AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH ALLIANCE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Submission to the

**House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Family, Community, Housing and Youth**

Inquiry into the impact of violence
on young Australians

by the

Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY)

December 2009

The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) is a national non-profit organisation of more than 1200 individual and organisational members who are working together to create a better future for all Australia's children and young people.

Despite Australia being a wealthy, developed country, many aspects of the health and wellbeing of our young people have been declining. ARACY was formed to reverse these trends by preventing and addressing the major problems affecting our children and young people.

ARACY tackles these complex issues through building collaborations with researchers, policy makers and practitioners from a broad range of disciplines. We share knowledge and foster evidence-based solutions. By working together, we can begin to close the gap between what is known and what is done to help all children achieve their full potential.

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Additional information about ARACY is available at www.aracy.org.au.

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Recommendations

The recommendations listed below are presented according to the section of the submission to which they relate.

The target population (p. 13)

ARACY recommends:

1. a national policy agenda be developed to provide a cohesive policy response to the developmental needs of young Australians from birth to adulthood. The policy agenda would integrate the current National Agenda for Early Childhood with the proposed youth agenda and include a strong policy and practice focus on the developmental needs of young people during the middle school years as they transition through puberty and move from primary to secondary school

2. extension of the definitional boundaries applying to young people and youth issues to encompass the developmental needs of younger adolescents (ie aged 10 plus) with targeted programs addressing young people's needs at different developmental stages.

Violence and young people in context (p. 15)

ARACY recommends:

3. the implementation of an integrated, whole-of-government response to the prevention of violence committed against and by young people reducing risk factors and strengthening protective factors that present at different life stages

4. that this inquiry takes account of the broad range of settings in which violence may be committed against and by young people including within the family home.

Perceptions of violence and community safety among young Australians (p. 17)

ARACY recommends:

5. the implementation of a long term, large scale strategy to promote the social and cultural environment in which the optimum development of children and young people is most likely to be realised. This strategy would need to include the promotion of community attitudes and behaviours that are conducive to meeting the developmental needs of children and young people, as well as countering attitudes and behaviours that compromise their healthy development.

The strategy would also need to target specific attitudes that contribute to violence committed against and by young people, in which respect ARACY recommends:

6. the introduction of public education campaigns that promote tolerance of diversity, as well as countering negative stereotyping of young people of different ethnic backgrounds

7. the development of responsible reporting guidelines for media coverage of the involvement of young people in violent and antisocial behaviours (particularly relating to the ethnicity of the alleged offenders)

8. the development of standards for the release of information by police on the ethnicity of young people engaging in criminal behaviour.

Links between illicit drug use, alcohol abuse and violence among young Australians (p. 20)

ARACY recommends:

9. the introduction of evidence-based drug and alcohol prevention programs that address the specific issues facing different population groups (including programs that are community-wide, family focused, pre-natal and age-appropriate).

The relationship between bullying and violence and the wellbeing of young Australians (p. 24)

ARACY recommends:

10. the introduction of comprehensive strategies to address and prevent bullying in different social settings (including bullying committed by adults against children, and by adults against adults, as well as programs that target bullying committed by children against children in a school setting).

Social and economic factors that contribute to violence among young Australians (p. 25)

ARACY recommends:

11. that this inquiry also consider:

    • the interaction between the characteristics of the individual with factors in the social, economic and physical environment (especially the individual characteristics that may place some young people at greater risk)

    • the behavioural implications of changes in the adolescent brain

    • the impact of diet on behaviour and brain development.

12. that policy responses to violence committed against and by young people be integrated into the Government's Social Inclusion Agenda to ensure the developmental needs of socially isolated and disadvantaged young people are appropriately met, with a particular focus on:

    • addressing the heightened risk of violent behaviour among young people living in lower socio-economic areas

    • reducing risk factors and strengthening protective factors across multiple domains of the young person's life.

Strategies to reduce violence and its impact among young Australians (p. 31)

An overarching framework of guiding principles

ARACY recommends:

13. the development and adoption of a set of overarching principles (based on the developmental needs of children and young people) to provide a framework for the recommendations arising out of this inquiry. Such principles would provide a yardstick by which each recommendation can be tested for consistency and effectiveness.

A holistic collaborative approach to prevention

ARACY recommends:

14. that governments and other program funders provide incentives and support to encourage greater collaboration across sectors, disciplines and jurisdictions to enable a holistic approach to addressing issues that impact on the healthy development and wellbeing of children and young people including:

    • financial incentives for research, policy and practice organisations to work more collaboratively

    • financial and practical support to build the capacity of organisations to adopt and apply collaborative practices to more effectively address the multilevel factors associated with youth violence and antisocial behaviour.

Evidence-based solutions

ARACY recommends:

15. indicators be developed and targets set for improving child and youth wellbeing informed by nationally consistent data collection that enables outcomes to be measured, monitored and compared over time at a local, state, national and international level.

16. a tool be developed to measure local indicators of youth wellbeing (including factors associated with their emotional and social wellbeing) akin to the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) which is being used to monitor the development of young children on an area specific basis.

Adopting a developmental pathways approach to prevention

ARACY recommends:

17. that programs and strategies aimed at reducing youth violence and antisocial behaviour be tailored to the different developmental stages in a young person's life addressing the diverse factors that influence outcomes at different life stages.

Adding value to existing work

ARACY recommends:

18. that this inquiry takes account of the findings and recommendations of other recently commissioned jurisdictional inquiries into youth violence and antisocial behaviour.

1.   Introduction

The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) welcomes this parliamentary inquiry into the impact of violence on young Australians and the opportunity to contribute to it.

1.1.   ARACY's interest in this issue

ARACY's over-riding concern is to ensure that all Australian children and young people get the care, support and opportunities they need to enable them to achieve their personal potential in life which will also enable them to contribute to advancing our collective wellbeing as an Australian nation.

We see violent and antisocial behaviour as symptomatic of a breakdown in the socialisation process that:

- supports children and young people to develop the emotional and social skills they need to regulate their emotions and to respect themselves and others

- enables adults to nurture and support the developmental needs of children in their care

- promotes harmonious, constructive and cooperative relationships in a civil society.

We submit that policy and program initiatives aimed at preventing violence committed against and by young people require a simultaneous national commitment to

- ensure the emotional and social developmental needs of all Australian children and young people are met

- maximise the opportunities available to all Australian children and young people to engage with Australian society in meaningful and constructive ways.

ARACY is currently undertaking a number of projects aimed at enhancing the wellbeing and life chances of Australian children and young people which, we believe, will also contribute to reducing the level of violence in Australian society.

The main initiatives that are relevant to this inquiry are listed below.

A comprehensive strategy to promote a positive social and cultural environment for children and youth people:[1] based on best evidence social marketing principles, the ARACY strategy aims to create the social conditions (values, practices and policies) that nurture and support young people in an environment that is conducive to their full physical, emotional and social wellbeing. ARACY has recently presented details of the proposed strategy to Government and is waiting on a response.

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[1] ARACY's Social Change Strategy
http://www.aracy.org.au/index.cfm?pageName=social_change_strategy_overview

Prevention of child abuse and neglect: [2]ARACY is working with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to enhance the capacity of government and community organisations to prevent child abuse and neglect. This project has a focus on primary prevention (targeting all families and carers responsible for the care and wellbeing of children) and secondary prevention (aimed at identifying and providing support to vulnerable families to enable them to better meet their children's needs).

Promoting developmental opportunities for socially and economically disadvantaged children:[3] In conjunction with the National Australia Bank, ARACY's "Child Readiness to Learn" project seeks to ensure that the innate ability to learn of young children is nurtured and protected from the negative impact of social disadvantage.

Preventing Youth Violence:[4] ARACY's Preventing Youth Violence initiative seeks to mobilise collaborative action across sectors and disciplines in developing strategies that are grounded in the best available evidence on "what works" to reduce youth violence and antisocial behaviour.

ARACY has recently commissioned the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute to prepare a discussion paper that will inform national consultations on how the evidence presented can best be applied in developing innovative, collaborative strategies to reduce violent and antisocial behaviours among young adolescents in Australia.

The Preventing Youth Violence discussion paper is expected to be completed in early 2010. (A copy can be made available to this inquiry as soon as it is completed).

1.2.   Relevant ARACY reports

This submission draws on commentary and data from a number of recent studies and reports commissioned by ARACY that are relevant to the Terms of Reference for this inquiry. A summary of the cited reports is presented below. These references, together with web links to them, are listed in Attachment A.

- *Community attitudes to children and young people: Communications research report* (Auspoll, 2009). This, as yet unpublished report, presents the outcomes of focus group discussions and survey results canvassing community attitudes about children and young people.

- *Young people and alcohol – reducing the risk (Saggers, Chikritzhs & Allsop, 2009).* This report summarises existing evidence on the prevalence of young people's risky drinking, the threat of risky drinking to the health and wellbeing of young Australians and the interventions that have been proven to be effective in addressing risky drinking in Australia and overseas.

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[2] ARACY's Preventing child abuse project
http://www.aracy.org.au/index.cfm?pageName=preventing_child_abuse
[3] ARACY's Child readiness to learn project
http://www.aracy.org.au/index.cfm?pageName=child_readiness_to_learn
[4] ARACY's Preventing youth violence project
http://www.aracy.org.au/index.cfm?pageName=preventing_youth_violence

- *Violent and antisocial behaviours among young adolescents in Australian communities: an analysis of risk and protective factors (Williams et al, 2009).* This report presents the results of an analysis of survey data from 8000 Year 6 and Year 8 students which sought to identify factors that may either increase or decrease the likelihood of young people engaging in violent and antisocial behaviour. The association between these behaviours and alcohol consumption is also examined.

- *Inverting the pyramid: Enhancing systems for protecting children, (Allen Consulting Group, 2009).* This report identifies national and international best practice in organisational change strategies and processes that are most effective in moving towards the prevention of child abuse and neglect. The report presents evidence on how to move large systems to a prevention focus, which includes building capacity for identifying vulnerable families and children and providing assistance before harm occurs.

- *Preventing youth disengagement and promoting youth engagement (Burns et al, 2008).* This report includes input from young people about their views on what promotes or prevents young people engaging constructively with Australian society. Participants in a face-to-face and online youth discussion forum were recruited through service agencies supporting young people at risk of mental health problems or social disengagement. Seventeen young people took part. Participants were roughly equally divided between those aged 17-20 and those aged 21-25. Seven came from a CaLD background.

- *Anti-gang strategies and interventions (White, 2007).* This report reviews programs and strategies aimed at reducing violent and antisocial behaviour by young people aligned with youth gangs. The report includes a review of the academic literature and other sources reporting on the role of the news media in shaping community perceptions about young people.

- *The impact of drug and alcohol misuse on children and families (Dodd and Saggers, 2006).* This paper reviews the literature on what is known about the incidence and prevalence of drug and alcohol abuse in families with children and the impact of such misuse on children. The paper has a particular focus on the impact of drug and alcohol misuse on health and wellbeing and the implications for involvement in the criminal justice system.

2. The scope of this inquiry

2.1 The target population

While this inquiry broadly categorises "young Australians" as those aged between 12 and 25 years, we submit that a more finely tuned distinction is required to address the different needs of young people at different life stages.

Within the 12-25 age range, developmental distinctions may be made taking account of:

• the earlier onset of puberty in modern Western societies (from around 10 years of age upwards) with associated changes in brain development occurring throughout the adolescent and early adult years

• the unique experiences and challenges faced by children transitioning from primary to secondary school education (which potentially increases the stresses and risks encountered as children move into a less structured and less protected social environment)

• the increasing influence of peers, other social groups and factors in the broader social environment impacting on young people as they move into the mid adolescent years (also associated with diminishing parental control and authority over children's behaviour, their social experiences and other external influences)

• the experience of young adults as they move into the post school years when they are expected to be more self-directed and self-sufficient as they increasingly assume adult roles and responsibilities.

Victoria's Vulnerable Youth Framework discussion paper (2008)[5] identifies three age groups associated with significant transitions in young people's lives between the ages of 10 and 25. It is notable that the discussion paper also expands the definition of a "young person" downwards to include those aged 10 to 12. The three age groupings associated with significant developmental transitions are identified as being: 10-14 years, 15-17 years and 18-25 years.

In response to the discussion paper, the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic, 2008) commented that cohorts of young people at the more extreme ends of the age spectrum (specifically children aged 10-12 and young adults aged 18-25) were missing out on age appropriate service responses.

> "*While it is clear that both these cohorts are missing out on a service response, it is also critical that the service response that is developed is age appropriate... a 10-year-old child is not a 'young person' and it is not appropriate that a 10-year-old receive the same type of support that would be offered an adolescent by a youth service*" (p.13).[6]

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[5] Details of the Vulnerable Youth Framework including the discussion paper can be downloaded from: http://www.cyf.vic.gov.au/youth-services/vulnerable-youth-framework

[6] The Youth Affairs Council submission responding to the Vulnerable Framework discussion paper is available at: http://www.yacvic.org.au/policy/items/2009/01/259368-upload-00001.pdf

The YACVic submission further argued that a service gap also existed for even younger children from eight years old upwards noting that, even at this young age, risk factors to longer term emotional and social adjustment may already be manifesting or intensifying.

ARACY's Preventing Youth Violence initiative is targeted at young people aged 10-14 acknowledging that:

- this is a period of major changes in brain development which, the evidence suggests, not only increases adolescent vulnerability to adverse environmental influences but also affords greater opportunities for effective, positive interventions

- the 10-14 age group appears to be relatively neglected in current policy and service provision initiatives

- the transition from primary to secondary school education not only poses additional developmental challenges for young adolescents, but also represents a change in educational systems with associated challenges for the delivery of seamless interventions.

ARACY recommends:

1. a national policy agenda be developed to provide a cohesive policy response to the developmental needs of young Australians from birth to adulthood. The policy agenda would integrate the current National Agenda for Early Childhood with the proposed youth agenda and include a strong policy and practice focus on the developmental needs of young people during the middle school years as they transition through puberty and move from primary to secondary school

2. extension of the definitional boundaries applying to young people and youth issues to encompass the developmental needs of younger adolescents (ie aged 10 plus) with targeted programs addressing young people's needs at different developmental stages.

2.2. Violence and young people in context

Policies, practices and administrative responsibility for addressing violence are conceptualised differently according to the setting and the age at which the violence occurs and against whom it is directed.

- Violence against younger children in the family home typically comes within the ambit of child protection agencies. The incidence and impact of family violence on adolescents, however, appears to receive less public and policy attention. Within the family and home setting, it needs to be acknowledged that adolescents may also inflict violence on their parents or siblings.[7]

- Violence towards and between children and adolescents occurring in a school setting is addressed by policies and practices targeting "bullying" (with principal responsibility for addressing these behaviours attributed to educational authorities).

- Violence against or committed by adolescents or young adults in a community or social setting is typically labeled as youth violence (with responsibility for addressing these more public displays of violence attributed to police and justice systems).

Published crime statistics indicate that violence disproportionately affects young people: both as victims and as perpetrators of violence.[8] These official data indicate that the prevalence of community violence is increasing among younger people,[9] but decreases as they move into their mid to late 20s.[10]

However, a report on violence in young children published by Canadian Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development (Tremblay, Gervais & Petitclerc, 2008)[11] asserts that the age group in which physical aggression is most likely to occur is, in fact, among pre-school aged children, rather than among young people.

Based on a social learning model, children are faced with the developmental task of learning ways of expressing themselves and of achieving their personal goals through socially acceptable and constructive means (as opposed to resorting to violent outbursts and behaviours more typically deployed in those of younger years).

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[7] A 2004 paper produced by the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse "*Adolescent violence towards parents*" cited US data putting the incidence of adolescent violence towards parents at 7%-18% in two parent families and 29% in one parent families

[8] The assumption that young people are more likely to be perpetrators of violence refers primarily to community violence but does not take into account violence perpetrated in the family home which is most often committed by adults

[9] According to the Australian Institute of Criminology (2008) from 1997 to 2007, the number of young people charged with assault rose by 48%.

[10] According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008) 29% of young males aged 18-19 years report having recently been physically assaulted by another male, compared to 15% of males aged 20-24, and only 4% of older males.

[11] Tremblay, R. E., Gervais, J., & Petitclerc, A. (2008). *Early learning prevents youth violence.* Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development.

"Most children who are nurtured in a supportive environment, in which parents and other caregivers provide positive guidance, will follow (a) path toward socially appropriate behavior. The pre-school years are the critical time to teach children the fundamentals of social interaction – sharing and compromise, cooperation and verbal communication" (Tremblay, Gervais & Petitclerc, 2008, p.2).

The authors claim that about 5-10% of Canadian children fail to learn how to share, compromise, cooperate and communicate verbally in their early years which leads to them displaying serious and escalating behavioural problems later on.

Research recently commissioned by ARACY confirms that while some young Australian children are already manifesting violent and antisocial tendencies that persist from early childhood into adolescence, in other children these problem behaviours may not manifest until much later in the developmental pathway: occurring at the onset of adolescence, later in adolescence, or manifesting for the first time in early adulthood (Williams et al, 2009).

"If prevention investment is to effectively address the settings and risk processes that influence these different onset groups, a contextual analysis is required of community level risk and protective factors for early, versus late, engagement in antisocial behaviour and harmful alcohol use" (Williams et al, 2007, p.6).

ARACY recommends:

3.   the implementation of an integrated, whole-of-government response to the prevention of violence committed against and by young people aimed at reducing risk factors and strengthening protective factors that present at different life stages

4.   that this inquiry takes account of the broad range of settings in which violence may be committed against and by young people including within the family home.

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3. ARACY's response to the Terms of Reference

3.1. Perceptions of violence and community safety among young Australians (Reference 1)

While this reference is expressed in terms of the perceptions of violence and community safety among young Australians, we submit that community perceptions about young Australians are equally important and relevant.

Community perceptions about young people

A study of community attitudes towards children and young people (Auspoll, 2009, forthcoming)[12] indicated a community perception that today's young people were generally faring well in a physical and material sense, but that they were not doing as well in relation to their emotional wellbeing and mental health.

Today's young people were considered to be more technically savvy, worldlier, independent, have more money and opportunities as well as being more aware of their rights than ever before. Young people were perceived to be empowered.

However, when asked to characterise young people, focus group participants typically expressed powerfully negative views. Young people were described as having a lack of respect, both for others and for themselves (e.g. risk taking behaviour), lacking in commitment, direction and hope, being too materialistic, being selfish and image/brand obsessed.

The dominant attitudes presented through the research suggest that adult views about the emotional and social capacity of young people are unrealistic and often hostile. "Teenagers, themselves", the report summarises, "are seen as being the problem" (p. 18).

These two sets of views - competency and responsibility on the one hand, and negative behaviour on the other – lead to conclusions (and conversations) in which children and young people are seen as being personally responsible for the problems they create and face. Young people are judged as if they were adults.

The views expressed by focus group participants seem to indicate that adults may be less aware of the many developmental influences, social and other factors to which young people are subject but which they have limited capacity to control.

ARACY suggests that hostile community attitudes towards young people do not provide a supportive base from which to foster young people's emotional and social development and wellbeing. A hostile attitudinal environment is not only unlikely to reduce youth violence, but more than likely exacerbate it.

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[12] Based on a nine focus groups of eight to ten people each from a range of community settings and backgrounds.

Media influences on community perceptions about young people

In a report commissioned by ARACY on youth gangs, violence and antisocial behaviour, White (2007) refers to the role of the media in reinforcing negative perceptions of young people.

> *"The persistence and pervasiveness of such reporting and commentary means that it is hard not to be fearful of crime and to be suspicious about young people"* (p. 43).

According to White, the "the racialisation" of much of the reporting of youth violence and criminal activity pathologises young people of particular ethnic backgrounds. This, in turn, has a major impact on public perceptions, as well as influencing how state agencies (such as the police) respond to these community concerns.

White suggests that negative media reporting may, in fact, lead to increased levels of criminal activity by some members of youth gangs who enjoy the notoriety and media attention that ensues.

Young people's perceptions on barriers to constructive social engagement

Burns et al (2008) conducted discussion forums with young people on factors that encouraged or discouraged their social participation. The young people:

• reported that feeling unwelcome or experiencing prejudice or disengagement in one setting (ie school) impacted on their level engagement in other settings (ie the community and in employment)

• highlighted the need to recognise and respond to young people's diversity, reinforcing that a 'one size fits all' approach to policy and programs created barriers to engagement particularly among groups of young people with different characteristics and from different cultural backgrounds to those of mainstream Australian society

• said they valued being afforded the opportunity to make choices for their own lives. Being told what to do, and having few options to choose from were seen to contribute to youth disengagement.

> *"Stereotypes that reflected both racist and prejudiced views about particular groups and young people in general were believed to affect people's desire to engage or disengage with particular institutions or processes. Participants spoke at length of the role that stereotyping of those from culturally diverse background, non-Australian citizens and the socio-economically disadvantaged were... barriers that prevented engagement"* (Burns et al, p. 31).

Summary

Community attitudes to and perceptions of young people affect the extent to which they feel that they are valued members and included in mainstream society. As such, negative and unrealistic community attitudes are likely to be counter-productive to the goal of encouraging and supporting young people to engage constructively with Australian society.

In other areas of social concern impacting on the health and wellbeing of the Australian community, government funded social marketing campaigns have successfully been employed to target and change counterproductive community attitudes and behaviours (eg attitudes to depressive illnesses via the beyondblue initiative, and anti-drink driving and anti-smoking campaigns).

ARACY believes that a broad-based strategy is required to address community-wide attitudes and behaviours that are harmful to children and young people.

ARACY recommends:

5.   the implementation of a long term, large scale, social marketing strategy to promote a social and cultural environment in which the optimum development of children and young people is most likely to be realised. This strategy would need to include the promotion of community attitudes and behaviours that are conducive to meeting the developmental needs of children and young people as well as countering attitudes and behaviours that compromise their healthy development.

The strategy would also need to target attitudes that contribute to violence committed against and by young people, in which respect ARACY recommends:

6.   the introduction of public education campaigns that promote tolerance of diversity, as well as countering negative stereotyping of young people of different ethnic backgrounds

7.   the development of responsible reporting guidelines for media coverage of the involvement of young people in violent and antisocial behaviours (particularly relating to the ethnicity of the alleged offenders)

8.   the development of standards for the release of information by police on the ethnicity of young people engaging in criminal behaviour.

3.2. Links between illicit drug use, alcohol abuse and violence among young Australians (Reference 2)

The links between alcohol and violent behaviour have been well established. Data from the Australian Department of Health and Ageing for 2003[13] indicate that alcohol misuse was implicated in:

- half of all domestic and sexual violence cases
- 40-70 percent of violent crimes
- 70-80 percent of night-time assaults
- 34 percent of murders.

Alcohol use and violence among young adolescents (aged 10-14)

During 2009 ARACY commissioned the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute (Williams et al 2009) to analyse survey data collected from more than 8000 Year 6 and Year 8 students in Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia.

The survey sought information from students on diverse areas of their personal, family, school and community life with the aim of identifying rates of health and social problems, together with risk and protective factors that may predict these problems.

In this study, the survey data were analysed to specifically identify risk and protective factors associated with violence, antisocial behaviour and hazardous drinking. The definition adopted for violent behaviour applied to more extreme forms of physical aggression (for example, if a student reported that in the previous 12 months they had attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting them, or had beaten someone so badly that they probably needed to see a doctor or nurse).

The analysis confirmed a strong association between the consumption of alcohol and the likelihood that a student would have also engaged in violent or antisocial behaviour.

- The likelihood of engaging in violent or antisocial behaviour was much higher for those who had ever used alcohol and particularly high amongst those who had drunk five or more alcoholic drinks on one occasion in the previous two weeks (binge drinkers).

- Young people who had ever consumed alcohol, or had consumed alcohol in the previous month, were approximately three-and-a-half times as likely to have been violent in the previous year, and six times as likely to have participated in antisocial behaviour.

- Among those who had engaged in binge drinking in the previous two weeks, the likelihood of having been violent was more than five times higher than for those

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[13] Cited in Dodd and Saggers (2006, p.20). The cited data do not differentiate these crimes according to the age of the perpetrator.

who had not consumed alcohol at this level, while the likelihood of participating in antisocial behaviour was more than nine times as high.

As illustrated in the diagrams below[14] the study indicated that young people are already consuming alcohol at alarmingly high levels from an early age with possible implications for concurrent violent and antisocial behaviours as they are exposed to a greater number of risks in the social environment.

Figure 1. Recent alcohol consumption by sex and year level *(based on 2006 data)*
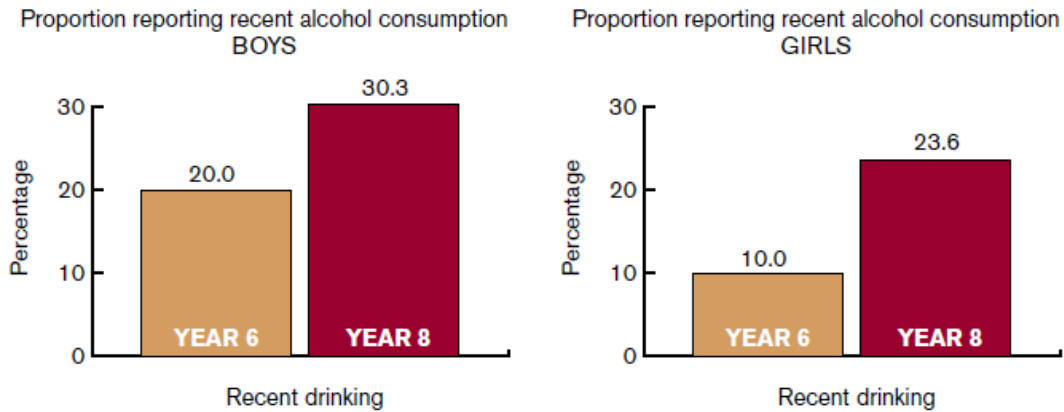
A student was classified as having recently consumed alcohol if they reported having had an alcoholic drink within the past month.

Figure 2. Binge drinking by sex and year level *(based on 2006 data)*
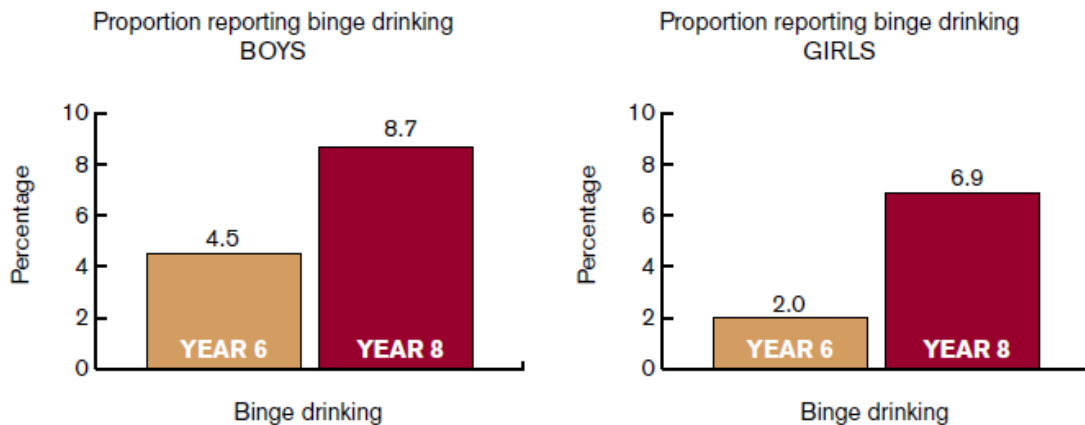
A student was classified as engaging in binge drinking if they had consumed five or more alcoholic drinks in a row within the previous fortnight.

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[14] Diagrams reproduced from Williams et al, 2009 pp. 22 and 23.

Alcohol and drug related violence in the family home

Reviewing the evidence on the impact of drug and alcohol misuse on children and families, Dodd and Saggers (2006) noted the association between parental drug and alcohol misuse and the potential for parental physical and sexual abuse, as well as neglect, of children. The authors cited data from the New South Wales Department of Community Services indicating that as many as 80 percent of child abuse cases are associated with drug and/or alcohol misuse.

In other studies cited as part of this review:

- mothers who misuse substances were reportedly less likely to be responsive to their children's needs and to perceive them more negatively than mothers who did not misuse substances (p.12)

- injury prevention statistics indicate that in families where there is parental substance misuse, both child abuse and partner abuse are also more likely to co-occur (p.9)

- children exposed to drug use among other family members are at a far higher risk of an earlier initiation into drug use themselves (p.11).

Thus, children living in families where there is parental substance misuse are exposed to multiple risks that are not only likely to threaten their healthy development, but may also have implications for their capacity to resist engaging in unhealthy, violent and antisocial behaviours as they are progress through their own lives.

As well as violence committed by parents in the family home, Dodd and Saggers (2006) noted the violence that alcohol or drug affected young people may inflict on others within the family home (presumably with adverse implications for all family members including younger siblings).

> *"Usher and colleagues (2005) cite a study which reports that mothers of young people who misuse substances need to deal with the violent behaviour and criminal activity of their own children and their associates"* (p.24).

The health and social costs and consequences of drug and alcohol misuse are considerable.

> *"Individuals living in families where they or other family members misuse substances are more likely to come in contact with the criminal justice system, be diagnosed with a mental illness, be admitted to hospital, experience or be a perpetrator of family violence, experience poverty and homelessness, and experience marital breakdown"* (p. 13).

As the authors comment until relatively recently most of the research and interest at a policy and research level has focused on substance misuse as an individual problem rather than one which has broader family and social influences and implications. An increasing awareness of the effects of substance misuse on the entire family and especially on the wellbeing of children has lead to a growing

recognition of the need to adopt a more holistic and 'joined up' approach to service provision.

However, the authors argue that existing service provision boundaries, and administrative structures and arrangements have detracted from the effective implementation of such 'joined up' approaches.

The behavioural implications of alcohol misuse on early brain development

Dodd and Saggers (2006) cite Australian data from 2003 indicating that approximately five per cent of pregnant woman admitted to drinking alcohol at the level associated with Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS).[15]

A health fact sheet authorised by the Victorian government reports that there is little public awareness of, or concern about, Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) in Australia compared to overseas where FAS is considered to be the leading preventable cause of intellectual and developmental problems in children.[16]

Of particular concern to the focus of this inquiry is that, as well as impairments to intellectual functioning which may result from excessive exposure to alcohol during the gestational period, Foetal Alcohol Syndrome is also associated with behavioural problems in affected children (including hyperactivity and impulsivity) which may also predispose them to engaging in violent and antisocial behaviour throughout their lives.

Strategies to reduce alcohol consumption among young people

In a summary of evidence on policies and programs that have been shown to reduce drinking among young people, Saggers, Chikritzhs & Allsop (2009) note that universal interventions to prevent risky alcohol consumption are most effective when they involve regulating the physical and economic availability of alcohol including:

- Taxation and/or price increases on alcohol
- Zero tolerance laws applying to a lower legal blood alcohol content for drivers under the legal drinking age
- Graduated licensing that places restrictions on the circumstances under which young or novice drivers are permitted to drive
- Increases in the minimum drinking age.

Referring to the powerful influence of adult drinking behaviours on young people, the authors argue that preventing adult alcohol misuse is as important a strategy as directly tackling risky drinking by young people.

At a population level, the evidence supports strategies such as:

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[15] Note: Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is likely to be even more pervasive than the more extreme Foetal Alcohol Syndrome.

[16] The fact sheet is posted on the Better Health Channel website
http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Foetal_alcohol_syndrome

- better enforcement of liquor licensing laws, (including the prohibition on serving under-age or intoxicated patrons)

- policing of local liquor accords and risky drinking occasions such as school leavers' celebrations

- broad developmental interventions and targeted interventions with vulnerable and disadvantaged groups

- investment in brief screening and counselling interventions and treatment to reduce drug-related harm

- addressing intergenerational substance misuse, also involving non-using family members.

ARACY recommends:

9. the introduction of evidence-based drug and alcohol prevention programs that address the specific issues facing different population groups (including programs that are community-wide, family focused, pre-natal and age-appropriate).

3.3. The relationship between bullying and violence and the wellbeing of young Australians (Reference 3)

The National Centre Against Bullying defines bullying as the repeated and intentional use of negative words or actions by a person or group of people with more power against a person with less power which causes distress and risks wellbeing.

Much of the interest in "bullying" in Australia to date (including the focus of the National Centre Against Bulling) appears to be on the physical and psychological intimidation practiced by school aged children against other school aged children within a school setting.[17]

However, "bullying" may be applied to intimidatory practices and behaviours occurring in a range of settings (family, school, community, via the internet and mobile phone, workplace or other social contexts) in which there is an apparent imbalance of power. Teachers may bully students just as students may bully each other.

Irrespective of the context, we submit that bullying practices and behaviours are likely to compromise the development of interpersonal and social skills that will enable both perpetrators and victims to engage constructively with society in the long term.

As adults are the primary source of social learning for children, bullying that occurs in any context is potentially damaging, not only to the parties immediately involved, but

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[17] The National Centre Against Bullying focuses specifically on childhood bullying. The Centre refers to five types of bullying (physical, verbal, social, psychological and cyberbulling http://www.ncab.org.au/

also to children who may witness such encounters and subsequently imitate them, or who may bear the brunt of the individual and family dysfunction that ensues.

ARACY recommends:

10.   the introduction of comprehensive strategies to address and prevent bullying in different social settings (including bullying committed by adults against children, and by adults against adults, as well as programs that target bullying committed by children against children in a school setting).

3.4.   Social and economic factors that contribute to violence among young Australians (Reference 4)

ARACY welcomes the acknowledgment implicit in this reference that factors in the broader social and economic environment contribute to violence committed against and by young Australians.
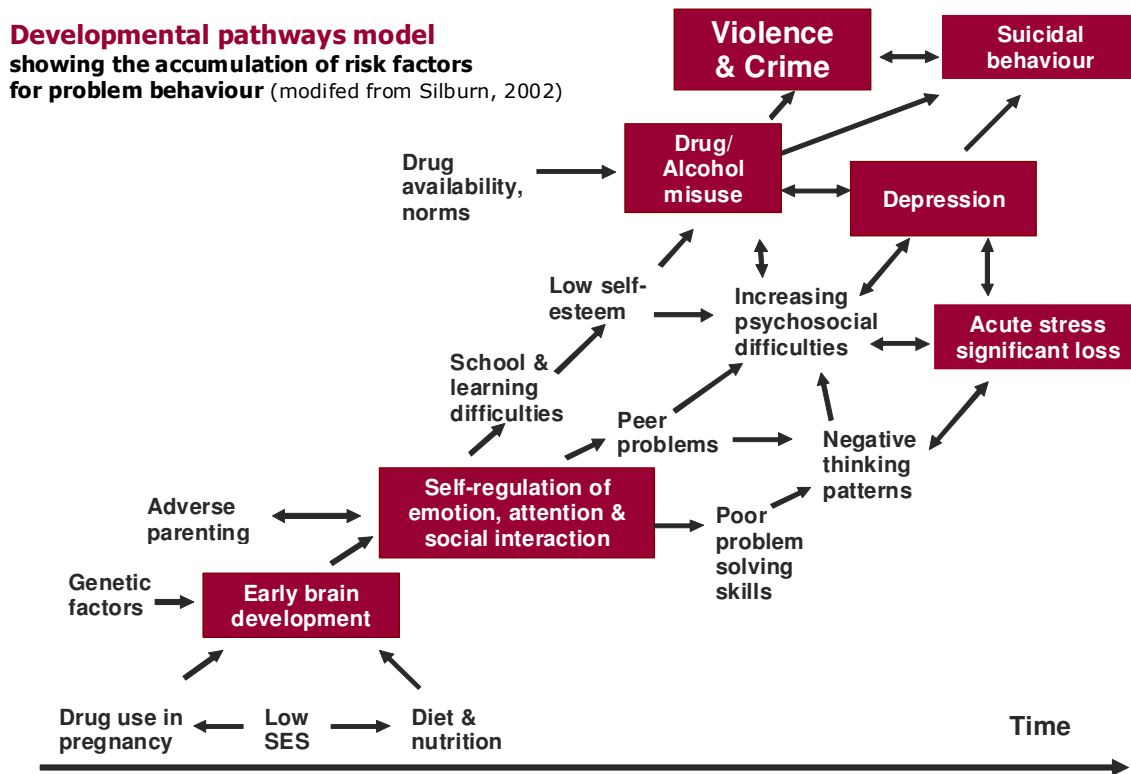
However, we believe that individual factors are also relevant in determining how young people interact with their social environment at different life stages.

A life pathways approach assumes that if the developmental needs of a child or young person are not met, the personal, family, educational and social problems that result will accumulate as the young person progresses along their life path. According to this framework, it is apparent that many of the health and social problems occurring in later adolescence can be traced back to common antecedents emerging in earlier developmental periods.

> *"Risk and protective factors have different levels of influence depending on the young person's developmental stage at the time of exposure, and the total number of risk and protective factors they experience. It is the cumulative number of risk factors that increases the likelihood of a negative outcome"* (Williams et al, p.10).

The diagram below, adapted from Silburn, 2002, shows how risks accumulate over time. The diagram illustrates how many of the health, wellbeing and social problems that occur later in the development pathway have common antecedents reinforcing the value of early intervention to prevent the emergence or escalation of developmental problems.

Figure 3: Pathways to violence and crime[18]

Developmental pathways model
showing the accumulation of risk factors
for problem behaviour (modifed from Silburn, 2002)

Violence & Crime

Suicidal behaviour

Drug availability, norms

Drug/ Alcohol misuse

Depression

Low self-esteem

Increasing psychosocial difficulties

Acute stress significant loss

School & learning difficulties

Peer problems

Negative thinking patterns

Self-regulation of emotion, attention & social interaction

Poor problem solving skills

Adverse parenting

Genetic factors

Early brain development

Drug use in pregnancy

Low SES

Diet & nutrition

Time

Individual factors that contribute to youth violence

Factors operating at an individual level that may contribute to problem behaviours among young people as they progress along the developmental pathway include:

- *Gender:* males are more likely to be violent than females. Based on a statistical analysis of survey data of 8000 Year 6 and Year 8 students, Williams et al, (2009, p. 28) concluded that boys were five times more likely to engage in violent behaviour than girls.

- *Age:* in the study cited above violent behaviour decreased with age (ie Year 8 students were less likely to be violent than Year 6 students). This was particularly the case for boys.

- *Temperament*: temperamental qualities in some children and young people are associated with higher levels of rebelliousness, hyperactivity, impulsivity, stress tolerance and aggressive behaviour.[19]

- *Intellectual capacity*: problem solving and verbal communication skills (necessary for conflict resolution) are often diminished in children and young people with

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[18] Silburn, S. R. (2002). Translating research into practice, Workshop on Children's Futures. Australian Academy of Social Sciences, Melbourne.
[19] Prior, M., Sanson, A., Smart, D., Oberklaid, F., (2000), Pathways from infancy to adolescence: the Australian temperament project, Australian Institute of Family Studies. http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/resreport4/main.html

intellectual disability.[20] It is estimated that 120,000 young Australians aged 15 – 29 have an intellectual disability.[21]

- *Adolescent brain development*: major changes in the developing adolescent brain, from the onset of puberty onwards, are known to affect:

   o how young people think and feel (including how they respond to stress, how they regulate their emotions and how they interpret emotions in others)

   o how they behave (including increases in risk-taking behaviours)

   o how their brain processes alcohol and drugs (with associated alcohol and drug affected behaviours)

   o how they respond to environmental influences (both good and bad).

- *Diet and nutrition*: western dietary patterns, including higher levels of consumption of take away foods (high in fat, sugars and salt), confectionary and red meat, have been shown to contribute to poorer behavioural and other mental health outcomes among young adolescents.[22]

At an individual level, the factors listed above have implications for whether, how, and the extent to which, young Australians are more, or less, likely to engage constructively with Australian society, or to engage in violent and antisocial behaviour.

The extent to which these behaviours manifest as lifestyle patterns in a young person's life depends on an Australian commitment of effort and resources to create the kind of social environment in which all children and young people are supported and enabled to achieve their full developmental potential.

ARACY recommends:

11. that this inquiry also consider:

   - the interaction between the characteristics of the individual with factors in the social, economic and physical environment (especially the individual characteristics that may place some young people at greater risk)

   - the behavioural implications of changes in the adolescent brain

   - the impact of diet on behaviour and brain development.

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[20] AIHW (2008) *Disability in Australia: intellectual disability*
http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10582
[21] Data reported by the AIHW (2008) ibid indicate that in 2003 the number of children and young people with an intellectual disability was estimated at: 152,800 children aged 5-14; 59,800 young people aged 15-19; and 60,200 young people aged 20-29
[22] Oddy et al (2009), *The association between dietary patterns and mental health in early adolescence*, Preventative Medicine, 49, 39-44

Social and economic factors that contribute to youth violence

The social and economic environment in which children and young people develop may either enhance or detract from their sense of connection with, respect for, and commitment to the wellbeing of their fellow citizens.

Social experiences may create and reinforce a sense of:

* social disconnection due to perceived, or actual, prejudice and exclusion from mainstream Australian society

* relative social disadvantage due to a perception of reduced lifestyle opportunities relative to other, more privileged, social groups.[23]

In turn, perceptions and experiences of social exclusion and disadvantage are more likely to contribute to behaviours that are consistent with such perceptions.

Burns et al (2008) summarised factors that either detract from or enhance the likelihood that young people will engage constructively with society:

> *"A number of interconnected structural and individual factors such as poverty, exposure to violence, social isolation and lack of positive relationships with adults link disengagement with offending behaviour, gang membership, alcohol and drug use, mental illness and suicide. Conversely, social networks and structures that support diversity can provide support, influence and opportunities for engagement, thus facilitating links to others that promote a sense of belonging and meaningful connections, fostering social inclusion and reducing disengagement"* (Burns et al, 2008, p. 4).

Williams et al (2009) identified 20 risk factors which increased the likelihood of young people engaging in violent and antisocial behaviour including:

* Low community involvement and attitudes to substance use

* Poor family relationships and management

* Parental attitudes favourable to drug use

* School failure and disengagement

* Rebelliousness, sensation seeking and interaction with anti-social peers.

Almost 80% of young people who had four or more risk factors reported having used alcohol in the past month and/or having been involved in violent or antisocial behaviour in the past year.

This percentage dropped to just over 50% for those with two or three risk factors and 23% for those with no risk factors or only one risk factor.

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[23] Williams et al, (2009) have established the statistical significance of socio-economic factors associated with youth violence.

Higher levels of violent behaviour were also found among children living in lower socioeconomic areas but socioeconomic status did not appear to impact on the level of antisocial behaviour.

> "*Significant decreases in violent behaviour are seen with increases in socioeconomic status but there is no relationship between socioeconomic status and antisocial behaviour. In other words, there is a 10% decrease in the likelihood of violent behaviour for each increase in socioeconomic quartile, while antisocial behaviour does not change with socioeconomic status"* (Williams et al, 2009, p. 29).

However, the study also noted a high level of variation in violent behaviour among young people between the 30 communities surveyed (even after controlling for socioeconomic status, age, sex, alcohol use and individual levels of risk and protection).

> "*It may therefore be concluded that there is something inherent within communities that influences the level of violence. Further research is needed to determine the community characteristics that discourage violent behaviour"* (Williams et al, 2009, p. 30).

The diagram below shows the influence of factors in different dimensions of a young person's social environment that may either increase of decrease their constructive engagement with society as they move from early adolescence into early adulthood.

Figure 4: Risk and protective factors in the social environment
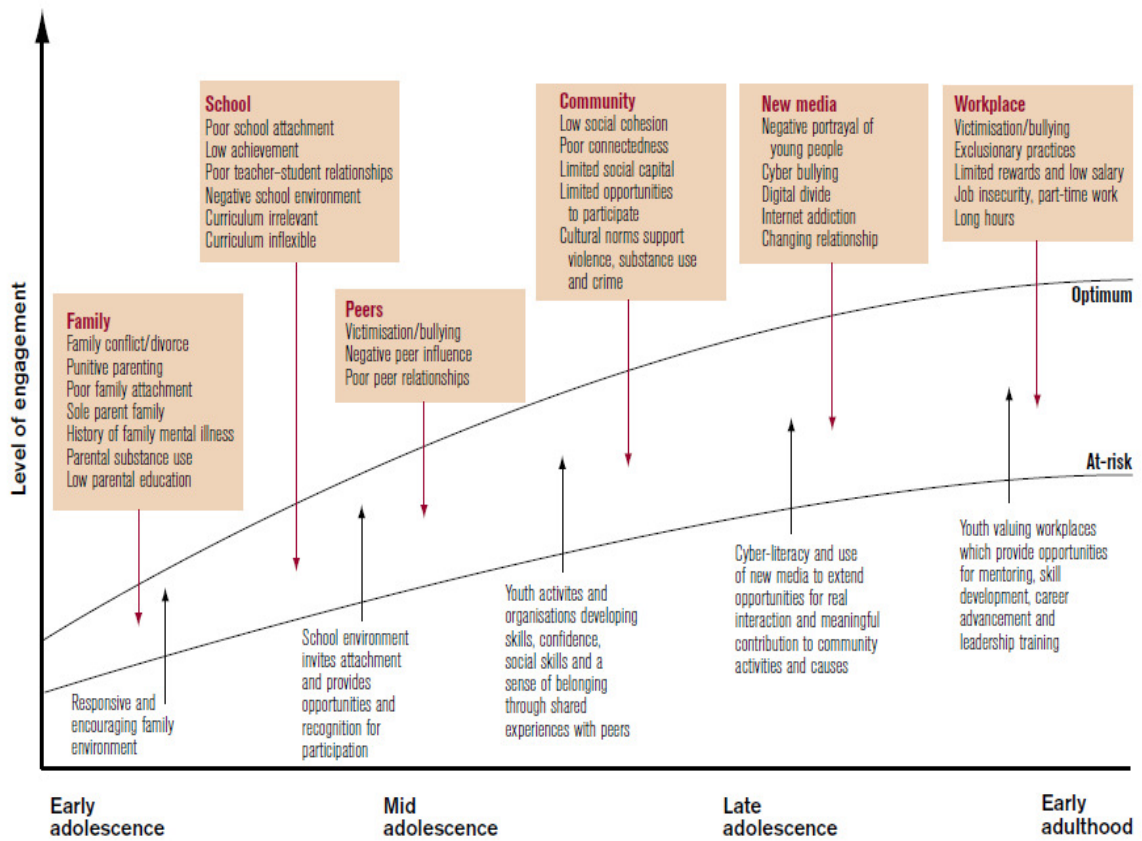
Source: Silburn (2008)

Cited in Williams et al, 2009, p. 11

These findings reinforce the opportunity for intervention to modify factors that place young people at increased risk in different settings and at various stages along the developmental pathway.

ARACY recommends:

12. that policy responses to violence committed against and by young people be integrated into the Government's Social Inclusion Agenda to ensure the developmental needs of socially isolated and disadvantaged young people are appropriately met, with a particular focus on:

   • addressing the heightened risk of violent behaviour among young people living in lower socio-economic areas

   • reducing risk factors and strengthening protective factors across multiple domains of the young person's life.

3.5. Strategies to reduce violence and its impact among young Australians (Reference 5)

ARACY has commissioned the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute to prepare a discussion paper which will synthesise the evidence on what works in preventing violence among young people (including the key principles and factors associated with successful programs). This paper, which is due to be completed early in 2010, will provide important information that is relevant to this reference. The paper will be used to inform and guide national consultations with key stakeholder groups on how the evidence can best be applied in the development and implementation of policies and practices that will substantially reduce the level of youth violence and antisocial behaviour among young Australians. A copy of the discussion paper can be made available to this inquiry as soon as it is completed.

The consultative process by which we are currently developing our Preventing Youth Violence initiative will lead to the identification of evidence-based strategies for which a broadly based collaborative approach is most likely to be effective and yield the greatest benefit.

A priority focus on the developmental needs of children and young people

ARACY's 2009 Conference had as its overarching theme "*Transforming Australia for our children's future: making prevention work*". The focus of the conference was on the identification and implementation of programs and strategies that prevent developmental problems before they occur, rather than treating the consequences after the event.

Delegates to the conference contributed to the development of a Conference Declaration[24] aimed at giving effect to the conference deliberations and insights.

Four key strategies were proposed with associated critical elements and actions required to give effect to them.

   1. Making the wellbeing of children and young people a national priority.

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[24] ARACY Conference Declaration
http://www.aracy.org.au/cmsdocuments/Conference_Communique_Declaration_Final.pdf

2. Setting internationally comparable health and wellbeing targets for children and young people for the next 20 years.

3. Agreeing on a national child and youth development agenda that integrates existing early years, middle years and youth agendas.

4. Developing a collaborative research plan on the prevention of problems affecting children and young people, linked with the child and youth development agenda.

ARACY submits that these strategies are equally relevant to a more targeted approach aimed at reducing violence and its impact among young Australians.

Involving young people in developing strategies

Under each of the four strategies, "listening to the voices of children and young people" was listed as one of the critical elements.

Participants in forums conducted as part of a review of youth disengagement and engagement (Burns et al, 2008) also advocated greater involvement by young people in issues concerning young people.

> "*Forum participants wanted to be involved in developing the strategies for addressing issues of disengagement – in their own lives and those of their peers. Forum participants also felt empowered where programs, organisations or processes acknowledged their rights to be involved and publicly recognised the role that they played in decision-making*" (Burns et al, 2008 p. 30).

An overarching framework of guiding principles

In seeking to advance the wellbeing of Australian children and young people, ARACY has adopted a set of guiding principles that underpin and direct our organisational operations.

We believe that the development of a similar set of principles, with a primary focus on the rights and needs of young people, could purposefully be applied as a guiding framework for whatever recommendations may result from this inquiry.

We submit that the framework should be focused on:
- **Prevention and early intervention**
- **Evidence-based solutions**
- **Developmental pathways (to reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors at different life stages)**
- **Adding value to existing work**

We note and support the framework of principles developed by the recent Victorian parliamentary inquiry conducted by the Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee into

strategies to prevent high volume offending and recidivism by young people upon which the inquiry's recommendations were based.[25]

ARACY recommends:

13.   the development and adoption of a set of overarching principles (based on the developmental needs of children and young people) to provide a framework for the recommendations arising out of this inquiry.   Such principles would provide a yardstick by which each recommendation can be tested for consistency and effectiveness.

Prevention and early intervention

The evidence shows that violence committed against and by young people has multiple dimensions across a range of contributing factors which may impact differently at different life stages and in different settings. Factors may operate at an individual level or occur within the social or physical environment, while factors at each level interact with those operating at other levels.

The inter-play of factors that contribute to violence among and towards young people reinforces the need for organisations to work collaboratively in providing a more comprehensive and effective preventative responses.

> *"Prevention activities are likely to be most successful where they work in a coordinated way to improve conditions for healthy youth development over many years… By pooling the knowledge, experience and resources of planners from crime prevention, substance abuse prevention, and health and mental health promotion, a more coordinated and integrated local prevention strategy can emerge"*
> (Williams et al. 2009, p. 31).

The ARACY report *Inverting the pyramid: Enhancing systems for protecting children*, Allen Consulting Group, 2009) identifies national and international best practice in organisational change strategies and processes that are most effective in moving toward the *prevention* of child abuse and neglect, rather than after the event responses from tertiary child protection services.

The report presents evidence of how to move large systems to a prevention focus, which includes building capacity for identifying vulnerable families and children and providing assistance *before harm occurs*.

The report identifies four key elements required to move the system to a more preventive focus:

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[25] Inquiry into strategies to prevent high volume offending and recidivism by young people http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/dcpc/Current_Inquiries/High_volume_crime/DCPC-Report_HighVolumeCrime_2009-07-22.pdf

- articulation of a shared vision
- building a supportive culture
- integrated governance arrangements
- legislative support.

We submit that a similar "systemic approach" to the prevention of violence committed by and against young people is also required.

ARACY recommends:

14.   that governments and other program funders provide incentives and support to encourage greater collaboration across sectors, disciplines and jurisdictions to enable a holistic, systems approach to addressing issues that impact on the healthy development and wellbeing of children and young people including:

- financial incentives for research, policy and practice organisations to work more collaboratively
- financial and practical support to build the capacity of organisations to adopt and apply collaborative practices to more effectively address the multilevel factors associated with youth violence and antisocial behaviour.

Evidence-based solutions

There is already a substantial body of research evidence on the factors that contribute to youth violence and antisocial behaviour including "what works" and "what doesn't work" in addressing these factors.

While punitive approaches to violent and antisocial behaviour among young people (including school suspension or incarceration in juvenile justice facilities) may have short-term political and public appeal, we submit that policies and programs which have the effect of further alienating young people from constructive social engagement are likely to be counter-productive in the long term.

As well as applying research evidence on what does and doesn't work in policies and practices, evidence-based action calls for reliable data collection and systems for ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

The study commissioned by ARACY on risk and protective factors associated with violent, antisocial and other health-compromising behaviours among young adolescents highlighted a high level of variation between the 30 communities surveyed (Williams et al, 2009).

These findings reinforce the value of collecting localised data on a range of outcomes relevant to adolescent health and development to provide an informed means for

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identifying possible ages and targets for preventive interventions, including identifying those communities with the highest levels of need.

> "*The availability of local data on how young people are faring provides communities with the information they need to develop customized prevention strategies that reflect their own population needs, issues and priorities*" (Williams et al, 2009, p. 35).

ARACY recommends:

15. indicators be developed and targets set for improving child and youth outcomes informed by nationally consistent data collection that enables outcomes to be measured, monitored and compared over time at a local, state, national and international level.

16. a tool be developed to measure local indicators of youth wellbeing (including factors associated with their emotional and social wellbeing) akin to the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) which is being used to monitor the development of young children on an area specific basis.

Adopting a developmental pathways approach

A developmental pathways approach to preventing the manifestation or entrenchment of problems among young people is based on strengthening protective factors and reducing risk factors (at an individual, family and social level).

In the pathways analysis of risk and protective factors associated with violent and antisocial behaviour, Williams et al (2009) identified nine protective factors operating in four domains including:

- **Peer and individual** social skills and values
- **Family** attachment and involvement
- Positive interaction with the **school**
- Opportunities to be involved and rewarded within the **communit**y.

Almost 80% of young people with the maximum nine protective factors had <u>not</u> recently consumed alcohol or engaged in violent/antisocial behaviours (Williams et al 2009).

ARACY recommends:

17. that programs and strategies aimed at reducing youth violence and antisocial behaviour be tailored to the different developmental stages in a young person's life addressing the diverse factors that influence outcomes at different life stages.

Adding value to existing work

As well as a large body of research evidence already available on the causes and consequences of youth violence, ARACY is aware that a number of jurisdictions have recently undertaken inquiries or prepared reports comprehensively investigating issues associated with youth violence and with violence prevention.

To build onto, rather than replicate, the substantial body of work that has already been undertaken, we believe that this inquiry should also consider recent inquiries relevant to the Terms of Reference that have been undertaken in the different Australian jurisdictions and internationally.

Attachment B provides references and links to some of these reports and reviews.

ARACY recommends:

18.   that this inquiry takes account of the findings and recommendations of other recently commissioned jurisdictional inquiries into youth violence and antisocial behaviour.

4.   Conclusion

> *"In trying to make sense of this complex literature (on youth disengagement) one common theme emerged –* **young people who feel valued, who are provided with opportunities to participate and have the skills and capacity to participate and who feel connected to family, friends and their community** *– are less likely to experience disengagement"* (Burns et al, 2008 emphasis included, p. 35).

Many of the problems confronting children and young people (including youth violence and antisocial behaviour) suggest that the emotional and social development needs of young Australians have not been adequately met so as to enable them to:

- regulate and control their emotions

- respect the equal value and rights of others

- find meaning and purpose in their lives as valued, contributing members of Australian society.

The consequence of the escalation in complex child and youth problems is that:

- the capacity of increasing numbers of children and young people to achieve their developmental potential is being compromised resulting in a loss of personal and social capacity and an increase in personal and social dysfunction.

- Australian society will be required to pay the costs of increasing social problems from a diminished resource base (due to a lower productive capacity among future generations).

As an over-arching recommendation, we submit that ARACY's proposed social change strategy will address most, if not all, of the issues being considered by this inquiry.

ATTACHMENT A: Cited ARACY reports

Saggers, S., Chikritzhs, T., Allsop. S. (2009) *Young people and alcohol – reducing the risk.* ARACY, Canberra
http://www.aracy.org.au/publicationDocuments/REP_Young_people_and_alcohol–reducing_the_risk_2009.pdf

Williams, J., Toumbourou, J., Williamson, E., Hemphill, S., Patton, G. (2009) *Violent and antisocial behaviours among young adolescents in Australian communities: an analysis of risk and protective factors.* ARACY, Canberra
http://www.aracy.org.au/index.cfm?pageName=preventing_youth_violence

Allen Consulting Group (2009) *Inverting the pyramid: Enhancing systems for protecting children.* ARACY, Canberra
http://www.aracy.org.au/cmsdocuments/REP_Inverting_the_Pyramid_Enhancing_Systems_for_Protecting_Children_2009.pdf

Burns, J., Collin, P., Blanchard, M., De-Freitas, N., & Lloyd, S. (2008) *Preventing youth disengagement and promoting engagement.* ARACY, Canberra
http://www.aracy.org.au/cmsdocuments/Preventing_Youth_Disengagement_and_Promoting_Engagement-BurnsJ_et_al_August2008.pdf

White, R. (2007) *Anti-gang strategies and interventions.* ARACY, Canberra
http://www.aracy.org.au/publicationDocuments/TOP_Anti_Gang_Strategies_and_Interventions_2007.pdf

Dodd, J., & Saggers, S. (2006). *The impact of drug and alcohol misuse on children and families.* ARACY, Canberra
http://www.aracy.org.au/publicationDocuments/TOP_The_impact_of_drug_and_alcohol_misuse_on_children_and_families_2006.pdf

ATTACHMENT B: Other relevant reports and inquiries

New South Wales

NSW Legislative Council Social Issues Committee **Inquiry into Youth Violence** (1993) included a substantial issues paper, followed by an even more substantial report (1995)

Issues Paper:
http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/committee.nsf/0/A45CCA582760F C23CA256F2E0022480F

Full Report:
http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Prod/parlment/committee.nsf/0/46F35523367311 17CA256F2E00218D6A

The NSW Department of Community Services published **Effective strategies and interventions for adolescents in a child protection context: literature review**, (Schmied & Tully, 2009)
http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswr/_assets/main/documents/effective_adole scent_strategies.pdf

Victoria

Victoria is developing an across government framework to provide a comprehensive response to the needs of "Vulnerable Youth". The **Vulnerable Youth Framework Discussion Paper** was published in August 2008.
http://www.cyf.vic.gov.au/youth-services/vulnerable-youth-framework

In July 2009, the Victorian Parliament Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee published the report of its **Inquiry into strategies to prevent high volume offending and recidivism by young people**.

Discussion Paper:
http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/dcpc/Current_Inquiries/High_volume_crime/Discus sion_Paper.pdf

Full Report:
http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/dcpc/Current_Inquiries/High_volume_crime/DCPC-Report_HighVolumeCrime_2009-07-22.pdf

Queensland

Queensland convened a **Youth Violence Taskforce** in 2007 and produced a report with broad ranging recommendations.
http://www.stephenrobertsonmp.com/_dbase_upl/youthfinal.pdf

Western Australia

WA Office of Crime Prevention, 2005 – **Preventing Violence: The State Community Violence Prevention Strategy, a Green Paper Policy Framework for Development** (Available from the Office of Crime Prevention)

Injury Control Council of WA, 2007 – **Community Violence Among Young People** (Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis)
http://www.iccwa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2008/06/final-report-young-people-community-and-stakeholders.pdf