

Chris Barrett

Manager,
Armadale, Gosnells & Districts Youth Resources Inc, Western Australia

INTRODUCTION

Armadale, Gosnells and Districts Youth Resources Inc is a community based organisation established in 1989, through the “Kids In Crime” initiative by the W.A State Government’s Department of Community Services. In 1993 the agency became the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice under their Juvenile Justice Community Funding program.

The aim of Youth Resources is to offer a range of supports and activities that are designed to offer positive alternatives to young people, who are offending or “at risk” of offending due to varying circumstances. The agency will aim to connect young people in the Armadale/Gosnells region to education, employment, training and recreation options in the community, and attempt to support their families.

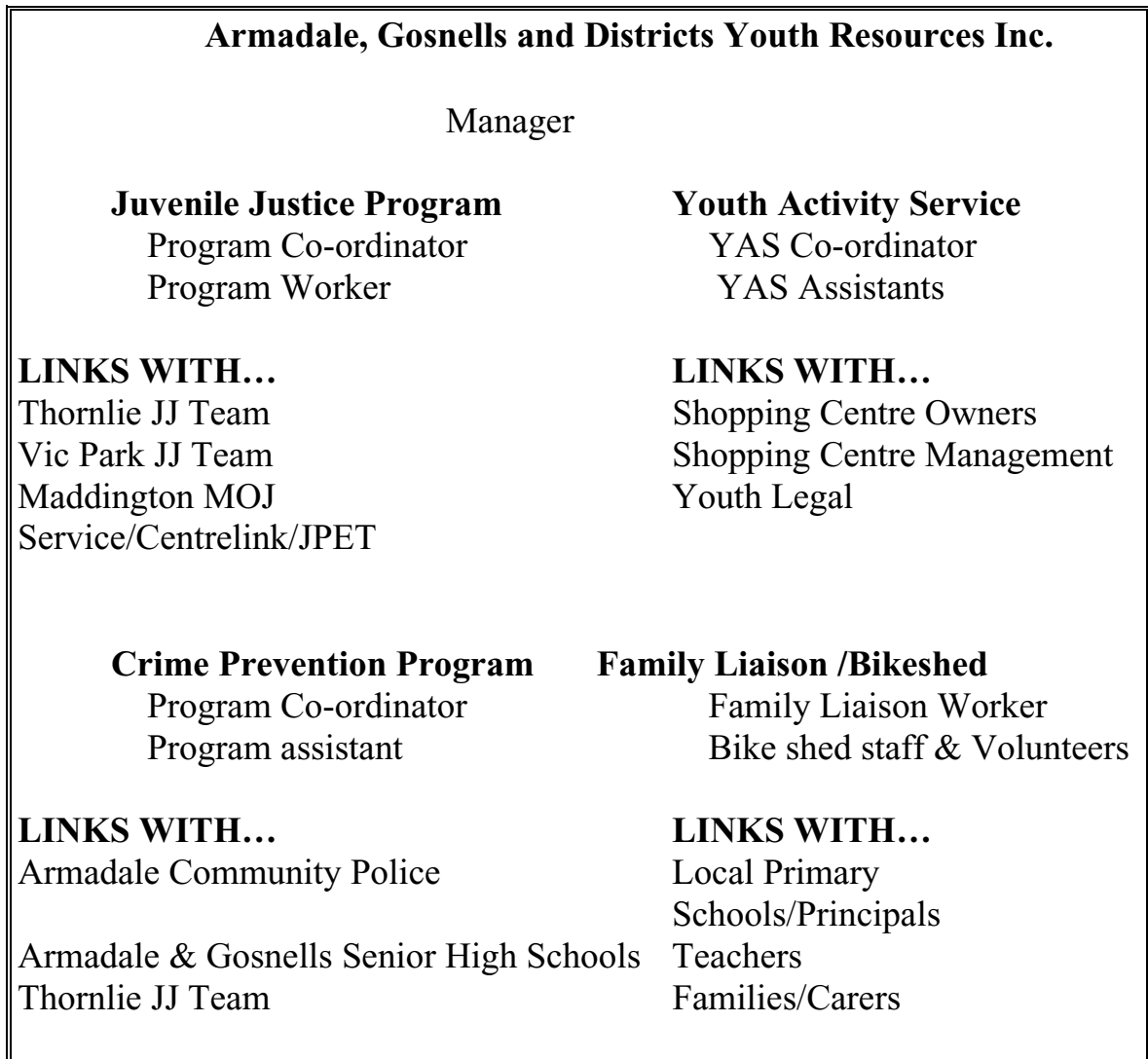
Programs conducted by Youth Resources are generally open to all young people aged 10 - 18 years within the region, with a particular focus on those who are:

- young offenders or those at risk of engaging in offending behaviours
- socially and/or economically disadvantaged
- poor or low academic achievement
- sibling or friends of known offenders

Approximately 2,700 young people have accessed the services provided by Youth Resources during the 1998/99 period. Youth Resources will continue to maintain and expand its services to meet the needs of young people in the region.

Organisation Structure

The agency employs three full-time staff, the Manager and two Program Co-ordinators, and six part-time staff, two Program Worker, the Youth Activities Co-ordinator and three Youth Activities Assistants. We also employ sessional trainers, artists and project staff for specialist programs.



Armadale, Gosnells and Districts Youth Resources Inc. is a community based organisation managed by a committee made up of community members and representatives from government and non-government agencies.

1998/99 Funding Sources

Youth Resources received funding or funding approval from the following sources during the 1998/99 Financial Year.

Ministry of Justice	\$120,000.00
Department of Health and Family Services	\$ 41,417.00
Department of Health and Family Services	\$ 23,016.00
Safer W.A.	\$ 59,925.00
Community Policing Plate Funds	\$ 5,000.00
Family & Children's Services	\$ 4,000.00
City of Armadale	\$ 4,800.00
Lotteries Commission	\$ 2,800.00
Community Arts Network	\$ 3,000.00
Rotary Club Of Armadale	\$ 7,500.00
Rotary Club of Maddington	\$ 395.00
WADASO	\$ 2,000.00
Lotteries Commission	\$ 4,996.00
TOTAL INCOME TO DATE	\$278,849.00

Target Group

Programs conducted by Youth Resources are generally open to all young people aged

10-18 focusing on

- Young people who have come into contact with the Justice system
- Parents of those young people
- Siblings and friends of young people involved in the Justice system

Some of the characteristics of this target group include:

- * low self-esteem
- * little or no trust in people
- * angry and aggressive
- * reluctant to show commitment to attend programs or appointments
- * low literacy levels
- * poor communication skills
- * transient and relatively unstable lives

There are a number of common issues that are experienced in working with the target group and these include:

- * the use, misuse and dependency on illicit drugs and alcohol
- * have suffered some level of physical, emotional or sexual abuse
- * dysfunctional family
- * conflict with authority
- * accommodation problems
- * struggle for financial independence
- * poor or low academic achievement

Agency Objectives:

1. To contribute to a reduction in the incidence of offending by the target group.
2. To provide a range of youth services to meet the needs of the target group.
3. To involve parents, families, responsible persons and the community in addressing the needs of young people in the target group.
4. To assist young people to access other support services and options.
5. To reduce the involvement by young people in activities that may lead to an increased risk of offending, such as substance misuse, truancy etc.
6. To link young people to employment, training, educational/vocational and recreational activities.
7. To assist in the improvement of relationships between young people and their families
8. To assist in the improvement of relationships between young people and their school community

Strategies:

* To develop an understanding of each participant and their particular circumstances and needs.

* To provide a program of activities that offer young people opportunities to develop life skills and reduce “at risk” and offending behaviours.

* Develop and implement a core program of activities that incorporate experiential learning, recreation and vocational skills.

* To complement the core program with special needs activities that take account of individual differences and cultural diversity.

* Refer participants to appropriate complementary services such as:
drug and alcohol counselling
literacy programs
employment and training services
specialized youth services
other recreational options

Preventative Programs

“Albertus”

The program is aimed at 14-15 year olds, conducted at a property at Gidgegannup by Bill Mangini, a retired scientist and philosopher, who introduces the participants to a wide selection of activities including woodwork, fishing, map reading, biology, bushcraft and bush-cooking.

The activities are very much "hands on" with the emphasis on learning using their own initiative, as opposed to being taught in a traditional sense. Once the participants have demonstrated that they can work as a cohesive team an overnight camp is held.

Successful participants are either linked into employment, work experience, or vocational training. Alternatively they re-enter full-time school with improved attitudes and commitment.

“Landcare”

A landcare/work skills programme for “at risk” year 10 students. School guidance staff from Kelmscott Senior High School would identify referrals.

The programme would incorporate a landcare project, permaculture/aquaculture workshop and a workshop on the use and maintenance of small motors. (E.g. chainsaw, brushcutter)

Youth Crime Intervention Project

At completion of 1998 Armadale, Gosnells and Districts Youth Resources (AYR) secured funding through the State Crime Prevention Fund Funding to address the offending activity by young people in the local area. A proposed strategy was devised whereby AYR would implement an early intervention program targeting first offenders, at-risk youth, and families.

“Jigsaw”– a six-week lifeskills program for middle adolescents. It operates during school term and referrals can be either non-school or school attendees. Activities undertaken have included:

- Educational – landcare work with voluntary organisations, energy conservation through the construction of solar cookers, manual arts sessions at Midland TAFE.
- Vocational – several sessions at Armadale Joblink on employment issues and opportunities, researching career options at The Career Reference Centre, visiting a career expo for young people.
- Recreational – canoeing, caving, cycling, hiking, navigation, camp planning and preparation, minimal impact camping.

Dogpound/Streetbeat– both these programs have been afterschool music programs emphasising rhythm and movement for 12-17 year olds. Dogpound took the form of eight workshops involving DJ’ing, rapping, singing and dancing. Streetbeat was a series of drumming workshops with an emphasis on drumming.

General Recreation– an afterschool recreational program for younger siblings of offenders and/or those young people coming from severely disadvantaged families.

“Metamorphose” – an eight week adventure therapy program for year 9 students. The program operates one day a week over the school term, culminating with a five-day expedition. Activities include ropes courses, problem solving, flying fox, abseil, canoeing, hiking, solar cookers, plus sessions on planning for minimal impact camping.

Family Liaison Project

Aimed at 10-14 year old “at risk” students, predominantly boys (although female students are also included) who are experiencing difficulties at home and within the school system.

The Family Liaison Worker delivers “Anger Management” workshops within the local Primary Schools with a small group of Grade 6/7 students who have been identified as having problems, and have been truanting or suspended for offensive and aggressive behaviours. .

In June 1999 a follow-up to the classroom situation, is the newly developed “**Bike ’n Hike**” program, incorporating bicycle workshop skills and adventure recreation.

“Bike and Hike”

A follow-up to the Anger Management Programme, incorporating bicycle workshop skills and adventure recreation. The Program targets Year 7 students whom have successfully completed Anger Management Programme.

After School Bike Workshop

The Family Liaison Worker has been operating a Bike Rebuilding workshop since late 1997, which offers young boys an after school activity, with their peers and provides an opportunity for them to interact with positive male role models.

The participants of the “Anger Management” workshops are also encouraged to involve themselves in the Bike Workshop.

“Family Fun Days”

A series of “Family Fun Days” were conducted over the 12 month period Three were held at a Sport & Recreation Campsite, which involved Abseiling, Flying Fox, High and Low Ropes Course, Canoeing and Team Building Activities.

One was held at the Road Safety Centre in Armadale, which allowed the young people who participate in the Bike Workshop to showcase their bikes as well as riding skills, amongst the group and for their families.

Youth Activities Service

The Youth Resource Centre at Armadale Shopping City is a joint initiative of Youth Resources and the management of the shopping centre. The Youth Resource Centre was established in 1994 in response to the concerns of local shopowners about young people "hanging around" the shopping centre. After a consultation process with local young people, tenants of the centre and shopping centre patrons, Youth Resources recommended the establishment of a designated space for young people, which was opened in July 1994.

Program Statistics

History	Attendances
1995/96	1536
1996/97	2098
1997/98	2837
1998/99	2536

School Holiday Activities

Youth Resources has been successful in obtaining funding from the W.A Department of Family and Children's Services to enable the Youth Activity Service to conduct a comprehensive range of school holiday activities. Over each two week period in the July, October, January and April holidays activities were held each day including:

caving	indoor climbing
horseriding	go-karting
movies	Adventureworld
waterslides and swimming	
beach excursions	catamaran sailing
wave-skiing	twilight canoeing
bushwalking	cycling
rollerskating	ice-skating
archery	Perth Zoo
Zone 3 Laser games	

Future Directions

In 1999/2000 Youth Resources will continue to develop new projects and services relevant to the needs of young people in the region.

The focus for the 1999/2000 Financial Year will be to seek funds to initiate programs that will compliment the existing programs offered by Youth Resources.

Funding for the 1999/2000 year has been approved, which opens opportunities for the agency to attract other sources of funds, to further develop its service.

The Management Committee, Manager and staff of Youth Resources remain committed to providing a quality service in this region, and continuing to retain a good working partnership with the Ministry.