resource for schools.

RECOMMENDATION 67 - COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOLS

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education encourage the involvement of parents on matters relating to student welfare and discipline, and ensure that schools:

- develop effective processes in their management plans which guarantee genuine community participation and
- inform parents of their rights, responsibilities and opportunities for involvement in the school community.

Government response:

That Government supports the recommendation.

The NSW school discipline policy, *Good Discipline and Effective Learning*, released by the Minister for Education and Training in December 1995, emphasises the need to inform and consult with parents. Also, recent moves to encourage more active and representative school councils has increased parental involvement in this area.

The Government will ensure that the revised *Student Welfare Policy* supports such community participation. It will ask schools to review practices to ensure that they are consistent with this policy.

RECOMMENDATION 68 - ANTI-VIOLENCE RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS

That the Minister for Education require the Department of School Education to review, on a regional basis, existing policies for non-violent schools and produce a resource for schools that outlines standards of best practice and encourages student involvement in developing such a policy, including an outline of their rights and responsibilities.

Government response:

The Government has acted to implement this recommendation.

The Department of School Education has recently completed a systematic statewide program of review of anti-violence initiatives enabling consolidation of the most successful practices.

The Department of School Education has a *Teaching Against Violence* resource kit which received an Australian Violence Prevention Award and is being distributed to schools during 1996.

The Minister will release a package of material addressing the key issues of discipline and student welfare during Term 3, 1996. The package will include:

- a new *Student Welfare Policy*
- a Ministerial Statement on *Good Discipline and Effective Learning*, released in December 1995, which requires that schools continue to revise their discipline policies every 3-4 years
- teacher support materials to assist schools in the implementation of the policy and the Ministerial Statement
- revised procedures relating to suspension, exclusion and expulsion of students from school and the declaration of place vacant.

The Government notes that students, through their student representative councils, are already encouraged to be involved in developing school decision making. Indeed, many Student Councils have joint meetings with School Councils.

RECOMMENDATIONS 69 - 72 - SCHOOL COUNSELLOR SERVICES

Recommendation 69:

That the Minister of Education undertake a review of the school counsellor service to examine

- the adequacy of counsellor numbers in each region
- the basis upon which the allocation of counsellors occurs and
- the services provided by school counsellors.

Recommendation 70:

That the Minister for Education allow the appointment of selected experienced psychologists without teaching diplomas to the position of school counsellor.

Recommendation 71:

That the Minister for Education:

- introduce a policy regarding the operations and protocols of the school counselling service
- ensure students are advised of the availability of school counsellors and support teachers and

- ensure that all students have access to appropriate guidance and counselling and that, if necessary, this be enshrined in legislation.

Recommendation 72:

That the Minister for Education ensure that school counsellors have access to:

- telephones with sufficient privacy to deal with student issues in schools, in accordance with the registered psychologists' Code of Conduct and
- accommodation within schools which ensures privacy and confidentiality.

Government response:

The Government has a policy of providing school counsellors to schools on the basis of need.

The Department of School Education established a new Student Welfare Directorate in 1996. This Directorate has a Student Counselling and Welfare Unit which will review the processes for allocation of school counsellors. Each of the Department of School Education's 40 District Offices will have a student welfare consultant as well as a senior education officer and student services and equity officer.

The purpose of requiring school counsellors to have teaching qualifications is to ensure they have an understanding of student needs in a school context.

The Government will ensure that school counsellors are provided with appropriate accommodation and access to telephones consistent with their need for privacy and confidentiality.

While it is not financially-feasible to provide counsellors with a telephone line for their exclusive use, they have adequate access to telephones to carry out their duties effectively.

RECOMMENDATION 73 - PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING ON VIOLENCE

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education bring the issue of adequate pre-service teacher training in strategies to deal with violence, including behaviour management, to the attention of University Vice-Chancellors.

Government response:

The Government recognises the need for adequate pre-service teacher training in strategies to deal with violence, including behaviour management.

From the start of 1994 people obtaining education qualifications from NSW universities have been only employed as teachers with the Department of School Education if their teacher education courses include mandatory studies in special education. An outline of the recommended areas of competence for inclusion in the pre service special education component were provided to all NSW universities. A major area of competence in the course content includes classroom strategies for behaviour management and the management of disruptive behaviour.

The Minister for Education and Training has established the Ministerial Advisory Council on the Quality of Teaching, with a particular focus on teacher education, comprising representatives of employers, teacher unions, universities, parents and the community. Membership includes a nominee of the NSW Vice-Chancellors Conference and the Teacher Education Council (comprising all Deans of Education of NSW universities).

The Council's initial agenda includes the task of 'reviewing training requirements to give student teachers the capacity to assert, maintain and restore classroom discipline as well as strategies to cope

with bullying and playground violence'. The work of the Council should have a significant influence in increasing the capacity of teacher education programs to address these issues.

The Director-General of School Education is advised on the quality of teacher education courses and teacher qualifications by the Teacher Qualifications Advisory Panel, which comprises representatives of the Department of School Education, NSW Teachers Federation, NSW Teacher Education Council, principals and the Migrant Skills Qualification branch.

RECOMMENDATION 74 - RECRUITING MATURE AGE STAFF

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education examine the feasibility of recruiting mature age persons with appropriate skills into the teaching profession.

Government response:

The Government appreciates the concerns behind examining the feasibility of recruiting mature age persons with appropriate skills into the teaching profession.

In 1994, 47 per cent of primary teachers and 37 per cent of secondary teachers were 30 years or older when recruited. The average age of Department of School Education teachers is currently 42 years. The Department of School Education has several recruitment programs through which mature aged persons with appropriate skills can be employed, including the *Target Casual* program and the *Graduate Reeruitment Program*.

The Ministerial Advisory Council on the Quality of Teaching will be addressing the issue of selection and recruitment of suitable persons to the profession during its first four year term. It has the task of 'identifying appropriate selection procedures to ensure suitable candidates enter the teaching profession' and will consider the recommendation as part of this process.

RECOMMENDATION 75 - STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education:

- review student involvement in decision-making in schools
- urge schools to ensure that students are consulted in the development of anti-violence initiatives and
- produce information on standards of best practice regarding student participation for dissemination to all schools.

Government response:

The revised *Student Welfare Policy* will encourage schools to include their Student Representative Councils in decision making. Materials produced to support the policy will include examples of ways in which student participation in decision making can be an effective anti-violence strategy.

The Minister for Education and Training issued a new school discipline policy, *Good Discipline and Effective Learning* in December 1995. This requires all public schools to prepare their own school discipline policy in time for the 1997 school year. This work is to be undertaken collaboratively involving the whole school community - students, staff, parent organisations and the school councils.

RECOMMENDATION 76 - PEER MEDIATION PROGRAMS

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education

- ensure that education regions develop in-service courses for teachers to provide them with the skills for developing peer mediation programs and offering training to students and
- trial and evaluate the New Zealand model of mediation involving mediators from outside the school system.

Government response:

A range of mediation programs are already available to schools and schools training and development funds can be used for this purpose. Peer mediation is an elective part of *Strategies for Safer Schools*.

The Department of School Education has developed and trialed a peer mediation based on the NSW Community Justice Centres model. This involved training secondary school teachers as mediators and coordinators of the peer mediation program in their school. Research included examining the New Zealand model and similar programs in Canada and the USA. A report has been prepared on the pilot. The program and its evaluation will continue throughout 1996.

RECOMMENDATION 77 - ABOLISHING CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education amend the Department of School Education's Fair Discipline Code to remove corporal punishment as a disciplinary option in government schools.

Government response:

The Government has acted to remove corporal punishment as a disciplinary option in government schools. In December 1995 the Government passed the *Education Reform Amendment (School Discipline) Act* restricting the right of teachers in both government and non-government schools to use corporal punishment as a disciplinary method. The provisions apply in government schools now and will apply in private schools from 1997.

RECOMMENDATION 78 - SUSPENSION, EXCLUSION AND EXPULSION PROCEDURES

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education amend the suspension, exclusion and expulsion procedures to

- include definitions of the type of violent behaviour that should lead to suspension, while maintaining the discretionary power of principals and
- ensure that the welfare and behavioural needs of such students are met through means such as informing school counsellors of all short suspensions and involving them in discussions on appropriate actions to be taken.

Government response:

The 1994 procedures for *Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion of Students from School* are being revised and this recommendation will be considered in the review. Revised procedures are to be issued during Term 3, 1996.

The new school discipline policy issued by the Minister in December 1995, *Good Discipline and Effective Learning*, defines unacceptable behaviour, including violence, outlines punishments and refers to counselling and special behaviour programs.

RECOMMENDATION 79 - ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION STRATEGIES

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education ensure that appropriate alternative education strategies are introduced in all regions for students displaying inappropriate and aggressive behaviour, and that these strategies include

- tutorial centres offering in-school suspension programs and
- pre-suspension programs offered at off-campus facilities.

Government response:

The Department of School Education offers a variety of alternative education strategies including:

- in-school supervision of students, isolation or "time out" rooms and special behaviour support teams. Isolated schools can be provided with access to support teams
- for students whose behaviour is unable to be managed within the school, referral may be made for placement in a specialist class, unit or school. These include support classes for short term placement for students with severe and persistent behaviour problems, schools for specific purposes for students with emotional disturbance and segregated conduct disorder programs and tutorial centres for secondary aged students
- the *Time Out Program*, sponsored by the Department of Training and Education Co-ordination, aims to provide young people at risk of becoming alienated from the school education system with assistance to develop self-esteem and improve basic literacy, numeracy and social skills. In the 1996/97 Budget, \$830,000 was allocated to this program.

Support for students on suspension is already required under current guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION 80 - EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education ensure that:

- students excluded from schools for violent behaviour are offered behavioural or social skills programs that assist in addressing that behaviour and facilitate placement in an alternative school and
- schools in isolated areas have access to appropriate strategies to provide alternatives to exclusion to deal with aggressive and violent students.

Government response:

Students can currently access the services of an Itinerant Support Teacher (Behaviour) and, under some circumstances, an outreach teacher. These teachers offer support in behavioural and social skills programs which should ideally be presented in the receiving school and should incorporate that school's programs and procedures.

Strategies for Safer Schools - Phase 3 will address the area of working with very disruptive or anti-social behaviour and include a section on the teaching of social skills.

The Department of School Education's current procedures on *Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion of Students from School* refer to alternative education programs. Exclusion takes place when it is

considered that a student could develop self-discipline and cooperative behaviour in a suitable alternative school.

The Department of Training & Education Co-ordination *Time Out Program*, for truanting and 'at-risk' students, runs ten-week courses and provides activities to assist literacy, numeracy and personal development.

RECOMMENDATION 81 - EXPULSION PROCEDURES

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education ensure decisions to recommend the expulsion of students are made by the principal in consultation with school welfare and discipline committees and parents/care-givers.

Government response:

The Committee's recommendation that decisions to recommend the expulsion of students are made by the principal in consultation with school welfare and discipline committees and parents/care-givers is consistent with existing practice.

The existing procedures on *Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion of Students from School* require full consultation through each stage leading to expulsion. This requirement will be retained in the current revision of procedures, due to be completed in July 1996. The Minister for Education will also ensure that the recommendation of the NSW Ombudsman's 1995 report on the suspension of a student at The Entrance High School is taken into account in the review of NSW procedures. This recommendation relates to appeal mechanisms.

RECOMMENDATION 82 - EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES POST EXPULSION

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education recognise the right of students to receive an education by ensuring:

- appropriate alternative education options for those students expelled from the state education system who are less than 15 years of age and
- appropriate liaison with agencies offering education and training options to inform young people expelled from the state education system who are aged 15 years or over of their options.

Government response:

Expulsion of a student is a very rare event. No student has been expelled from state education since Term 1, 1994. Expulsion is an absolute last resort which involves complete removal from the Government school system. Alternatives then available include home-schooling, enrolment in non-government schools or enrolment in TAFE for older students. See also the Government's response to Recommendation 85.

RECOMMENDATION 83 - DECLARATION OF PLACE VACANT OPTION

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education commission an independent review of the declaration of place vacant option, including the reasons underlying such declarations, to assess the appropriateness of this option.

Government response:

In the context of the abolition of Department of School Education regions and the establishment of 40 district offices, the opportunity exists to monitor the application of the Declaration of Place Vacant policy across districts. Such monitoring is already underway.

RECOMMENDATION 84 - SUSPENSION PROCEDURES IN PLAIN ENGLISH AND COMMUNITY LANGUAGES

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education ensure procedures for suspension, exclusion and expulsion are:

- written in plain English
- distributed widely to students and parents and
- available in community languages.

Government response:

Consideration is being given to a Plain English summary of the procedures for *Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion of Students from School*, which would then be translated into community languages.

RECOMMENDATION 85 - UNAUTHORISED REMOVAL OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education instruct the various regional offices of the Department of School Education to examine and report on the allegations that many young people have been removed from schools through means other than the formal mechanisms of expulsion, exclusion and declaration of place vacant.

Government response:

The Government notes the allegations in the report that many young people have been removed from schools through means other than the formal mechanisms of expulsion, exclusion and declaration of place vacant.

The Government is currently developing new procedures for dealing with suspensions and the monitoring of suspensions under the new District Office structure. These procedures will be brought to the attention of principals and District Superintendents and the need to follow formal suspension procedures will then be reiterated.

CHAPTER 9 - DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION: ANTI-VIOLENCE INITIATIVES AND THE CURRICULUM

Examines a range of school anti-violence initiatives and programs developed or already introduced and considers issues relating to the school curriculum.

KEY RECOMMENDATION 86 - RESOURCES FOR ANTI-VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education ensure sufficient resources are available to schools to enable them to function as models of cooperative, tolerant and non-violent communities. In achieving these goals schools are

- to provide programs which foster tolerance and acceptance
- offer integrated programs which provide skills in acceptable problem solving behaviour
- work to eliminate the destructive practices of bullying and
- support students exhibiting problem behaviours through appropriate means and environments with the well being of the student being paramount.

Government response:

The Government is firmly committed to ensuring that schools are well placed to ensure that schools foster non-violence. This commitment is expressed through existing programs. Schools are guided by the *Student Welfare and Discipline Policies*, which assist them to operate as models of tolerant, non-violent and cooperative communities. Other resources include:

- *Strategies for Safer Schools* - a K-12 school development program designed to extend the skills of teachers and members of the school community in the management of student behaviour
- the *Whole School Anti-Racism Project*, which schools can undertake to examine current practices and plan for future anti-racism strategies
- the *Dispute Resolution Project*, a collaborative project between the Department of School Education and Community Justice Centres to trial a peer mediation program for secondary students
- curriculum materials for *Teaching Against Violence*, which focus on communication, conflict resolution, alternative dispute resolution skills and cooperative learning. The resources received an Australian Violence Prevention Award.

Board of Studies' Personal Development, Health and Physical Education syllabuses specifically focus on the promotion of positive interpersonal relationships between people and the importance of recognising individual rights and responsibilities. Students are given the opportunity to develop skills of decision making, communication, interaction and values clarification. Students are encouraged to reflect on interpersonal behaviours, ways of overcoming negative behaviours, their consequences and the resolution of conflict.

The syllabus canvasses a range of issues such as power in relationships, conflict resolution, violence in the family, child sexual assault, vandalism and homophobia, equity and discrimination and sex based harassment.

The Personal Awareness strand deals with effective communication and explores socially acceptable and unacceptable ways of displaying emotions and needs. It also covers the management of stress and strategies for resolving conflict.

The Board of Studies has developed a number of teaching kits which include significant discussion of 'violence' as a sensitive social issue.

RECOMMENDATION 87- PLAYGROUND SUPERVISION AND VIOLENCE

That the Minister for Education ensure

- the Department of School Education produce and distribute to all schools standards of best practice in playground supervision and programs and
- schools review their playground supervision practices to minimise the potential for playground violence.

Government response:

The Department of School Education's resource document *Strategies for Safer Schools, Phase 2* is designed to assist schools to review their playground supervision practices to minimise the potential for playground violence. Many schools have established playground initiatives as part of anti-violence programs and initiatives to eliminate bullying.

This approach has been reinforced by the Minister in his statement, *Good Discipline and Effective Learning*, which requires all schools to consider expected standards of behaviour in their school discipline code.

RECOMMENDATION 88 - EXTENDED EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education recognise the diverse range of abilities and talents that young people may possess and make provisions for developing such abilities within the education system, through initiatives such as extended educational pathways.

The Government already recognises the diverse range of abilities and talents that young people may possess. It makes provision for developing such abilities within the education system, through initiatives such as extended educational pathways. The Department of School Education, in consultation with other education sectors and industry, is continuing to expand the pathways available to students.

In 1995 approximately 25,000 Department of School Education students studied Industry Studies, vocational content-endorsed courses and Joint Secondary Schools TAFE courses as part of their HSC program of study.

The Board of Studies has recognised the increasing diversity of the student population. It is broadening the traditional academic curriculum to include new areas of study giving opportunities to explore vocational interests. Courses now include Computing Studies, Legal Studies, Business Studies, Classical Ballet, Dance, Drama, Aboriginal Studies, Life Management and Personal Development Health and Physical Education. Courses with a strong vocational component include the Board's *Industry Studies* syllabus with strands in Hospitality, Retail and Metal and Engineering. The Board also offers seven Content-Endorsed Courses, each with formal industry recognition, in Rural Studies, Furnishing, Building and Construction, Retail, Hospitality, Office Skills and Electronics.

Under the Board's *HSC Pathways* framework, the Higher School Certificate can be studied part-time (for up to five calendar years), allowing the flexibility to combine study with other commitments eg employment or family responsibilities. HSC study can also be combined with TAFE study and prior learning experiences can be formally recognised. Flexible progression provisions are available to School Certificate level students, with students being able to accumulate subjects over an extended period with no set time limit.

The Government has recently completed a major Review of Profiles and Outcomes in NSW curriculum. Through the implementation of its recommendations and through the work of the Board of Studies in developing curriculum for NSW schools, NSW will be able to provide an education

system which recognises and fosters the development of young people's diverse range of abilities and talents.

Access to vocational education through schooling is a high priority for the portfolio, balanced with continuing access for students to a broad, general education, equipping them to contribute to their own prosperity and to the community. The HSC in TAFE, acceleration and accumulation HSC units, and credit transfer all need to be complemented with further extended educational pathways.

The initial findings of the Government's review of the Higher School Certificate were released in May 1996. A White Paper will be released in 1997. This review is making a major contribution in identifying directions for further effective and extended pathways for young people.

RECOMMENDATION 89 - EVALUATION OF COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education ensure that the current initiatives being trialed in schools and TAFE colleges based on competency assessment are appropriately evaluated.

Government response:

Current initiatives being implemented in schools in this area include Industry Studies and Vocational Content Endorsed dual accredited HSC courses. With increasing retention rates it has become imperative to ensure properly recognised vocational pathways are available for young people. TAFE NSW has been integrally involved in developing the vocational curriculum now offered in secondary schools and in the retraining programs provided to secondary school teachers.

TAFE NSW has also been developing credit transfer agreements with the Board of Studies over the last four years, arrangements which have been enhanced with the introduction of HSC vocational courses. Students now have very extensive industry based pathways that can be followed between the secondary sector and TAFE NSW.

CHAPTER 10 - DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION: RESPONDING TO CAUSES OF VIOLENCE

Examines the responses of the Department to specific forms of violence in schools, discusses factors underlying school violence and considers initiatives targeting sex-based harassment, bullying and racism.

RECOMMENDATION 90 - SEX BASED HARASSMENT RESOURCES

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education ensure regional education offices assist schools to recognise and address sex-based harassment by

- offering appropriate information resources to schools
- developing in-service workshops for teachers and
- developing in-service workshops for school counsellors providing counselling for boys regarding their behaviour towards girls.

Government response:

The Government is acting to address sex-based harassment in schools.

Sex based harassment is now addressed by:

- Board of Studies teaching kits and support documents which give advice and a framework for school programs
- Years 11-12 Skills for Living and Life Management and Personal Development Health and Physical Education courses
- *Resources for Teaching Against Violence* which addresses sex-based harassment, offers information, provides support for training and development and includes questions and answers to assist schools in developing policies
- professional development resources which have been provided to all Gender Equity Coordinators and Student Welfare Consultants, with a copy for each District Office.

Teacher inservice workshops will continue to address this priority issue.

RECOMMENDATION 91 - ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education encourage schools to formulate a school anti-harassment policy, with appropriate attention to sex-based harassment by students and teachers, and appropriate input from students, teachers and parents.

Government response:

As noted in the Committee's report the Department of School Education released a resource document, *Procedures for Resolving Complaints About Discrimination Against Students*, in February 1995. This addresses sex-based harassment by students and includes a training package. It encourages schools to set up processes to resolve incidents of sex-based harassment promptly and successfully. The Government's *Gender Equity Strategy* will also assist in dealing with this issue (see Government's response to Recommendation 93).

RECOMMENDATION 92 - MENTORING PROGRAMS FOR BOYS

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education evaluate mentoring programs for boys with a view to their possible extension as an interim measure to develop positive constructions of masculinity.

Government response:

The Government notes the recommendation.

The Department of School Education has developed a *Gender Equity Strategy* which addresses the needs of boys. Possible mentoring programs will be considered in this context (see Government's response to Recommendation 93).

RECOMMENDATION 93 - DEVELOPMENT OF A GENDER EQUITY STRATEGY

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education develop a gender equity strategy which includes

- an acknowledgment of the gendered nature of violence
- strategies to eliminate gender stereotyping in schools
- an appropriate focus on communication and alternative conflict resolution and
- strategies to encourage alternative non-violent constructions of masculinity.

Government response:

The Government has developed a *Gender Equity Strategy*, released in May 1996, which forms part of a broader Government commitment to achieving more equitable outcomes in schools. The strategy allows for:

- development of a better understanding of the processes of gender construction as distinct from innate differences between the sexes
- development of teaching and learning programs to ensure that learning is not constrained by practices related to perceptions of gender
- development of a school culture which aims to eliminate sex-based harassment and deal with health and welfare issues from a gender perspective
- the investigation of post school options examining the nexus between school achievement, gender and post school pathways and also the nexus between gender, domestic life and the world of paid and unpaid work.

A Department of School Education Consultative Committee has advised on the preparation of the Strategy to ensure that boys and girls are not being disadvantaged in education in any way.

The Government has also appointed a gender expert to the Board of Studies to ensure school curriculums do not give particular advantage to either gender.

RECOMMENDATION 94 - BULLYING

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education ensure regional education offices

- offer appropriate information resources to schools to assist them in identifying and intervening appropriately when bullying occurs
- develop in-service workshops for teachers to assist them in addressing bullying
- direct schools to formulate a school policy on bullying, with appropriate input from students and parents and
- develop or approve self-administered, anonymous questionnaires to offer to schools to assist them in evaluating the extent of the problem and in developing an appropriate, co-ordinated response to bullying.

Government response:

The Department of School Education resource document, *Strategies for Safer Schools*, addresses bullying. The program provides a process whereby school communities can review current practice, identify training needs and develop whole school behaviour management strategies for classrooms and playground. The Committee's recommendations on bullying, dealing with information resources, teacher in-service workshops, policy development and student questionnaires will be incorporated in the work of the newly formed Directorate of Student Welfare.

The Minister's statement, *Good Discipline and Effective Learning*, released in December 1995, requires individual schools to develop a School Discipline Policy. Prevention and appropriate handling of bullying behaviour is addressed in the Minister's statement and will be included in School Discipline Policies.

The *Teaching Against Violence* kit for the 1996 school year also includes topics on bullying.

The Government notes that no recognition appears to be given in the recommendations to that fact that young people with a disability are a significant target for bullying and harassment. Similar strategies to those identified for other specific population groups, for example young Aboriginal people and girls, need to be developed and implemented in consultation with appropriate government and non-Government agencies.

RECOMMENDATION 95 - ANTI-RACISM POLICY AND PRACTICE

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education collate and review regional reports on the implementation of the Anti-racism policy to produce standards of best practice for distribution to all schools.

The Government supports the recommendation.

The Government has responded to racism in schools by developing *Whole School Anti-Racism Project Resource Materials* (April 1995), which provide school communities with materials to evaluate anti-racism initiatives and to help further promote racism-free working and learning environments.

In 1996 all schools are being offered opportunities to participate in training programs to help them implement the materials. The Department of School Education is collecting data on how anti-racism grievance complaints are resolved. The data will inform the development of further strategies on training and anti-racism initiatives for students, staff and school community members.

RECOMMENDATION 96 - ETHNIC COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICERS

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education allocate adequate resources to fund appropriate numbers of Community Liaison Officers to ensure ethnic communities are involved in the education and welfare of their young people, and potential ethnic disputes impacting on schools can be identified and addressed.

Government response:

The Government notes the Committee's support for the important work of Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) in ensuring ethnic communities are involved in the education and welfare of their young people and that potential ethnic disputes impacting on schools are identified and addressed.

The Department of School Education will review the need for CLOs and the number of positions designated to work with identified communities.

The Department of School Education currently has 15 full-time equivalent CLOs (Non-English Speaking Background) to promote the participation of NESB parents and community members in the education of their children. Because of the particular needs of certain NESB groups, some CLOs are designated to work with identified communities.

RECOMMENDATION 97 - LANGUAGE HIGH SCHOOLS

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education support the continued development of appropriately resourced Language High Schools, in areas with high proportions of students from non-English speaking backgrounds, provided such schools continue to demonstrate the acquisition of English is also facilitated.

Government response:

Government policy is to increase the number of students undertaking continuous and sequenced study of languages throughout their schooling.

In 1996 an additional 42 community language teachers had been appointed to schools with significant enrolments of students from non-English speaking backgrounds. A further 18 teachers will be appointed each year from 1997 to 1999. The initiative will allow students to develop literacy skills in their home language.

Language high schools and other high schools with significant NESB enrolments will provide a range of language programs to further develop students' language learning from primary school community language programs.

Consideration is now being given to the most appropriate way to develop Language High Schools and in what locations. This is related to a broader strategy to meet the goal of having 25% of HSC students studying a language other than English.

RECOMMENDATION 98 - ABORIGINAL CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education ensure that, in areas with significant Aboriginal populations

- strategies are in place to develop appropriate links between schools and the Aboriginal community and
- adequate numbers of both male and female Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers are employed in schools to establish and maintain these links and increase awareness of Departmental practices and policies, support at-risk students, and encourage parental involvement in programs.

Government response:

As noted by the Committee, significant work is already under way to implement the recommendation. For example, the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group acts as the peak Aboriginal organisation for liaison with schools at local and state levels. Aboriginal organisations which have sought closer links with the Department of School Education include the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the Aboriginal Health Unit, the NW Aboriginal Land Council, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission.

The Aboriginal Education Policy (AEP) was launched by the Minister for Education and Training in February 1996. \$5.7 million has been allocated to implement the policy. It aims to:

- improve educational outcomes of Aboriginal students to a level comparable with those of the population generally
- ensure Aboriginal students have high quality, culturally appropriate education
- target resources and programs to provide for the educational needs of Aboriginal students and
- ensure Aboriginal people are employed at all levels of the Department of School Education.

A comprehensive assessment of progress in achieving the goals of the AEP will take place at the end of a five year development and implementation period. The policy ensures that Aboriginal communities will be involved, through the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG), in policy and program development.

TAFE NSW is a major training provider for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth. Of the 12,400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in TAFE NSW, some 44 percent are under 24 years. TAFE's work in this area includes

- participating in an inter-departmental trial at Keelong Juvenile Justice Centre seeking to develop a coordinated program of vocational education and training provision to young people in custody, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander juvenile detainees
- responding on a needs basis to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, individuals and organisational requests for culturally appropriate accredited courses, through a network of field officers located across the State in the 11 Institutes of TAFE NSW (the network of nine Aboriginal Development Managers and 25 Aboriginal Coordinators complements the work performed at the school level by Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific or general Joint Secondary Schools TAFE programs (JSST) in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth also participate, whereby Year 11 and 12 secondary students can undertake TAFE NSW studies counting towards their HSC.

The *Koori Youth Program*, sponsored by the Department of Training and Education Coordination, assists young Aboriginal people who have left school early and are unemployed or who are at risk of leaving school early. The Program provides assistance with literacy, numeracy, social skills and cultural identity through part-time courses conducted by community organisations.

The *Aboriginal Employment Strategy for the Public Sector* is designed to improve employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal people in the public sector, providing funding for a project officer in the Department of School Education. This position could have a role in the establishment of other designated positions in the Department of School Education to maintain links between schools and the Aboriginal community.

RECOMMENDATION 99 - ATTITUDES TO HOMOSEXUALS

Recommendation 99:

That the Minister for Education ensure the *Resources for Teaching Against Violence* kit continues to be reviewed, and that this review includes an analysis of attitudes towards homosexuals and lesbians among high school students.

Government response:

The Government is committed to the ongoing review of *Resources for Teaching Against Violence* kit, including an analysis of the attitude towards homosexuals and lesbians among high school students. This topic is included in the 1996 materials distributed to schools.

Teaching and learning activities are included to encourage responsible discussion of attitudes towards homosexuals and lesbians in secondary schools.

RECOMMENDATION 100 - LINKING VIOLENCE KIT TO CURRICULUM

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education develop strategies to

- encourage the introduction of the revised *Resources for Teaching Against Violence* kit in the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education curriculum and
- monitor its use and effectiveness.

Government response:

The *Resources for Teaching Against Violence* will be promoted as appropriate use in Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) and its usefulness for school programs will be monitored. The Board of Studies is producing a Board Bulletin article (sent to all NSW Government and non-Government schools and systems), drawing teachers' attention to the links between the kit and the PDHPE syllabuses.

RECOMMENDATION 101 - REFERRAL SERVICES FOR STUDENTS REPORTING HOMOSEXUAL HARASSMENT

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education ensure students identifying as homosexual or lesbian and reporting harassment are advised of appropriate agencies and counselling services.

Government response:

The Government already ensures that students identifying as homosexual or lesbian and reporting harassment are advised of appropriate agencies and counselling services. The *Procedures for Resolving Complaints About Discrimination Against Students* provide support for students who report harassment. School-counsellors have access to appropriate referrals for these students.

RECOMMENDATION 102 - COUNSELLOR AND TEACHER TRAINING ON HOMOSEXUAL ISSUES

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education ensure

- all school counsellors are adequately prepared and receptive to handling sexual orientation inquiries from all students, and to provide support for students with HIV and
- teachers have access to in-service training to assist them in countering negative attitudes towards homosexuals and lesbians by school students, both within and outside the classroom.

Government response:

The Government notes the Committee's concerns.

Some professional development initiatives have been undertaken in this area and will be continued. *Procedures for Resolving Complaints About Discrimination Against Students* have been distributed to all schools and training is under way.

RECOMMENDATION 103 - SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education undertake a review of educational services for students with long-term psychiatric disorders.

Government response:

The Government notes the recommendation.

As a result of the Burdekin Report, the Department of School Education is currently developing Phase 3 of *Strategies for Safer Schools* which will include strategies for these students. Needs have been reviewed at a local level and a review involving other departments and agencies at state office level is planned.

There is no data currently available on the number of students with long term psychiatric illnesses who require educational services other than those currently offered. It is inappropriate in light of current policy directions to establish schools or programs that isolate students with psychiatric illnesses into segregated settings. These students need programs that enable them to participate in educational services within the mainstream, or as close as possible to their mainstream peers.

Specialist teachers and counsellors and professionals from Departments of Health and Community Services are available to assist in this process.

There are also existing facilities not noted by the Committee, for example the Ward for Adolescents with Psychotic Illnesses at Redbank.

See also the Government's response to Recommendation 22.

RECOMMENDATION 104 - STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISORDERS AND DISABILITIES WHICH RESULT IN VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education review the support available in schools for students with learning disorders and disabilities which result in violent behaviour, recognising the need for a multi-disciplinary approach involving, where desirable, experts from fields other than education.

Government response:

The Government notes the recommendation.

A number of programs are already in place to address the needs of this group:

- the Department of School Education has recently developed, in conjunction with specialist medical practitioners, a resource aimed at supporting teachers and schools in the management of students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. This resource, *Talk, Time, Teamwork: Collaborative Management of Students with ADHD*, was released to all schools and ADHD support groups in Term 4, 1995
- the LAST (*Learning Assistance Support Teams*) program assists mainstream teachers to develop skills necessary to assist students with learning difficulties
- guidelines for supporting students experiencing difficulties with learning are currently under review and a new model for provision has been released for public comment.

The Board of Studies is responsible for the development of curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12, credentialling students including those with special education needs and the registration of non-government schools which includes special schools. It addresses the needs of students with learning disorders and disabilities by:

- providing a range of curriculum options for students with special education needs who cannot access mainstream courses, eg courses such as Life Skills courses in each Key Learning Area in stage 5 (Years 9 & 10) and Board endorsed courses in stage 6 (Years 11 & 12) including school developed courses for students who require a specially designed course to meet their individual needs
- developing primary curriculum support materials to assist teachers to develop appropriate programs for students with special needs
- credentialling students with special education needs for the School Certificate through a special program of study.

These initiatives recognise that cross curriculum programming is an essential feature for students with learning disorders and disabilities. The Government recognises that learning will occur in a range of settings with a range of personnel involved both in the planning and the delivery of the program. The personnel involved could include teachers, teachers aides, speech pathologists, specialist counsellors, child protection workers and social workers.

The Ageing and Disability Department is developing a policy on support for people with a disability and challenging behaviour for services funded and provided under the *Disability Services Act*. The policy will be of particular relevance to issues of youth violence. It provides guidelines for the provision of services to people with a disability who have challenging (disruptive) behaviour in ways that prevent abuse and delineates non-abusive strategies or positive management practices. This will be incorporated into another policy initiative of the Government currently underway which is the development of a whole of government disability policy framework.

RECOMMENDATION 105 - SUPPORT UPON RETURNING TO MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

That the Minister for Education ensure students entering or returning to mainstream schools from alternative education facilities are provided with appropriate support.

Government response:

The Government is committed to ensuring that students entering or returning to mainstream schools from alternative education facilities are provided with appropriate support. Specialist teachers and counsellors are available to assist such students. The Government undertakes to monitor individual schools offering alternative programs to ensure that they have extensive re-integration processes as part of their overall program. Phase Three of *Strategies for Safer Schools* will assist schools in this process.

RECOMMENDATION 106 - EXTRA PROGRAMS FOR CONDUCT DISORDERED STUDENTS

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education and the Minister for Health ensure additional alternative day and residential programs are made available for conduct disordered students.

Government response:

The Department of School Education has established a Conduct Disorders program for high school students. Eight projects have commenced with the type of project ranging from schools for specific purposes, units attached to high schools, wilderness projects and tutorial centres.

Other programs are offered by Itinerant Support Teacher (Behaviour), school counsellors, regional behaviour/welfare teams.

Research indicates that alternative programs for conduct disordered adolescents should be provided wherever possible in regular educational settings. Removing students from their home environment for a long period of time is contrary to current, world wide behaviour management philosophies. The Government will consider replicating for widespread use pilot programs such as HAYSS (*Helping All Young Students Succeed*) which focuses on prevention and early intervention for students at risk of developing conduct disorders.

RECOMMENDATION 107 - HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Recommendation:

That the Minister for Education, in consultation with other relevant agencies, develop protocols on dealing with homeless young people attending school.

Government response:

The Government supports the recommendation.

The Department of School Education has already developed a number of related initiatives:

- in conjunction with the Department of Community Services it has developed a protocol for the provision of educational services to students in substitute care, a number of whom have been homeless at some stage
- it is developing further protocols with other support agencies as part of the *Students At Risk (STAR)* program

- it is conducting a project on student homelessness which will determine strategies for schools relating to the prevention and early intervention in relation to homelessness.