

HILLCREST CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

PO BOX 2503 BURLEIGH BC QLD 4220

PHONE: 07 5593 4226

CONTACT: MR KEITH FRANCIS – PRINCIPAL

SUBMISSION ON VIOLENCE

It has disturbed me for many years that Government policy tends to deal more with the symptoms of a problem rather than prevention. By prevention I believe policy should be directed towards addressing the underlying causes. It is often harder to identify and introduce policy and programs which deal with the root causes rather than simply dealing with the symptoms.

The problems which cause violence in the Community, in my opinion, largely stem from the breakdown of the family unit. Ultimately domestic violence and street violence arise when people who are unhappy have issues that need to be addressed and from those who feel in a state of despair.

A Country like Australia should have a better support network for:

- Marriage / relationships between parents through counselling
- Domestic violence support
- School to work / traineeship programs
- Community Centres proactively engaging and supporting families

The Department of Child Safety Centres are heavily overworked and understaffed and it is becoming increasingly difficult to find sufficient homes to place children in respite or foster care. The cost of the 'rescue' programs, in my view, would be far more than a planned Community Family Support and Education program. Family and Relationship Support Centres need widespread funding to make them accessible to families in crisis I believe should be foundational to any new policy initiative. As a part of this network financial counselling and employment services should be included. As a Community we would be better served through Government funding and support of such Community Centres operated by Government Departments, private enterprises or Church groups.

While ever we ignore the desperate need for family support before violence and family dysfunction occurs, we will continue to face the short and long term problems associated with the escalating violence in our Community.

Of particular concern to me as an educator is the growing incidence of youth vagrancy, street violence and drug abuse. Some of this is undoubtedly caused by family fracturing and dysfunction bringing about a lack of hope for their future. Desperation and idleness leads to anger showing itself in violence and crime.

I believe our Government needs to be proactive in looking at new ways to address this societal blight through greater support of community, church and sporting initiatives across the Country. By supporting organisations that have a heart for youth, long term solutions can be achieved at a proportionately small cost.

Keith Francis
Principal