

RECEIVED
29 JUL 2002BY: *G. E. Gould***NORTHCOTE BENEVOLENT SOCIETY INC**

Established: 1888

Incorporation No A0025538S

A.B.N. 62 870 435 624

C/O P.O Box 305
Fairfield
Victoria 3078
July 24, 2002

Northcote Benevolent Society has operated within the City of Northcote, now part of the City of Darebin, for over a hundred years. It is the policy of the Society that volunteers visit clients, who require assistance, in their homes. This gives us a unique opportunity to observe the crimes committed against Australians and the impact of those crimes.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In many homes we visit there is evidence of domestic violence, in some cases ongoing and in others having necessitated relocation of the family and restraining orders. In most of the cases the perpetrator is the male partner motivated by desire for power or fuelled by alcohol.

THEFT

Often the reason for clients seeking assistance is loss of cash, either through bag-snatching or pick-pocketing in the case of men or having money stolen from the home by so-called friends or acquaintances. These crimes usually occur on or around 'pension day'. The perpetrators are rarely apprehended. Theft of domestic possessions e.g. TV, video recorder, mobile phone, c.d.'s is also frequent. If reported to police these burglaries are more likely to result in the apprehension of the perpetrator.

DRUGS

There is evidence of fairly prevalent drug and alcohol abuse with many clients on methadone programmes. Often the two previous categories are related to this. We also hear of physical violence in relation to the drug culture as a way of encouraging others to participate in drug abuse.

GAMBLING

With the ease of access to gaming outlets many of our clients inappropriately use this form of socialising which in some cases leads to becoming addictive problem gamblers. While gambling is not a crime, in an area where many are dependent on Social Security as their only means of financial support, losses at gambling sometimes lead to crimes being committed to restore losses.

ASSAULT

Victims in this category are both male and female. Sometimes loss of property e.g. money at ATM outlets is involved and in other cases being ethnically or socially different.

It is difficult for us to comment on apprehension rates or the effectiveness of sentencing as these are outcomes about which we are not informed. We do see the impact of crime and in many cases the fear of becoming a victim because of the areas in which many of our clients live.

Jean B. Parker

Assistant Secretary.

Northcote Benevolent Society