



# **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**Reference: Factors influencing the employment of young people**

**CARNARVON**

**Wednesday, 30 April 1997**

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**CANBERRA**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Members

Mr Charles (Chair)

Mr Peter Baldwin	Mrs Gash
Mr Barresi	Mr Marek
Mr Bradford	Mr Mossfield
Mr Brough	Mr Neville
Mr Dargavel	Mr Pyne
Mrs Elson	Mr Sawford
Mr Martin Ferguson	

Matter referred for inquiry into and report on:

Factors influencing the employment of young people.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
SCHOOL FORUM

*Factors influencing the employment of young people*

CARNARVON

Wednesday, 30 April 1997

Present

Mr Charles (Chair)

Mr Barresi

Mr Mossfield

The forum met at 11.11 a.m.

Mr Charles took the chair.

1515

**PARTICIPANTS:****Carnarvon Senior High School**

Barry Bellotti  
Greg Brown  
Des Christie  
Adam Clews  
William Dunning  
Nora Eastman  
Clinton Edel  
Joshua Ellis  
Mark Forbes  
Annette Gibson  
Lee Haines  
Dallas Hayes  
Mary Jugov  
Garry Kealley  
Trevarus Kelly  
Nick Kosovich  
Luci Lulich  
Abby McArthur  
Narelle McArthur  
Leanne McKivett  
Melissa Mellan  
Jocelyn Merritt  
Tim Millson  
Kim Novak  
Jason Paxman  
Lisa Sweetman  
Jarrod Walker  
Scott Walker

**St Mary's, Carnarvon**

Marko Alujavic  
Elisa Andreoli  
Tracy Basulla  
Nathan Condo  
Allison Della Bella  
James Fee  
Rene Herbert  
Shannon Li  
Wesley Payne

Megan Perry  
Juan-Paul Rebola

**CHAIR**—Good morning, everyone. Thank you for taking time out of your busy school schedule to come and talk to us. I have to say a few formal things in a minute, but this is really a very informal session. We are not here to talk to you. We are here to listen to what you have to say. So we need for you to stand up and talk, and I will go through that procedure in a minute. So, if you will bear with me, I have to read this stuff into *Hansard*.

My colleagues over here are Hansard reporters. They are simply recording what we say and what you say, and it will wind up ultimately in a written transcript. You will have an opportunity to correct the transcript if you think they have gotten it wrong. Remember, they have a job to do and they are very good at English, I can tell you; but they do need a little bit of help from you.

I declare open this school forum on the inquiry into factors influencing the employment of young people. The purpose of this inquiry is to consult widely and produce recommendations for government action that will help promote the employment prospects of our youth. The committee has conducted similar school forums in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and Western Australia. Students and members of the committee agreed that the forums are a valuable opportunity to share concerns and express views about this important issue. This school forum is one of a series with students in Darwin, Kununurra, Broome, Carnarvon and Kalgoorlie. The committee considers the school forums to be an important part of the inquiry process.

So far the committee has received over 100 submissions and conducted public hearings in Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Hobart, Darwin, Alice Springs and several regional centres in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. For the most part the evidence collected has come through employers, government and non-government agencies. Through this school forum all of you will have the opportunity to voice your views and your opinions on this very important matter.

The agenda and issues for discussion have been sent to you and you have had prior opportunity to study the issues. Some of the issues we wish to discuss today include the effectiveness and appropriateness of the secondary education system, vocational education in schools, the employer perceptions of young people, apprenticeships and traineeships, youth wages, income assistance and any other issues that you may wish to discuss.

To help structure the debate I will introduce each section with a few comments based on evidence that has already been provided to the committee. I will then seek your comments and views on the matters under discussion.

We are not the government. We are a group of members of the House of Representatives—members of parliament and members of this committee—and we report to the House of Representatives, not to government. When we finish the inquiry and write a report, we will deliver the report to the parliament. Ultimately the government, through

the Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, will respond to the report and respond individually to our recommendations.

We have been at this now for almost a year. We have heard from a lot of people. We are looking forward to hearing about the employment prospects in Carnarvon and how you view your prospects and how you think the education system has helped you or hindered you towards ultimately getting a good job.

The first topic is about schools and whether the school system itself here is doing a good job for you. Some of the kinds of things that we have heard is that many young people and indeed adults have a view that too few young people really understand the full range of employment prospects that are out there in Australia for you—the range of careers, things that you might do other than being a brain surgeon or a rocket scientist. We cannot all be brain surgeons or rocket scientists or high powered lawyers. There are many other satisfying careers and jobs around.

The first thing we would like to hear from you is how you think your school systems, your schools, are helping you on the path ultimately to a job, whether you think they are doing it well or whether they are doing it badly and what you think your prospects are here. Who would like to go first?

**ADAM CLEWS**—Depending on the subjects you choose during your school life, Carnarvon helps you along the way of what you want to be when you get a job. For example, if you want to be a chemist, the content in chemistry helps you understand everything that you need to know.

**TREVARUS KELLY**—There are not enough subjects to choose from for what you want to do. If there are, they are usually on at the same times. You cannot get the subjects that you really want. You do not have enough choices in subjects.

**CHAIR**—What sorts of things would you like to do that are not available in the school?

**TREVARUS KELLY**—I do not know. You are restricted to what the school has to offer, so you have to choose out of those subjects. You cannot choose what you want to do.

**CHAIR**—In some places students have told us that their teachers, and probably their parents too, tell them that they have two choices: either study hard and go to university or go on the dole. Do you hear that sort of thing?

**TREVARUS KELLY**—Yes.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Do you have vocational subjects? Do you have a good range

of subjects that enables you to either go into a trade or go to university or follow the career you want to? Do you think there are enough subjects in the school?

**TREVARUS KELLY**—Yes. If you want to study hard and go to university, you can do that. The other subjects you have to make what you want to do out of them.

**Mr MOSSFELD**—What sort of vocational subjects are available? There are two schools here. What about St Mary's? What sort of vocational subjects are available at your school?

**TRACY BASULLA**—St Mary's gives us a few choices. We do all the normal stuff like maths and English, and we do social studies and stuff like that. We can also do art, woodwork and stuff like that. That is mainly what we do.

**CHAIR**—Do you have horticultural studies?

**TRACY BASULLA**—No.

**CHAIR**—What do any of you think about that? This is a big horticultural production area, isn't it? Do your teachers tell you about careers in that industry?

**GARRY KEALLEY**—They do not really tell you what careers you can do with the subjects.

**CHAIR**—What year are you in?

**GARRY KEALLEY**—Year 12.

**CHAIR**—Do you have any idea about the range of jobs which you might find around here?

**GARRY KEALLEY**—Not around here.

**CHAIR**—Do you intend to go to university?

**GARRY KEALLEY**—No.

**CHAIR**—What do you think you will do then?

**GARRY KEALLEY**—I was going to join the armed forces for computering, but there is not much around the Carnarvon area for that.

**Mr BARRESI**—How many of you believe that you will have to leave Carnarvon in order to pursue a career? From the show of hands, that appears to be about half of you.



**Mr MOSSFIELD**—How many of you have given some thought as to what career you should take on? Would somebody like to tell us the types of careers that you are interested in?

**ADAM CLEWS**—Some of the careers I have been looking at are things like civil engineering or becoming a police officer. The subjects that are here, such as physics and maths, help a lot with that line of thinking.

**CHAIR**—Is there somebody else? What do you want to do when you leave school?

**ANNETTE GIBSON**—When I leave school I would like to do the diploma of photography at TAFE. At the high school, I have four periods of photography a week. We are limited. I am also doing a year 11 course of photography. There are two year 12 students doing photography.

We do not have all the stuff that they have in other schools. I know that even in Karratha they have heaps more. We have your basic assignment—‘Here’s your camera. Go take your pictures.’ I would also like to do something like stage direction, but there is nothing here besides what I did a couple of years ago at the Civic Centre. There is nothing at school which offers those things for you.

They said that I should do drama or something, but in drama all we do is acting. We do not do any of the backstage stuff with all the lights and sound.

**DES CHRISTIE**—I am looking at something in the building trade. Quite a bit is offered at the school in areas such as woodwork and applied industrial arts. There is also the Instep program.

You would probably have to leave town if you wanted to do a pre-apprenticeship course at TAFE, because the TAFE campus in Carnarvon is not that big. If you wanted to do a diploma of building or something like that, you would have to leave town eventually to be able to do that. TAFE does not really offer much in that way, but it is probably possible to get a trade in Carnarvon. The school does help you a bit towards it, but I feel that the teachers need to tell you what sort of career you should pursue if you are unsure of the career that you want to do.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Have you had any work experience in that trade? Have you been able to go out and work with some of the local industries for a week or so?

**DES CHRISTIE**—Yes, I did a week of work experience at St Mary’s and, with the Instep program here, I am going to start doing work experience soon with that. So, yes, I have had quite a bit of work experience so far.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—What about other students: have you had much work experience in the occupations you might be interested in?

**TEACHER**—It is a bit difficult in a small town to try to get these guys into the occupations they prefer.

**Mr BARRESI**—How many of you have done work experience?

**LEE HAINES**—Two years ago I did a week's work experience at the agriculture department.

**Mr BARRESI**—And was that a fulfilling week?

**LEE HAINES**—Not really. They mainly just got me to do the work for them. I did not learn that much; they just got me to dig and a bit of labour basically.

**Mr BARRESI**—And you realised after that week that is not what you wanted to do for the rest of your life?

**LEE HAINES**—Yes.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—What hours did you do when you were working?

**LEE HAINES**—I started at 7.30 and finished at 4.30.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—And how did you find starting early? No problem?

**LEE HAINES**—No.

**LISA SWEETMAN**—I worked as a travelling consultant for one week for work experience. There was nothing much that I could do around the office because I could not exactly tell people where to go for their holidays, for how long, how to get there and so on. I just sat around the office, got rid of the stuff, sorted out their magazines and made their coffee. That is about it. After seeing what they did, I do not think I would like that at all for a life career. It was not too interesting. I basically got jealous because they get to travel all over the joint. It was all right.

**MARK FORBES**—I did work experience at Central Primary School as a physical education teacher but did not learn anything because all I did was get the sports equipment and clean up the sports room and did not do any teaching.

**Mr BARRESI**—Did any of you have a positive experience during your one or two weeks work experience? Two of you. What was good about that work experience?

**ANNETTE GIBSON**—The work experience that I did was not through school. I went out and said, ‘Look, I am interested in doing this.’ I first started off just sitting there watching them show movies. Then eventually I was running the movies. I was the stage director. That was just through Carnarvon, and we do not have many shows that come through, but when I had holidays and I actually went into Perth I went into the cinemas and said, ‘I am from Carnarvon. Can I have a look?’ I actually did work experience in Perth in the big cinemas, but that was not organised through school, and I found it really interesting and exciting. But coming back to Carnarvon there is nothing I can do to further it. Through schools, they do not offer anything in that field. Then at the Civic Centre, like I said, there is not much that happens.

**ADAM CLEWS**—I actually did work experience when I was at a previous school at a hospital. I did bits and pieces everywhere and I learnt quite a bit. For instance, I was working in the office admitting and discharging patients, I was working with some of the elderly people helping them with their meals and I also helped in the kitchen as a cook and out in the garden as a gardener and things like that. I actually learnt quite a bit about what people do around the office and how much work and the number of people it takes to keep something so small—it was only a relatively small hospital—in working order.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Could we ask a question on education, on your literacy and numeracy skills. Do any of your friends have difficulty in reading and writing? How important do you think it is when you apply for a job to have good literacy and numeracy skills?

**ADAM CLEWS**—Again, my previous school was only a very small school. Some of my classmates I found, when they were reading, were reading slowly and sort of sounding out words at a time. For year 10, I find that fairly unacceptable. But at this school everybody’s reading and literacy skills are much better than where I came from before.

**CHAIR**—Where did you go before?

**ADAM CLEWS**—I was at Ravensthorpe District High School down south and the school had about 200 or 300 students.

**CHAIR**—Down south, in Perth?

**ADAM CLEWS**—Just south of Perth.

**CHAIR**—At least one or two of you have mentioned the Instep program. Can some of you tell us what that is all about and how many of you have had the opportunity to participate in it?

**CLINTON EDEL**—I did the Instep program last year and I’m starting this term

out at Dampier Salt. A day a week you get out in the work force and you just do whatever they do really. They teach you and stuff like that. I went out in the boats at Norwest Sea Foods and they teach you about boats, how they work, what engines they use, auto freezers and how to get them going and stuff like that.

**Mr BARRESI**—It is one day a week. What happens to your studies during that one day that you are away?

**CLINTON EDEL**—You get free periods during the week and you have to catch up during those periods so that you don't fall behind on anything.

**Mr BARRESI**—Does that one day count towards your course for the year?

**CLINTON EDEL**—No, it doesn't, I don't think. You've got to catch up and do well. Then they just give you a grade at the end of the term or whatever.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Do you think it is a good system, to get out into the workplace and see what it is really like?

**CLINTON EDEL**—Yes. It teaches you a lot about work and how they work. This will be my third placement next week and, yes, I learn lots about it. I will be able to put in my resume when I go for a job or something, where I've been and that.

**CHAIR**—Who else is doing an Instep program? Nobody?

**DES CHRISTIE**—I am doing the Instep program, but I haven't gone to my workplace yet—I'm going next week. I haven't really gone out in the workplace, but I have learnt about it and stuff like that. I know what is involved, as Clinton said, and I suppose I will enjoy going out into the workplace once a week. The catching up might be a bit hard, but eventually I'll get used to doing the extra bit of work. I suppose it's pretty well worth it and I think it's good to get out into the workplace and learn about things like that. It gives you more of an insight on whether you want to do that occupation or not.

**CHAIR**—For those of you who have not done it, were you given the opportunity? Is everybody given the opportunity to do it?

**ANNETTE GIBSON**—If you are a TE student, you cannot do it because you miss out too much work. You can do Instep or you can do a TE type thing.

**Mr BARRESI**—Is it offered only up to year 11?

**ANNETTE GIBSON**—I think it is years 11 and 12. I am not sure whether it is offered to year 10s.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Is anybody interested in taking on apprenticeships? You are already interested in carpentry?

**DES CHRISTIE**—Yes; carpentry and building trades.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Anybody else? Why wouldn't you be interested in taking on apprenticeships either in the tourist industry—

**CHAIR**—The hospitality industry.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Or in local industries, the fishing industry? It doesn't appeal to you?

**LISA SWEETMAN**—If we had anything like that offered for people our age, if there was a good apprenticeship in the tourism or hospitality industry, I do not think people our age would get such a good chance at getting it. There would be a lot of other people around town with better experience who would get it. In my case, if I was offered an apprenticeship in an area that I liked, I would go for it, but whether I got it would be a different thing.

**CHAIR**—Would you plan to do it if you finished year 12 and then did your apprenticeship?

**LISA SWEETMAN**—Yes, I would.

**CHAIR**—Is that what you intend to do now?

**LISA SWEETMAN**—Yes. I will finish year 12. If something good like that comes up, I will take full advantage of it, but if nothing like that is around I will take a TAFE course and see how far I can go with that.

**Mr BARRESI**—Can I just get a feel for friends of yours or those you know who perhaps left school last year and are now out there in the world. What are they doing at the moment?

**LISA SWEETMAN**—One friend finished year 10 last year. She has got herself a job as a hairdresser. She is not actually cutting people's hair; she is just an assistant. In a couple of months down the track they have organised for her to go on a course in Geraldton. She will actually be put through a proper course where she is taught how to deal with people, cut their hair and all that sort of thing.

**Mr BARRESI**—So she got the job here in Carnarvon?

**LISA SWEETMAN**—Yes.

**Mr BARRESI**—Have most of your friends who have perhaps moved on out of school all got jobs here in Carnarvon? I am trying to get a feel for what the employment opportunities are out there.

**ANNETTE GIBSON**—A lot of my friends have not so much finished school and left but dropped out because they found it too hard or just did not like it. A lot of them say, 'I'll go to TAFE.' They all went to TAFE for a couple of weeks. Basically they just sit at home and do nothing all day. Some of them still try and they have applied for jobs and that, but they never get them because the employers see that they didn't even finish year 10; some didn't finish year 11. They see that and somebody else gets it, because there are a lot of people who try for the same job. The employers just say, 'Look, they have got all this experience and you just dropped out of school.' I know a lot of people who finished year 12, did not get into TAFE and did not get into university. They try for jobs, but they just cannot get them. I don't know whether the jobs just aren't around in Carnarvon or they need the experience, but because they did not get into anything like TAFE they cannot get the extra experience.

**MARKO ALUJAVIC**—Most people, when they leave school, just go and work on a plantation. If their parent's own a plantation, when they finish year 10 and they are not really academic they just go and work on the plantation.

**CHAIR**—They don't need any training?

**MARKO ALUJAVIC**—Their dad will train them how to drive a tractor or something. Everybody knows how to work on a plantation because most people live on them.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—How many of you will get jobs with your family when you leave school? None.

**Mr BARRESI**—We heard in a number of other towns we have been to so far in WA that there are a lot of jobs around in those towns for young kids. These are the young kids telling us this. They may not necessarily be the right jobs or the first job that they are after, but there are jobs there. I get a different feel here about Carnarvon, that there is a higher level of unemployment amongst youth. Is that the case or are you just painting a bad picture? Is that the reality of it?

**ADAM CLEWS**—There are some jobs available such as working at Woolworths, at a Wendy's store or at the Rules supermarket. They are not jobs that you want to work at for the rest of your life.

**SHANNON LI**—I work for my dad. Because he supports me, I don't sit at home doing nothing. I earn money on weekends. I know that most of my friends have jobs around town.

**Mr BARRESI**—What kinds of jobs do they have?

**SHANNON LI**—A few of my friends work at Rules and I know of some who work at Woolworths. Most of the other people work on their parents' plantations, helping them out.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Do you have career days where local businesses come to your school and explain some of the careers that are available locally? Do any people from government departments, such as Defence, come to speak to you? Maybe you have not been exposed to it yet?

**ELISA ANDREOLI**—We do not really have career days at St Mary's, but we have assemblies every now and then when people from around the town come to tell us what they do in their jobs.

**CHAIR**—How many of you have a part-time job? Would each of you like to tell us what you do and what you think about it.

**TRACY BASULLA**—I recently got a job at Woolies. I work for about 15 hours a week. I don't get a lot of money, but I get enough money to buy clothes and things like that. I know some other people who work there. It teaches you how to mix with people and how to talk to your customers. It also gives you something to do when you are bored.

**ALLISON DELLA BELLA**—I have had a job at Rules supermarket for about a year. I earn about \$30 a day for working half a day for five hours. It is pretty good there because you meet a lot of people and you get a lot of experience in being sociable and talking with people.

**MELISSA MELLAN**—I am doing year 11 at school and I work after school. I have to pay my own way and pay my school fees. I find working at Woolies not something that I would want to do for the rest of my life; it is just something that I do to pay for myself. Because I am doing TE at school, I have to do a lot of study. I am trying to do something in the medical area, but there is not much that I can do in Carnarvon. The hospital has a little work, but it does not have any teaching strategies to get me to where I want to go.

**ABBY McARTHUR**—I have had a casual job for three years at Rules supermarket. It is good experience getting involved with the customers and the public.

**DES CHRISTIE**—I work at Woolies as a trolley boy and a checkout chick. It is an all right job. It is not really all that demanding and you get a bit of money out of it. If you wanted to work at Woolworths, you could make a career out of it by becoming a store manager, then an assistant manager and then the big boss. But there are quite a lot of people in town who do not want to do anything like that because it is rather boring. But I

suppose a part-time job gives you a bit of money to spend and waste.

I would say that in town there are not very many full-time jobs around for young people. Maybe at Woolworths there are, because it is cheaper to employ people, but most of the people I know who worked at Woolworths on a casual basis, once they had turned 18, were told to find a job elsewhere. It costs too much money to employ them when they can get someone who is 15 to do the same job more cheaply.

There is not really much employment for people over 17 or 18 who have just finished year 12. They cannot find any jobs in town. They cannot really do anything like that if they are over 18 unless they are lucky to get a job. In town, probably one or two apprenticeships pop up every year at Dampier Salt, and the older people tend to get them. With the other jobs, I would say that it is who you know, not how you work. There is not much of an option.

**CLINTON EDEL**—I am 17 years of age. I have had a job as a storeperson at Rules for two years. It involves just getting the store all clean, putting out the vegetables and so on, and stocking the shelves and whatever else. I have also had a job at a plantation handling bananas and so on, just saving up for a car. That is about it.

**JOSHUA ELLIS**—I work at a plantation handling bananas and so on. It is all right. You get paid a fair bit, so it is pretty good.

**LEE HAINES**—I work on the weekends for dad when he needs a hand on the plantation. I just give him a hand and he pays me in petrol, nine litres an hour.

**CHAIR**—Does the ratio go up and down with the price of petrol?

**LEE HAINES**—No.

**ANNETTE GIBSON**—I work and have been working for four years at Jenny's Hot Bread Bakery. When I first started there, I mopped floors and served customers, but now I do cake decorating and so on. There was a changeover with the business and the boss came up and said, 'Look, you've been here a while, how do you run things?' I thought it was really weird: here he was asking a 16-year-old how to run his store.

I do that work during the holidays, because on weekends I would be working from 7 o'clock in the morning, and I would find that really hard, especially with school. I also help, through Mum—I do not work for her, but sometimes she does it or I do it—stocking shelves at Woolworths or Rules.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Could somebody tell us a little bit about Dampier Salt: where is it, what does it do and how many people are employed there? Do you know anything about it at all?



**DES CHRISTIE**—I did my work experience out at Dampier Salt, and I also did a bit of extra work there helping a builder out for about two weeks. About a couple of hundred people work there. It is about 110 kilometres away from Carnarvon. It is a big company.

Also there is another mine out there, the gypsum site, which is opening up for gyprock and so on. There will be some new jobs in town popping up for that. But the workers for those new jobs will probably come across from other mining towns. They mainly ship salt out via the big boats. I think they have about 70 boats a year coming here, or something like that. I do not know how many, but roughly it is that amount. It is a big company. The people who work out there get good pay. But, to work out there, you have to have experience with working in a mine, unless you get an apprenticeship that comes up.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—That is a good explanation of a major company in your area that obviously employs a lot of people. What about other industries such as the fishing industry? Can anybody tell us a bit about the fishing industry?

**ANNETTE GIBSON**—My dad used to be the fleetmaster at Norwest Sea Foods. They are looking for a new storeperson now, but they offer a lot of jobs. Now he is a skipper on the boats—he is not working with Norwest Sea Foods—and he employs a lot of people. They get backpackers walking up and saying, ‘Have you got a job on the boats?’ He has got a guy on his boat now who has just turned 15, I think, and never had a job in his life before. But they just walk up and say, ‘Have you got a job?’ They take them out, sometimes for a month or for a weekend, and if they can do the work—it is long hours and all that—if they can hack it, he keeps them.

**CHAIR**—Have those of you that do not have part-time jobs tried to get a job and not been able to get one?

**LISA SWEETMAN**—When I was 13 in year 8, I went out to Supa Valu, which is now known as Rules, and I got a job there for about a year. Then after my year at Rules I went out to the chemist and I worked there for about half a year. With Supa Valu, all I did was met up with the customers, stacked shelves and you were trusted to deal with the money and all that sort of stuff. When I moved to the chemist, you were trusted to give people medical advice when you were asked, ‘What can I do for a cold sore or for a sore throat?’ The difference was dramatic, but the experience was good. I can put it down in my resume saying that I was a chemist worker, but I quit for my year 11 so that I would have more time for study and that sort of stuff.

**ADAM CLEWS**—I had a part-time job at the local swimming pool just working in the canteen, mowing the lawn and things like that. The bloke who manages the pool, Mike Nunn, hires almost anybody to look after the canteen so he can supervise people at the pool. I stopped working there because the business was starting to slow down and he

was basically paying me to sit there and do nothing. So I just stopped working there.

**CHAIR**—Essentially, do you reckon that if you want a part-time job you can find one?

**ADAM CLEWS**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—But that full-time jobs, once you have finished school, may be harder to get? Is that right?

**LISA SWEETMAN**—Yes.

**Mr BARRESI**—Have any of you applied for a full-time job and been knocked back?

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—One question that I always ask relating to interview skills is whether you are given any training on interviewing skills—that is, how to present yourself when you go for a job.

**SHANNON LI**—I think we learnt that in year 9 in English. We had videotapes of interviewing, of how to do things and of what not to do. I think we learnt more about interviewing skills in year 9 than in year 10 because now we are focusing more on poetry and so forth. We have not had much interviewing skills training other than that.

**CLINTON EDEL**—With Instep, you have to do this interview to get into Instep. You have to tell them why you want to join and stuff like that. You have to ring up your workplace and have an interview to organise when you are going to start. There is a subject called work studies where they tell you all about work, how to interview properly and how to dress well. They show you all these movies on what to do and what not to do.

**CHAIR**—Did you find that helpful?

**CLINTON EDEL**—Yes. You then know what to do when you are going for a job or something. You are above the rest of them if you know how to do it. They look for that sort of thing.

**ELISA ANDREOLI**—Last year in year 9 for English we did a bit on interviewing. They taught us how to write our resumes up and how to write a letter of application. We were taken as a group over to the CES and they showed us how to use touch-screen computers and all of that. They showed us how to present ourselves properly for when we leave school.

**CHAIR**—Do they also teach you how to fill out dole forms?

**LEE HAINES**—That's positive thinking!

**CHAIR**—It is not very positive thinking, but some schools do, believe it or not. We have had lots of young people tell us that they are told how to fill out the dole forms. I just wondered whether that happened here. No? That is good. Your schools get an A-plus.

**Mr BARRESI**—We have heard a lot from employer groups—this comes out in various submissions that have been made and it can be disputed—but I want to get your views about the attitude of young kids to work. When we talked to various employers they basically said, 'It's a bit hard putting someone on. It's a risk putting them on. Their attitude isn't quite right. They do not present well. They all want to get to the top very quickly and be managing directors by the time they're 30 years of age.' How true do you believe that is, either from your own experience or from talking it over with your friends? How prevalent is that attitude here in Carnarvon? Is it there at all or is it not even an issue?

**ADAM CLEWS**—I do not know much about the attitude of young workers in Carnarvon, but I find that, with regard to people like us working and how quickly they want to rise in the ranks, it all depends on the person and whether they do not mind starting at the bottom or whether they are impatient and want to get higher quicker and things like that. It depends solely on the person who is applying for the work.

**JARROD WALKER**—The problem with attitude is that, if the kids have a job that they do not really enjoy doing, they are not going to do well at all, they are not going to try, but if there is something that they like doing then they are going to do it well and try their best at it. There is nothing in Carnarvon that kids want to do really. It is just Woolies and that sort of thing.

**CHAIR**—What about McDonald's?

**STUDENTS**—We don't have any.

**CHAIR**—Really? No McDonald's!

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—One of the other things that employers have said to us is that there is a need for strong family support to enable young people to start in the work force, so they can give them advice and so that there is somebody at home that they can talk to about how things went at work today. How important do you think family support is in your finding a job?

**TRACY BASULLA**—I think it is pretty important to have your family there to support you when you are working, because some of the customers that come through can be really rude and put you in a bad mood. When you are starting work your parents can

help you decide what to wear and how to talk to the people and things like that. For instance, my mum helped me get my job because she knows the people and she went and talked to them.

**ADAM CLEWS**—Since I started year 11 my family have drilled it into me, ‘School first and think about work later.’ Mum and dad want me to finish years 11 and 12 before I think about getting another part-time job or a full-time job again.

**LISA SWEETMAN**—When I started working part time at the chemist, my parents basically supported me in whatever I wanted to do. If I wanted to go to work for the sake of getting money, they were with me all the way. When I decided to quit the chemist—it took me a while to actually make up my mind and I was desperate for advice on what I should do—my parents said that whatever I wanted to do they would support me. Basically, their support helped me a fair bit in knowing what I wanted to do. I would probably still be working at the chemist and getting a fair way behind in my work if it wasn’t for them.

**DES CHRISTIE**—I get a bit of support with my work because I am a bit lazy to walk to work, so I sometimes scam a lift off my mum. My mum also helps me out if I have a bad day at work. She understands that when I come home in a bad mood just to leave me alone. She would like me to have a job but also to stay ahead at school because she cannot afford to support me and my brother at the same time. We have to have the extra money if we want to do extra things.

**CHAIR**—Did the work experience of any of your friends who have finished school and gotten full-time jobs outside of working on the family farm help them to get the job?

**TREVARUS KELLY**—My friend had work experience with Instep last year, and she was offered an apprenticeship as a secretary in their office. The experience that she had from Instep helped her with the work that she is doing now. She has left school now.

**ANNETTE GIBSON**—My boyfriend was also working at Jenny’s cleaning floors. When Jenny’s was bought by Carnarvon Bakery, an apprenticeship came up, and from just mopping floors he is now into his second year as an apprentice baker. His boss, Peter, knew that he worked well and I suppose he had that advantage over the other people who applied for it. So just by mopping floors gave him that extra little bit to get an apprentice baker job.

**CHAIR**—Do you think most of your friends and colleagues understand that?

**ANNETTE GIBSON**—I don’t know.

**CHAIR**—Fair enough.

**LEE HAINES**—One of my mates, Brooksie, had work experience at Norwest Autos about a year ago and now he has an apprenticeship out there as a mechanic.

**LISA SWEETMAN**—My boyfriend finished year 12. The courses he took for years 11 and 12 included applied industrial arts. At the end of year 12 there was an apprenticeship that came out from Dampier Salt here in Carnarvon for a mechanic. He applied for it and he got through to the second last person where he had to compete with what happened to be one of his best mates. His best mate ended up getting the job. But, through Dampier Salt here in Carnarvon, there was another apprenticeship going for the same place as a mechanic in Dampier. They got him to apply for that one in Dampier. He went up for an interview and he ended up getting the job. He is now in the second year of his apprenticeship and he loves it.

**CHAIR**—And you never see him.

**LISA SWEETMAN**—That is the downside to it. There is not much I can do about it.

**Mr BARRESI**—Have any of the mining companies up north come down here and outlined some of the opportunities available working with them? Are the mining companies active at all in trying to market themselves and the positions that are on offer? I take it from your silence that you never hear from them.

**CHAIR**—Are any of you interested in a career in the mining industry or offshore gas or oil?

**Mr BARRESI**—How many of you are planning to go to university after year 12? Five or six of you put your hands up to go to university. None of you put your hands up for an apprenticeship. So what are the rest of you going to be doing?

**JUAN-PAUL REBOLA**—The problem with some of the plantations is that it is so hard to get out there if you want to get a job there and you are too young to drive.

**WESLEY PAYNE**—In a little while we are going to do some work experience and I know that some of the businesses in town are not willing to take us on.

**CHAIR**—Do you know why?

**WESLEY PAYNE**—No.

**CHAIR**—We will ask them when they come to talk to us later.

**Mr BARRESI**—Is there a Chamber of Commerce in Carnarvon?

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Have you applied for work experience yourself?

**WESLEY PAYNE**—No.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Then how do you know they will not take you on?

**WESLEY PAYNE**—Our teacher said that some businesses, from the classes last year, would not take people on.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—That was the position last year but you are not sure about this year?

**WESLEY PAYNE**—I know for a fact that last year some people wanted to get a job at a civic business and that business would not take them on for work experience.

**CHAIR**—For those of you who are going to university, we would be interested to hear what kind of careers you think you want to pursue and what made you decide to go in that direction.

**JARROD WALKER**—The problem with uni is that you do not know what courses there are and what you can do at uni and no-one really tells you about it at school. You don't know of any jobs out there, so you don't really have any guidance at all as to what you can do and how to go about it.

**CHAIR**—So you are planning to go to university?

**JARROD WALKER**—Yes, I will try to get my TE, but if I can get a job then I will not go to university. If I cannot get a job, I will have to go to university.

**Mr BARRESI**—If you go to university, what degree are you planning to do?

**JARROD WALKER**—I do not know because I do not know what there is.

**Mr BARRESI**—What year are you in now?

**JARROD WALKER**—Year 12.

**ADAM CLEWS**—I was planning on going to the Australian Defence Force Academy at Duntroon in Canberra and doing an engineering course there. A couple of years ago I was taken down there, given a tour and told what sorts of courses there are and what the best courses to take were. I was told they were short of engineers, so I would probably have the best chance, if I was up there academically, to get into that course. My uncle is a civil engineer and he told me a bit about it. I thought that what he did was good, so I am thinking about it now.

**ANNETTE GIBSON**—I am doing TEE, but that is just to keep my options open. I always say that I would like to go to uni, but I do not even know what is there. I do not know what uni courses there are. All that I have heard about that I actually like and would like to do is the diploma, which is at TAFE. I have not heard of any uni courses that they run that I am interested in.

**TREVARUS KELLY**—In year 9 we went down for Country Week. They set up some courses to go to uni and TAFE and everything down in Perth. We went to Curtin University of Technology, and they took us on a tour through the uni. They told us about some of the courses and everything that were going on down there. The universities down there sometimes send up pamphlets on courses. They do not send all of the information; they only send a bit of it. You do not really know what courses are going.

**Mr BARRESI**—But there is information available?

**TREVARUS KELLY**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—Do you think you are going to go there?

**TREVARUS KELLY**—I don't know.

**CHAIR**—What year are you in?

**TREVARUS KELLY**—Year 12.

**CHAIR**—When do you think you are likely to decide?

**TREVARUS KELLY**—I don't know.

**Mr BARRESI**—Is there a careers counsellor in the school?

**LEANNE MCKIVETT**—No.

**Mr BARRESI**—For both schools?

**LEANNE MCKIVETT**—No.

**Mr BARRESI**—St Mary's does not have one?

**LEANNE MCKIVETT**—It only goes to year 10.

**LEE HAINES**—Will you show me how to fill out a dole form?

**Mr BARRESI**—So do St Mary's years 11 and 12 come over to Carnarvon?

**LEANNE McKIVETT**—Some students do. Most go to Perth.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Are there any national parks in this area?

**TREVARUS KELLY**—Out of town there are.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Is there a parks and wildlife authority or something like that?

**TREVARUS KELLY**—I don't know. Out of Carnarvon there is Gascoyne Junction, and you have the Kimberley Ranges around here. That is the only national park I have ever heard of.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—I was just wondering whether there are any employment opportunities in that field.

**TREVARUS KELLY**—Not really.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Not that you know of?

**TREVARUS KELLY**—No.

**CHAIR**—I think we are running out of questions. Considering the topics that we are here to discuss—how to help you be more employable and how to encourage employers to make more jobs available for you—are there any other issues that you can think of that you would like to bring to our attention? For instance, what do you think about the work for the dole scheme?

**DES CHRISTIE**—I think the work for the dole scheme is very good because the people, instead of sitting around doing nothing—watching telly, drinking beer—are out there doing some work and earning the money that the taxpayers give them. It is better in that way. Also, if they are just going on the dole because they could not be bothered getting a job, they will think twice about getting a job. I do not know if the work for the dole scheme will be available in Carnarvon, but I think it would be a good idea to make everyone that is on the dole work for it.

**ADAM CLEWS**—The work for the dole program is a good idea. It will keep a lot of the trouble element off the streets. It will probably help clean the streets up a bit as well. It is also a good idea because it is better than being a couch potato, just sitting there doing nothing and not bothering to look.

**ELISA ANDREOLI**—I think it is a pretty good idea, because you can't expect to get something for doing nothing. I think it would be better because it would probably make people feel better about themselves. They would be doing something to get the



money that they earn, not just sitting on their arses doing nothing.

**LISA SWEETMAN**—A benefit for this school is that we have a marine science program, which is run by two of our science teachers. Years 8, 9 and 10 are junior marine science, and they actually go out netting to various sites around Carnarvon. They net and catch the fish, freeze them until they can measure them, weigh them and collect all sorts of data for the fisheries in Perth. It only extends to year 10s. Years 11 and 12 get to do that sort of thing, but only if they take biology and senior science at the upper school. For people who are looking to the fisheries area, I think marine science is a good idea.

We had an offer to enter a BHP program which is run every year. Last year, years 8, 9 and 10 did a BHP program on the variety of fish that we catch here around Carnarvon. We gave them a year's lot of information. I think there were 80 finalists, and they got books and things like that. We went to Perth and presented a couple of our reports to the Perth schools, and also handed them over to Fisheries.

**SHANNON LI**—Some things are not accessible in Carnarvon. We have only got academic subjects like maths. We go around town, but there are not many things available. Every year we go on year 10 camps. We go down to see the universities and unusual jobs that are not accessible in Carnarvon, and then we learn about them and talk about them.

**LEANNE MCKIVETT**—Going back to what Lisa was saying about the marine science program, William and I are the only two who are left in it. We have been in it from the start. We started in 1995. Our two science teachers, who are actually marine biologists, started off the program because they had contacts with marine fisheries in WA. Recently we went down to Perth for the fish care launch. It was an Australian-wide thing. A senator was there. Afterwards we talked to the people. I talked to this guy who actually worked there. He came up to me and said, 'You can come down here to Perth for a week. You can come and do work experience here in the holidays in our fisheries department.' Doing this at our school gives us opportunities to go to Perth and do work experience there.

We go down to Perth and present our BHP projects there. We were finalists in these BHP projects last year. So it has been a really satisfying and rewarding thing to do. It gives us opportunities. If we want to do marine biology in university, we have got all that behind us.

**SHANNON LI**—In school we have music programs as well. We have a school band and we attend to that every Wednesday afternoon. We play in that for an hour or so. We have individual music lessons for each group of music students. Because my music teacher recommended that I have music tuition, I go to that on Saturdays at about 8.45 and learn music. Also, I learn theory with Sister Delores at school on Wednesday mornings. We have a good music program. Also, as I said, we go down to Perth and learn more about that. I think we have an adequate range of school subjects for that.

**CHAIR**—Anybody else? As the auctioneer said, are you all done? Thank you very much for coming to talk to us today. It is our intention to wind this inquiry up in June. We will be working on the report in August and will probably bring the report down in parliament in September. We will certainly send your two schools a copy of the report. We thank you very much for talking to us today. Good luck in your studies and good luck in whatever work you finally decide to do. Thank you again.

Resolved (on motion by Mr Barresi):

That this committee authorises publication, including publication on the parliamentary database, of the proof transcript of the evidence given before it at public hearing this day.

**Forum adjourned at 12.20 p.m.**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

*Factors influencing the employment of young people*

CARNARVON

Wednesday, 30 April 1997

Present

Mr Charles (Chair)

Mr Barresi

Mr Mossfield

The committee met at 1.30 p.m.  
Mr Charles took the chair.

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**CHAIR**—I declare open this public hearing on the inquiry into factors influencing the employment of young people. The purpose of this inquiry is to consult widely and produce recommendations for government action that would help promote the employment prospects of our youth. The committee has received over 100 submissions, conducted public hearings in Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Hobart, Darwin, Alice Springs and several regional centres in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. The committee has also conducted school forums, including one in Carnarvon today, in which young people discuss their views and their opinions with the committee.

The committee is now conducting public hearings in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. This meeting is one of a series in Darwin, Kununurra, Broome, Carnarvon and Kalgoorlie which will give Australians outside the capital cities an opportunity to put their views and their concerns to the committee. It is a very broad-ranging inquiry. The matters raised in submissions so far include the attitudes of young people, the work ethic of young people and their familiarity with the requirements of the workplace, the adequacy and relevance of the education and training systems, the importance of developing better linkages between schools and the business sector, the need for a more flexible industrial relations system and the effectiveness and efficiency of government programs to assist young people to find employment.

That is not meant to be an exhaustive list of the issues the committee will consider or which might be raised. We are entirely open to the views of everyone who wishes to make an input into the inquiry. We are here to listen, to learn and to help improve the prospects of young Australians.

I call representatives of the Aboriginal communities from Carnarvon and surrounding districts.

**COOYOU, Mrs Rowena Anne, Aboriginal Community Representative, 8 Tuckey Court, Carnarvon, Western Australia 6701**

**MITCHELL, Mr Michael Charles, Manager, Community Development Employment Project, Robinson Street, Carnarvon, Western Australia 6701**

**CHAIR**—Welcome. Thank you for coming along to talk to us this afternoon. We are a committee of the House of Representatives; we are an all-party committee. We are not government; we report to the parliament and then the Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs will be required to respond to our recommendations in a formal manner a couple of months after our report comes down. Do you have any comments to make on the capacity in which you appear?

**Mrs Cooyou**—The Aboriginal name for people in Carnarvon and the Gascoyne region is Yamatji people. I am an employment advocate and I have been for quite a few years, and I am here responding to a request to James about having input into this sort of forum.

**Mr Mitchell**—I am a member of the Aboriginal community and a representative of it.

**CHAIR**—Do either or both of you have statements you would like to make to the committee about the matters that we are inquiring into with youth employment?

**Mrs Cooyou**—Yes, we do. We do not have any substantial information that we want to give to you in writing, but we just wanted to provide a verbal perspective from an Aboriginal point of view, because, looking at the list of the people that you were going to be talking to, we felt that we wanted to have some sort of input.

**CHAIR**—Good.

**Mrs Cooyou**—We have had some discussions with James. The situation is that a lot of people tend to focus on the unemployment issues of the people and particularly with Aboriginal people there seem to be more disadvantages faced by that particular group in being able to achieve employment, hence opportunities or options that are available to them.

Some of the factors that are affecting people are that, even whilst they are still in the school system and are about to leave and enter into the employment arena, they are still faced with a number of issues like drugs and alcohol, positive participation in sport and recreation, peer group pressure, lack of counselling services available, purely because a lot of the Aboriginal kids are coming from dysfunctional and broken-down families and a lot of them are a result of the third generation of Aboriginal people, like the removal of children, so their grandmothers and even their direct parents have been removed at some

stage. So they are caught up in this cycle of welfare disadvantages, and that really inhibits their opportunities and abilities to go out and find proper employment.

Racism in a small country town is no different to any other place. There are limited job opportunities and employers are unwilling or unable to employ people if they have a juvenile record of some sort. Their presentation skills are lacking. Just because they do not have the right money to be able to dress up to present themselves, they are categorised and a lot of them are faced with paintbrush imaging. Employers are really basing their judgment on negative attitudes and pressures that other family members with the same name may have given that same employer, so people are penalised for belonging to the same family group. Those are some of the issues.

Lack of education is a problem. There are high illiteracy and poor numeracy rates in Carnarvon—about 24 per cent of Aboriginal people, which is pretty high. The drop-out rate of Aboriginal kids before they get to year 10 is very high. I am sure that your forum prior to lunch was able to spell a little of that out.

There are welfare and social prejudices as well, such as antisocial behaviour and the money situation. If anything, there are too many welfare handouts. A lot of it is taking away the motivation and the commitment from the people. You know that values and attitudes are inherited by people. It is unfortunate that Aboriginal people may inherit unnecessary values and attitudes that their parents have instilled into their own lives. Those are some of the factors affecting Aboriginal people. There are quite a few of them and I am sure that they are no different to any other place, whether it be Victoria or Darwin.

In Carnarvon we have the CDEP program. I know the program because I am the coordinator of the whole thing. Kuwinywardu—the Aboriginal name for Carnarvon—is the Aboriginal resource unit and it runs the CDEP program, which is an ATSIC program. It was handed over from DEETYA to ATSIC. It means that Aboriginal people forgo their jobsearch entitlements, work for a set amount of hours a week in community projects and receive a minimum wage. When people get off the dole and onto CDEP, we have found that they are not represented on the unemployment register. The government recognises them sometimes, but then it does not recognise them as being proper employees at other times.

Aboriginal people who want to go out and upgrade their skills through the CDEP program gain the skills but they lose out financially. That really affects people because Aboriginal people tend to live from day to day. There is no real incentive for long-term planning. The wage that they receive is about \$182.15 per week, which works out to be less than the dole. They lose out on things like rental subsidies. Not all people are entitled to health care cards and they are not recognised on the unemployment register.

Across Australia there are over 30,000 people on CDEP. In our region, the

Gascoyne-Murchison region, there are 215 people on CDEP in Carnarvon, 210 in Geraldton, 149 in Meekatharra, 80 in Mullewa and Wiluna, and 100 in Burringurrah. So there are about 700 people who are not represented on the local unemployment register. There is not a true indication of the real unemployment situation in Carnarvon. That sounds a little negative and dampening. On a positive note, in the local area we are linking with DEETYA and entering into traineeship and apprenticeship agreements to get people off the CDEP and into full-time employment.

Carnarvon is a small, local, geographically isolated community a long way from Perth. We lack the proper dissemination of information in an accurate and timely manner, so we are penalised. We do not really have direct and immediate access to whatever programs and services are available. We hear it on the grapevine from somebody who may have benefited down the track.

In Carnarvon, we are bombarded with government agencies and people who are transferring in, so the employment opportunities for kids that are coming out of Carnarvon Senior High School are very minimal. There is no real understudying, employment opportunities or employment campaigns going on at those agencies to link the people straight in.

We are, through the CDEP program, entering into agreements with the CES for traineeships at places like the fisheries department and the education department for AEWs—Aboriginal education workers—gardeners and front office receptionists, and we are doing that right now and so are the government agencies. All it means is that the people in Perth who are in charge of the education department do not have the human resource money, the ASL money, to employ additional people up here.

Our problem, from an Aboriginal community point of view, is that we do not have the positions available for people to go in and work at them. So we are coming up with a compromise and saying to the government agencies here, 'You create the position—it will not cost you anything. KARU, which runs the CDEP program, will cover all the on-costs, like superannuation, workers compensation, leave loading and all those sorts of things, so let us get these people into a position within your agency. You take them through your training—they will attend TAFE to do the formal thing because of their literacy, numeracy and all those sorts of problems.'

We have got 21 people under that scheme now, in a matter of six weeks, so by the end of May we hope to have probably 45 people in clerical administration. Then we will branch out into small business traineeships, which will entail things like fisheries officers, Aboriginal education workers and maybe even police aides. They are going into non-traditional types of entry levels of employment. This is bringing them great self-esteem and great motivation. We have set up a whole network of people around these people—like another family—to give them support on the job so that they do not fail along the way. It is accredited training, so they are given an accreditation certificate at the end of it.

The obligations for people like me who are working with these people and for Michael, our CDEP manager, is that we find them full-time employment to branch into by the end of the 52 weeks of training. Michael, do you want to add anything?

**Mr Mitchell**—Rowena has covered all of it, but I have a problem with the education system, the net for preparing them for the work force. There are just too many holes in it and it is quite easy to slip through the education system. I do not know what it is like now but, in regard to the three-strike system, those strikes and all that are just nothing strikes, if you know what I mean. The incident could be nothing but all of a sudden the students are expelled or suspended and then they are left out of the education system. They come back but, of course, if you miss out on anything you get behind the eight ball. From then onwards you are behind the eight ball and your chances of getting meaningful employment and getting yourself ready for employment are basically much harder than for the person that has been there right from the word go.

There has to be something done within the education system about the problem children and their needs. It is too easy to say, 'You are out.' If you do not take your child to school, you get bloody fined and everything else happens about it as if it is illegal.

**Mr BARRESI**—Typically, what are they getting expelled over?

**Mrs Cooyou**—Squirting water from a water fountain on to the verandah—it becomes a safety hazard for the other kids—and those sorts of things.

**Mr Mitchell**—We are not saying they are saints or anything, but it is just far too easy to get them out of the system. There has to be some alternative. These people are the ones who you will find unemployed down the track. If you go back and you do some sort of survey, you will find that the kids that are hard to employ now and will not get jobs are those exact kids.

**CHAIR**—We talked to young people here this morning. They gave us the very distinct impression that they get very little advice about what jobs there might ever be, what careers there might be, or what career paths might exist. Whether that is the school's job or somebody else's, I am not going to get into at this point. But let me ask you this: what are you doing to try and help your young people to have an understanding that they might have an opportunity for an apprenticeship as a mechanic or an apprenticeship out on one of the boats, or that there might even be a traineeship in horticulture, working out on the farms? Are you doing any of that with your young people, or is it all too hard?

**Mrs Cooyou**—Yes, we are.

**Mr Mitchell**—In regard to this business of the traineeships, for instance, last year there were six traineeships in this town or region.



**Mrs Cooyou**—The whole of Carnarvon.

**Mr Mitchell**—And this year there are so many more. None of those were Aboriginal last year. That is another problem we have. The government departments here do not make themselves available as to the programs that they have. If you have got a bit of dead wood sitting in one of these offices here, nothing happens. The only way we find out about programs is through another CDEP which has done something in their town, where their government department has been a bit more helpful, a bit more proactive. 'Proactive' is not a word they have heard of here.

**Mrs Cooyou**—In Carnarvon, the lifestyle and the weather are very welcoming. We have a lot of government agency people coming here to retire. While they sit in these positions, they are not proactive or innovative in giving out this information. Most of them are cruising through the town here on a two-year stint. They are really not here long enough. They have come straight into a new job from Perth. They are still learning their manuals, guidelines and policies before they actually touch the people. This all happens in a two-year period, and they are playing with people's lives in that period. They are the problems. In response to your question—

**CHAIR**—Yes, but what are you doing? That is what you did not answer. What are you doing to help those kids that are in school, so that they have some idea? One young Aboriginal girl today in year 12—

**Mrs Cooyou**—Her name is Trevarus.

**CHAIR**—A lovely young lady, absolutely delightful. We asked her what she wanted to do when she finished—

**Mrs Cooyou**—This is what my concern is. The vocational training in the schools is inadequate. I have been to the school myself. You do not do vocational training until you are in year 10. By that stage, if you want to enter into an apprenticeship or traineeship, you have had to achieve so many grades in whatever subjects. We were not in a position to set our curriculum. In year 8, you can now set your curriculum and have an aim. But the school is not coming down to meet them at year 8 with vocational training. I am personally concerned at the numbers of kids that are sitting in the school here being baby-sat, I suppose. They have got the Instep program here, which is a wonderful program, and that seems to be working really well.

**CHAIR**—They seem to think so, too.

**Mrs Cooyou**—Yes, there is a new coordinator on board and, once he gets moving, things are going to work out okay. What we will be doing personally is accessing those kids in their homes, outside school, getting them to withdraw from school. They are in years 11 and 12. They are not going for their TEE; not everybody in year 12 are TEE and

academically bright. A lot of them are just here really to hang with their friends. In regards to vocational training, we are prepared to, and we are trying to, pick them up now and link them into traineeship and apprenticeship opportunities. That opportunity is still available, but we want to pick them up before they get to year 11.

**CHAIR**—That is what I wanted to hear. You said that there were only seven traineeships available last year and none went to Aboriginal kids. What are you doing to try to convince the traders or the businesses in town—the automotive workshops, the smash repair shops, the fishing fleets, the horticulturists, the farmers—to put kids on and create traineeships?

**Mrs Cooyou**—It was only two weeks ago that a horticultural traineeship even started in Carnarvon. It is a slow thing. The CES is going through a restructure: they are closing down, amalgamating with Social Security and going into privatisation. It is unfortunate that we are caught up in all this sort of reshuffling stuff. When the kids are going into the CES to get the proper advice and information, they are not really told anything. They are coming up with no answers because the CES operators themselves do not know what their destiny is going to be, let alone that of the kids at school. We are sort of caught up in that unpleasant stage at the moment. The Aboriginal community will be putting in to run the Employment Placement Enterprise Agency ourselves.

**CHAIR**—Good, so you should.

**Mrs Cooyou**—And we will specialising with Aboriginal appointments because if we do not we will get left behind. On a positive note, we have enough Aboriginal people who have quite a bit of government expertise and knowledge on how programs work and don't work, on how we want the local government agencies to work in with the community and also how the education department has alternative education programs. But, more so, what the needs are of the kids and the families—that is really where our priorities are.

**CHAIR**—What is the population in Carnarvon; what is the total population and what is the Aboriginal community's population?

**Mrs Cooyou**—It is about 8,000 people and there is about 3,000 Aboriginal people. Those figures are not exact but that is a rough figure.

**Mr Mitchell**—I think that is regional as well.

**Mrs Cooyou**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—The percentage of young people would be relatively high?

**Mrs Cooyou**—Yes. Up until the age of 30, I think it represents about half. So at

least 1,500 people would be under the age of 30.

**CHAIR**—Just guessing, in the 18 to 24 age group?

**Mrs Cooyou**—Maybe 800 or 900.

**CHAIR**—That many?

**Mrs Cooyou**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—How many babies?

**Mrs Cooyou**—There was a baby boom. There are quite a few babies around. But from that age group there probably would be about 800 or 900.

**CHAIR**—How many of those would be in school?

**Mrs Cooyou**—From 18 years?

**CHAIR**—Well, from 16 years.

**Mrs Cooyou**—There are not too many at all. There would be under 30 Aboriginal kids.

**CHAIR**—And how many in paid work?

**Mr Mitchell**—The government calls CDEP work.

**CHAIR**—Well, forget that. How many in paid work?

**Mrs Cooyou**—In that age group—probably about 50, not even that really.

**CHAIR**—What do the rest do?

**Mrs Cooyou**—They are either caught up staying on the dole, participating in other vocational training as part of their dole requirements or registered and working on the CDEP program, which is not regarded as employment at this stage.

**CHAIR**—Do they have the option of doing CDEP or staying on the dole?

**Mr Mitchell**—Yes, the CDEP is not compulsory.

**Mrs Cooyou**—It is voluntary.

**CHAIR**—I knew that and I had forgotten, thank you.

**Mr BARRESI**—Michael, how hard is it to sell the need for work and to find work out in the community? Where are you—at Burringurrah, which is five hours drive.

**Mr Mitchell**—Yes. The opportunities are very limited out there. Basically all they can do is service their own community and then after that there are not too many jobs, as far as I know. They then go to rural programs, such as mustering and station work.

**Mr BARRESI**—Are many going on to that?

**Mr Mitchell**—There are a few. I think he is looking at starting up a few teams out there and getting people involved in that. Contrary to what a lot of people say, there is money in the rural industry with that kind of work—mustering and fencing and all that.

**Mr BARRESI**—It is interesting because, when we were in Kununurra yesterday, they made the comment that they have not had an Aboriginal apply for a job as a stockman on a station. It could very well have been very particular to that station.

**Mr Mitchell**—To a station or?

**Mr BARRESI**—Yes, it was one of the largest stations in the region.

**Mrs Cooyou**—Probably what the barrier there was the actual application process—is it in written form or is it by contact or phone?

**Mr BARRESI**—By phone, most of it.

**CHAIR**—Most of it has been by phone because there have been kids from other states who ring up and say, ‘Can I have a job?’ But if somebody fronted up and asked for a job and they could ride, they would get a job.

**Mr Mitchell**—What we are setting up at CDEP at the moment is a couple of teams of pastoral projects, basically, with mustering and fencing and all that. What we are hoping to do is give them the chance to get full-time work and become a contractor or a musterer by trying to set them up with their own gear, that is, their own motor bike, chainsaw, lighting plant, et cetera. It is a problem just getting that little kick-start, but once they get organised there is work for those people. That type of work does not appeal to a young kid, you know what I mean? We are talking about mature age persons.

**Mrs Cooyou**—We are also contending with old attitudes of Aboriginal people working for nothing. The obligation by the older Aboriginal people was the loyalty to the station people. It goes back some time. Aboriginal kids these days are really working to earn award rates of pay. In the pastoral industry Aboriginal people have been paid well

below the award wage because of other sorts of things such as a sheep here or a sheep there; or 'You could live over in those shearer quarters'—those sorts of arrangements. But it has been pretty difficult trying to get Aboriginal people to return to the pastoral industry because of the conditions of the quarters that they have to stay in—no running water and all that sort of stuff.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Can I just ask a question on work experience. We have found it very useful if we can get young people in the early years of their schooling—even years 9 and 10—into some sort of experience of working in local industry. The only problem is that it is not paid and sometimes the work is uninteresting. However, it is a start. Once they have that basic experience, quite often it could lead to a full-time job. Is there any possibility of your organisation actually promoting that amongst your own Aboriginal schoolchildren so that they at least get that feel for what work is really like?

**Mr Mitchell**—Yes. When I was at school, I went to year 11 and I did a course at school called '11 technical' and I got my apprenticeship out of that. I went on to become an electrician. It was just through that course that I did work experience and got that job. I do not know if they run that any more or whatever happened to that program, but I thought that was an excellent job. There were 12 of us in that class and I think about 10 of them got apprenticeships. So I thought it was a very successful thing.

**Mrs Cooyou**—But also with the traineeships now, people are making a compromise, because you are only receiving 75 per cent of an award wage and yet you are working full-time. So the same sort of principle applies: they are willing to compromise and work for lower incomes in return for getting the skills and opportunity to work in a full-time capacity. So their attitudes and motivation are starting to change.

**Mr Mitchell**—One of the problems we are having with CDEP—or that they have had in the past with the previous managers; I have only been there three months—is that the workers start to become a bit exploited, because the employers know about the CDEP wage but, above that CDEP wage, they can get paid up to \$364. A lot of the employers try to include that in the wages so that basically they get that four hours for free. We just have a bit of a problem with them exploiting those people, if you know what I mean.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—It is interesting that you said you are an electrician, because we have been trying to talk to young people about the need to take on trades. We are not getting a good response about the attitudes of young people to taking on a trade. What can we do to make young people more aware of the trade opportunities that are out there?

**Mr Mitchell**—I am not too sure. But I know that, if you do do a trade, the first few years are pretty hard because, even when I was doing my first few years, all my mates had jobs where they got paid heaps more and I was earning nothing. Unfortunately, you just have to put up with it. But I think the problem is that you earn nothing in those early years.

**Mr BARRESI**—But isn't it also, Michael, the failure of us selling the message to the kids that they should think forward, that a dollar forgone today could very well be two extra dollars tomorrow?

**Mr Mitchell**—Yes, that is true, you pick it up down the track. But nowadays for a tradesmen to earn some decent money, he has got to go out in the bush. That is the only place they earn it. They go out to these mining camps and work five weeks on and a week off sometimes.

**Mr BARRESI**—And they make big money?

**Mr Mitchell**—They make huge amounts of money but they also earn it.

**CHAIR**—One of the things we have heard over and over again is that one of the difficulties in trying to encourage young Aboriginal kids to finish school and to set sights for a job is the family culture that what they earn winds up being distributed amongst the family anyway. To what extent is that a problem in your region?

**Mr Mitchell**—It is true with Aboriginal people that, if one person has got money, everyone has got money, unfortunately. That happens Australia wide. I don't know what the solution is, but they just basically help their own people out. If someone has got money, then everybody is right. I don't not know how you fix it. It's just the way it's always been with Aboriginal people.

**Mr BARRESI**—You say it's your way of helping out. Bob has mentioned a couple of times in various sessions the example of the young Aboriginal girl in Alice Springs who actually gave up. It actually broke her motivation to work. So to some degree that's actually been counterproductive to that young kid's incentive to go out there and earn a dollar.

**Mr Mitchell**—I know where that's happened in town here a couple of times too. Unfortunately, that person in work stopped because they got sick of it. But, like I say, I really don't know what the answer is to that.

**CHAIR**—With the stockman business, do you teach the kids how to ride?

**Mr Mitchell**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—And none of them want to be stockmen?

**Mr Mitchell**—It is all motorbikes now—broom-brooms. Unfortunately, the management of the CDEP in the past have been just a bit different in their thinking. They included that \$182 as part of their wages, but that is sort of their incentive money. The way I see it is that being on CDEP at least they're not being exploited and they're earning

maximum dollars. I mean, it is hard work and it is a hard life. You have got to be sort of born into that, if you know what I mean, or really take it on. Somebody does not automatically become a stockman. Stockman are born. Bush people, fishermen—they are born; they are not made. I reckon we will do all right out of our stock program. But people are being stereotyped and all that, and we have to overcome all those values and that thinking.

**Mr BARRESI**—With your stockman program—maybe I did not pick this up before—you are actually just teaching them what's involved in being a stockman, or is there a job at the end of the day that they go to? Do you find them a job as well?

**Mr Mitchell**—At the moment what we're looking at is organising contract work. What we have offered them since I've been there is that we do the contract, and then CDEP and they go halves in the money that is made after all the costs have been taken out. So it's a chance for them to get their own stuff. But what I am trying to encourage them towards is to become a contract musterer. That's where the money is. The money isn't in being a jackaroo and that; there is no money in that. Contract mustering is where all the money is. They're screaming out for good contract musterers here. They're not screaming out for any contract musterer; they're screaming out for good ones.

**CHAIR**—Don't they have to learn to be a jackaroo first?

**Mr Mitchell**—Yes, it helps. But that is where there is no money in it. There is no money in being a basic station hand, but the contractors make the money.

**Mrs Cooyou**—All the people that you are referring to in the stock program are experienced stockmen. So it's not like you are just grabbing them off the unemployment register.

**CHAIR**—I thought you were telling me that you wanted to do what the kids want to do: start at the managing director level.

**Mrs Cooyou**—No.

**Mr Mitchell**—We hope to get a kid to go with a team, if you know what I mean, to try and test them out down that track, but we wouldn't send a team of four or five kids because then we would be cutting our own throat for that job in the future. We have to also perform as well in the CDEP. It is quite easy for a station bloke to say no, and what he says when standing around talking to his mates at the next bush dance could mean the difference between getting a job or not getting a job for that particular mustering group.

**Mrs Cooyou**—So the people are experienced, but what Michael is saying is that, in getting away from just doing the actual work like jackarooing, rousing and that sort of stuff, they can get the actual contract and become a business in their own right. So that is

the transition that he is working on at the moment.

**Mr Mitchell**—Trying to get them into that line of thinking.

**Mrs Cooyou**—There are heaps of contractual services available through the government, such as through CALM—Conservation and Land Management—Fisheries and those sorts of things. They are now moving towards contracting out the work—for example, for national parks they contract out the work to the station and to the pastoralists. They are now moving in the direction of giving them to station people. We are saying that, in recognising traditional Aboriginal people in their country and their boundaries, let's give it to those people to take care of. They can achieve two things: maintain the parks and also protect their heritage areas and their sites of significance.

**Mr BARRESI**—We met with the Wunan ATSIC regional council in Kununurra. They spoke highly of CDEP and thought that perhaps it should be expanded, particularly in the Aboriginal communities. One thing that they are also looking at setting up, and I would like to hear your comment on it, is a group training company which deals with only Aboriginal kids. Is that something which can be applied here?

**Mrs Cooyou**—It can be. There are local agencies working in group training company capacities at the moment. One in particular is working very much in line and directly with the Aboriginal community. So that service is available and is working pretty well. Aboriginal people in community groups from around Carnarvon will have the opportunity at any time to lodge a group training company to the Western Australian Department of Training. That may happen at a later stage. Aboriginal organisations will also have the opportunity to apply to become an EPE, like a contractual employment provider.

**Mr BARRESI**—Is that something which you are going to do? You said they can, but I'm just trying to work out what you're going to do.

**Mrs Cooyou**—We are definitely working in the area at the moment. We are utilising the existing group training company services that are available and working with the Aboriginal community, and that seems to be working okay.

**CHAIR**—You said there is too much welfare. What do we do about that?

**Mrs Cooyou**—That was a pretty open, broad statement. The point that we were trying to make is that everyone tends to inherit the values and attitudes of their mothers and fathers, et cetera. Aboriginal people are contending with those sorts of issues every day. If we get too adept at sitting back and working directly with government agencies and receiving those sorts of allowances, no motivation skills or improved self-esteem may be obtained by Aboriginal people themselves.



**CHAIR**—Can I say to you that that is no different from the rest of the community.

**Mrs Cooyou**—Yes. Absolutely not.

**CHAIR**—We know that social welfare is becoming an incentive problem, but what do we do about it, Rowena?

**Mrs Cooyou**—It's not what I can do about it.

**CHAIR**—How do we fix it? I didn't ask you how you could fix it.

**Mrs Cooyou**—Basically, keep lobbying government, use positive measures to put into place an alternative and give people additional options. The options to get people off welfare, the social handouts and all that sort of stuff are provided and coming from the government but not all those government agencies are providing the right information in an accurate and timely manner to the people. We are always finding out with one or two days notice that a program has been available and it's going to finish the next day, so already we are behind the eight ball. Until we start receiving proper information with enough notice so that we can compete and consider other options, things aren't going to change.

**Mr BARRESI**—Where's the principal source of your information? Do you get it mainly from ATSIC?

**Mrs Cooyou**—Most of the offices that are operating up here are only suboffices. The local city that is attached to Carnarvon is Geraldton, which is five hours drive away. From Perth, it is nine or 10 hours drive.

**Mr BARRESI**—You are talking about the lack of information and perhaps that not getting through to you. Where is it supposed to come from? Is your channel of information principally through ATSIC or through DEETYA?

**Mrs Cooyou**—No. This is why from an Aboriginal perspective we want to get away from focusing on ATSIC, like the Aboriginal affairs department: because every other government agency has got a portfolio responsible for making sure that Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal organisations access the same information. We are trying to get away from that sort of understanding.

The comment that I made earlier is that the government agencies in the town here have people who have been recruited from Perth and are passing through here on a career move. So they are here for only two years. When they leave Perth to come to Carnarvon, they bring their manuals, policies and guidelines, but it takes them two years to understand what those policies and guidelines are before they can go out, make contact with the people and deliver the programs and services that are available. I am talking about a

whole range of agencies.

They are the sorts of real life issues that we are contending with. It is someone's personal ability to be innovative and proactive to sell that government agency's policy or program to the community.

**Mr BARRESI**—I am still a bit confused. I know of the problem that you are expressing but I want to understand whether the information that you are currently getting is coming through the ATSIC line. Consequently, are those government agencies that you are saying are not passing on information assuming that you are getting it through ATSIC anyway? They are not contacting you because there is the assumption that there is no point in contacting you because ATSIC is providing that information to them.

**Mrs Cooyou**—ATSIC focuses on Aboriginal affairs. What if it is a DEETYA program about an Aboriginal training program? ATSIC does not have any control over policies, guidelines and information that comes from DEETYA. The attitude from government needs to change as well. Their obligation is to get the information out to everybody. We are caught up in that sort of stuff. People tend to say, 'If Aboriginal people want assistance, they should go to ATSIC or the Aboriginal affairs department.'

In the last budget the ATSIC budget was cut by something like \$700 million, so some of their programs are quarantined. They go into wider government servicing. If there is \$30 million targeted to come out of ATSIC and into the health department, there is \$34 billion available through the government. But Aboriginal people just focus on the \$30 million that ATSIC provided to them. They think that they can use only the \$30 million and they don't have access to the \$34 billion. So those attitudes need to change.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—So it is a form of discrimination, whether it is deliberate or not, but that is the effect of it?

**Mrs Cooyou**—Yes. I am not saying that it is deliberate at all; it is just caught up—

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—It is happening.

**CHAIR**—You have bureaucratic problems. I understand what you are saying. Despite the fact that you started out with a long list of negatives, I have come to the conclusion that both of you are very positive people. You have a lot to offer and I think that you are headed in some very right directions. If we could encourage you to do the best you can to forget the school system, to get the information to your young people on what kind of careers might be available for them and to do the job that you are doing to help expand the number of apprenticeships and traineeships, you will be doing a fantastic job. We wish you well.

We hope to finish the inquiry in June. We have been going at it for almost a year now. We hope to make a few very powerful recommendations in August or early September. We will see what the government does with those recommendations. Thank you for helping us with our inquiry; you have been most useful.

**Mr Mitchell**—Thanks for the opportunity.

[2.16 p.m.]

**COLLINS, Mrs Lancy Augusta, Vice Chairperson, Skillshare Carnarvon Incorporated, PO Box 869, Carnarvon, Western Australia 6701**

**VAN DUYN, Mrs Rhonda, Manager, Skillshare Carnarvon Inc, PO Box 869, Carnarvon, Western Australia 6701**

**CHAIR**—I welcome the representatives of Carnarvon Skillshare. We are not inquiring into unemployment; we are inquiring into employment, and we are really looking at two issues: first, how we can make young people more employable or help them to become more employable and, second, how we can encourage business, industry, commerce and the public sector to make more jobs available for our youth.

I understand that you have a reasonably brief opening statement that you would like to make about these issues into which we are inquiring.

**Mrs Collins**—Yes. We have written out a submission which contains points which you would probably like to take up for discussion. We have tendered the Gascoyne Economical Perspectives and the Gascoyne Regional Economic Development Strategy, both of which were compiled last year, so that you might have a better understanding of the socioeconomic factors that are around.

We have put together a profile of the participants within the regional context, particularly as it refers to remote and rural areas such as our own where commercial and industrial growth are inhibited by lack of infrastructure, and where regional planning is directed at the tourism industry. The region has had economic stress of a severity likely to cause social disruption, and already exhibits symptoms of social disruption.

Employment avenues are very narrow and there are challenges coping with structural change. We also have a significant proportion of disadvantaged young people who traditionally do not access programs likely to enhance their employment opportunities, who exit the secondary school system with inadequate skills, who have deficient social and functional skills, who have numeracy and literacy barriers, who are geographically isolated, who are in a cycle of dependency and who are resistant to Eurocentric structured learning processes.

In the Gascoyne region and in particular the shire of Carnarvon, Aboriginal people represent 13 per cent of the total population and it is dominated by youth. Currently, the growth rate of the Aboriginal community is estimated at 2.5 per cent, which is approximately one per cent higher than the state's annual population growth. The shift of Aboriginal people to a more static urbanised society has applied pressure to the services in the town of Carnarvon, in particular, and this pressure is likely to continue in the medium term. Increasing efforts will be required to ensure that employment is available.

It is anticipated that Aboriginal people will play a more central role in the Gascoyne region's economy as they become involved in areas such as indigenous tourism and more involved in activities such as fishing and pastoralism. Aboriginal people in the region will continue to require access to quality education facilities. Of the region's population, 24 per cent have not completed year 10 schooling, compared with 15 per cent for the rest of Western Australia. This community is relatively more illiterate and innumerate than others in the state. The number of persons without qualifications or vocational training is 502 per 1,000. Regionally that is the highest in the state. We are concerned about equality amongst people and groups of people within our community.

At Skillshare we are trying to focus on the basic causes of unemployment rather than the symptoms and cosmetic solutions. We have a list of the characteristics of young unemployed people, including low self-esteem, and this view is reinforced by little or no expectations from familial groups, many of whom have had negative educational experiences, low expectations from teachers and from the community as a whole. We have referred to research which says that young people at risk, if they think they cannot succeed, if they do not believe they are capable learners, will not try.

We have put down something about the ethos of our service delivery. We are seeking to enable and empower participants who are at risk and using well-documented strategies to see that we address their needs properly. It should be clearly understood that Skillshare Carnarvon is the sole provider within the region of access to education and training at the level of our participants.

The project is an integral part of the community. The education of the disadvantaged is crucial to the fabric of society. We have referred to the findings of John Cox, mostly because of the demographics of the town where he worked on the social and educational outcome of a cohort of rural children. It was a very long investigation and it said the factor most influencing expectations of young people is employment of their parents. You will probably find that unemployment is three generations cyclical in this town.

In relation to opportunities for employment, I actively sought some observations from young trainees and people in case management. I wrote down some observations that they made. I will have to get to them, working through this paper.

**CHAIR**—Perhaps we could read that later.

**Mrs Collins**—Sure. More steps must be taken to promote sustainable employment. We have periodic employment, as you heard before, such as mustering, shearing, grape picking and jobs in relation to vegetables and the horticultural industry. All of that is seasonal stuff. In the wake of drastic funding cuts at Skillshare and the imminent demise of the program, we have a proliferation of service providers which is increasing competition in training. We have user choice—that is, clients having the ability to choose

from registered providers—and that will depend on their capability to make an informed decision over the selection, content, sequencing and assessment, timing, location and method of delivery of training. There are without doubt persons—indeed, groups of persons—who will need to be assisted in this choice.

The capacity of this Skillshare to adapt to new conditions, to remain viable whilst proceeding through the tender process and to provide services on the basis of needs is receiving close examination at this time. It may be subjective, but the perception is put forward of employer expectations being based upon a negative stereotype. Furthermore, would-be employees and trainees have verbalised their feeling that the subsidy is an overriding factor in selection and that quality time required in the employer-employee relationship is hindered by the economics of the working arrangement.

There is a need, and it might be critical at this time, to dwell on the most disadvantaged and at risk clients who will be passed over for selection for programs which are outcome based and will be part of the cycle of dependency on a long-term basis, and for whom access and equity becomes impossible. There appears to be a need to allow for flexibility in the readjustment of training program planning and the same flexibility in referring clients.

The competitive nature of future service provision may also drive a propensity for selection of participants who are almost job ready or most likely to succeed. Concern would then focus on the social ramifications and the impact upon this society. This Skillshare is diversifying and examining the possibilities for a continued role in the provision of service to disadvantaged, long-term unemployed people, many of whom are young.

There has been an incredible commitment of community members nationwide who have borne the responsibilities entailed in voluntary service. We are concerned about remote and rural areas such as our own where isolation is compounded by curtailment of services, and where the local Skillshare has not the resources to enter the competitive market.

There may be a real danger that the benefits derived from community ownership and participation will be lost. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine at this stage that there will not be a shift from the emphasis of service provision most likely to enhance opportunities for the target group to the necessity of turning dollars over for the benefit of the organisation.

We are concerned that, once dispersed, this army of volunteers—who, in many cases, donate their professional expertise—may not be easily replaced. Certainly, centralised services may be available from larger and distant centres, but the expense, efficiency, effectiveness and quality of delivery and supervision of service and programs might be open to debate.

We have made a written submission to the strategic training plan for WA. We said, in part, that our chief concerns were related to equity, that is, improved access to and outcomes from vocational education and training of disadvantaged groups; and, secondly, training as an investment, that is, increased public recognition of the value of vocational education and training as an investment for both industry and individuals. We said that perhaps the most important issue with strategic forward planning related to education, training and employment perhaps ought to be related to addressing the needs of at-risk children within the school system.

Our final page is where we have said that our contact with the local high school over three years has been to provide a program for participants in the Instep program, during the course of which our message to young people in relation to training has been focused on five areas of skills and a three-part foundation of skills and personal qualities necessary and vital for the student in the 21st century. I will leave it at that and invite any questions.

**CHAIR**—After all that, what jobs are available in Carnarvon? What is the employment market for young people?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—There is the seasonal employment market as a whole—

**CHAIR**—With respect, the supermarket is not very seasonal.

**Mrs Van Duyn**—No. There are the local industries as well, which are full time. But, on a whole, when you look at the industries supporting our community, the main dollars that are supporting us are seasonal. So your fishing industry, your horticulture industry and your pastoral industry are all seasonal work. When you say ‘for young people,’ they do not often take young people on board.

**CHAIR**—Why not?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—The retail industry would be more likely to take young people, but, in the other areas, I think it is because they need more training, more expertise and more skills. Also, there is generally a bit of apathy amongst the young people towards applying for the positions, so attitudes need to change.

**Mr BARRESI**—We met with a sizeable group earlier today and most of them said that it was very difficult getting work experience in the local area. Work experience is only a week—at the most, perhaps two weeks—of commitment from an employer. Why won't the local employers at least give them that opportunity?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—The local employers are giving that opportunity. Some of the programs we run through Skillshare incorporate work experience of up to three weeks. Of the young people partaking in that, 50 per cent would have a commitment to what they are

doing. With the other 50 per cent, as I said a minute ago, attitudes are what we need to be working on. So the work experience is happening.

**Mr BARRESI**—Explain by what you mean by ‘attitudes’.

**Mrs Van Duyn**—General work ethic, such as not turning up on time. They are only working four hours a day when we put them on work experience, so they are not giving four hours productivity while they are at work. Their respect levels are also perhaps lacking in some cases. There are all sorts of issues surrounding the 50 per cent who are not putting an effort into what they are doing. But work experience opportunities from the employers in this community have been happening.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Do you involve school children in your programs, or after school?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—No. In only the one Instep program do we involve the school children.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Other than that, they are people who have actually left school?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—We are looking after school leavers—once they have left the education system.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—So it is between school and employment that you fill in the gap?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—That is right.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Do you have a board of directors?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—We have a project advisory committee.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—How many are there on that committee?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—At the moment there are 14 advisers.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—What specific groups do they represent? Is there an Aboriginal representative?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—Yes. There is Aboriginal representation, and there is industry representation. We have a member from Mitre 10, a member from Woolworths and a member from the fishing industry. There is disabled representation. It is a cross-section of the community.



**Mr MOSSFIELD**—What criteria do you use to judge your success rate? Do you measure it by the people placed in employment?

**Mrs Collins**—Absolutely.

**Mrs Van Duyn**—And by changing of attitudes. We may have somebody who goes through a program with us who does not get placed in employment. But about six or 12 months down the track, because of a change of attitude through the programs, they eventually get employment, or further training or education.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Do you have any figures on that?

**Mrs Collins**—You probably know that referrals to Skillshare are made with special criteria from the CES. We have a contractual obligation with the Commonwealth to fulfil a requirement with numbers. We do not get funded if we do not meet those requirements. I have some figures here. In the past 12 months through our Skillshare and non-Skillshare programs, we have provided effective and efficient services to 466 persons. Those services are closely aligned to our community's requirements based on surveyed needs analysis. In addition to Skillshare programs at this time, we are providing services to clients in a mentor program, case management, Nettforce, nautical training, open access to all unemployed persons, group training, personal development and job clubs.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—What about literacy and numeracy?

**Mrs Collins**—We have been told that we cannot run a literacy and numeracy program because it is presented by TAFE.

**Mrs Van Duyn**—We are, however, looking at it.

**Mrs Collins**—We have recently become aware of a program which is awaiting accreditation. It is a literacy program for which you do not need to have specialised teachers, but the participants will be self-paced and they need a supervisor or a trainer. We would be quite able to deliver that. I believe that program has been developed by Dr Sylvia Byers in Perth. She tells me that it is awaiting accreditation.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Is the Aboriginal community making good use of your services and training courses?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—Our mentor program is directed only at Aboriginal trainees and apprenticeships and Aboriginals in labour market programs. All the other services that we offer are patronised by Aboriginal persons. Harping back to the numbers, of the 466 people who went through Skillshare last year, 200 were under our DEETYA contractual arrangements. Of those 200, 40 per cent were employment and training outcomes.

**Mr BARRESI**—I want to go back to the youth issue, because this inquiry is specifically concerned with youth employment as opposed to youth unemployment. You are doing very little work with actual school kids but you obviously are with school leavers. Of those school leavers that you have been dealing with, do you have any idea whether or not those who are unemployed have come to that position of being unemployed because they are simply wandering around aimlessly not knowing what to do or because there has not been a job there for them to go to?

The reason I ask is that today we were amazed by the number of year 12 kids who, when we asked the question, had no idea of what they were going to do next year. They did not know whether they were going to university or to work. I am trying to get a feel for whether or not they were representative of next year's lot.

**Mrs Collins**—The people we see, of course, have to be six months unemployed before we even see them. They do not even get referrals. They cannot go from a high school and just wander into Skillshare.

**Mr BARRESI**—I appreciate that. I know how Skillshare operates. Are they unemployed because there has not been an opportunity or simply because they do not know and they are just wandering around?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—I believe that they have exited the education system not wanting to be employed.

**Mr BARRESI**—Not wanting to be employed?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—Not wanting to be employed, yes. Those that want to be employed are employed within the first three months of leaving the school system and those that are left behind are the ones that are just wandering around town and just taking—

**CHAIR**—Are you saying there really is not an employment problem in Carnarvon? Are you saying that if you want a job you can get a job?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—I believe there is an employment problem in Carnarvon, if you are addressing the whole issue. If we are looking at the youth in particular, it is a different story.

**CHAIR**—Well, we are.

**Mrs Van Duyn**—Yes, there is an employment problem with youth, but it is not totally due to unemployment issues. Like I said before, it is due to attitudes as well.

**CHAIR**—I will try again. Are you saying that, if you want a job and if you are

between the ages of 16 and 24 in Carnarvon, you can get a job; that if you want to work, you can work?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—That is a hard one to answer. No, not all year. Once again, I would have to say it is seasonal. There are times of the year where yes, if you want a job, you quite possibly would get one. Yes.

**Mrs Collins**—There are those young people in our community who are not aware of the resources that are available to them.

**CHAIR**—I think we could tell you volumes about that already, quite honestly.

**Mrs Collins**—Yes, and not accessing it.

**Mrs Van Duyn**—I think the youth on the streets at the moment has been an accumulation of lack of services for them in the last few years in Carnarvon. They have not been a priority group with DEETYA and they have not been readily referred to programs that were available to them. Now that they are a priority group things are starting to happen and things are starting to change. But the youth are still out there.

**Mrs Collins**—We were denied the opportunity of working for youth during 1994-95. We did not have any youth referred to us.

**Mrs Van Duyn**—And that has built up because we were not able to service those youth that were on the streets. It has built up, and what you see today is part of that problem.

**Mr BARRESI**—I want to check out another comment that was made this morning by the kids. With regard to apprenticeships and traineeships—perhaps the others whom we will be seeing later on after you could answer this as well—what opportunities are there to be able to place a young kid in either a traineeship or an apprenticeship here in Carnarvon, without having to go to Geraldton or Karratha or elsewhere?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—There is actually none. There are apprenticeships and traineeships here, but with the apprenticeships the majority of them have to exit Carnarvon to do their studies. They cannot stay here for the whole of their apprenticeship.

**Mr BARRESI**—They go down to Perth for block release?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—That is right; or Geraldton.

**Mr BARRESI**—When they come back, they will still be tied to an employer here, won't they?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—Yes, they will. But there is no opportunity for them to do it 100 per cent in Carnarvon. There are apprenticeships and traineeships available to youth in Carnarvon.

**Mr BARRESI**—The TAFE college in town runs some courses; is that correct?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—For traineeships, but I do not believe for apprenticeships—not to my knowledge.

**Mr BARRESI**—Are you able to tell me what traineeships they do courses for?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—They were due to start a nautical form of traineeship this week, but it has not happened. There is a retail traineeship that is on hold at the moment and there is a horticultural traineeship that is also on hold.

**Mrs Collins**—For lack of applicants.

**Mrs Van Duyn**—I think that is it.

**Mr BARRESI**—So that is three traineeships and all three are on hold?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—Yes.

**Mrs Collins**—Yes.

**Mr BARRESI**—Yet they could fill those tomorrow if they had applications?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—I think so, yes.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Looking at the issue of youth employment, which is the issue we are looking at, what adjustments could the government make to the operation of Skillshare to make you more effective in placing young people in employment?

**Mrs Van Duyn**—Ensuring the survival of Skillshare would be the first one, but adjustments to the application of Skillshare—

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—I think you have identified one that I noticed.

**Mrs Collins**—Their criteria for entry—they are waiting till young people have lost any motivation they had. They are mostly at the bottom of their emotional barrel. When we get them, any literacy skills that they may have had are disused and so they are deficient.

The group of young Aboriginal people which we have in our programs have

exited the school system with deficient numeracy and literacy. We try to incorporate that into authentic job tasks, the teaching that we are able to do, because they are resistant to the structured learning process of just being indoors. In fact, we had them build a pergola so that we teach outdoors, because we find it works better that way. So we have adapted to their needs quite a deal. And, of course, we are working with CDEP and those people.

**CHAIR**—Rhonda and Lancy, thank you very much for coming to talk with us this afternoon. We will have to move on, in fairness to the other people who are following. We hope to complete our inquiries in June and bring down a report in late August or early September. We will not make a lot of recommendations to inquire into matters again. We will make a few strong, positive recommendations that we think will help promote the young people's employment opportunities and hope that the government will listen to us. Thank you for participating. We will certainly send you a copy of our report.

[2.44 p.m.]

**CUTTIFORD, Mr Noel Healey, Coordinator, Instep, c/- Carnarvon Senior High School, Whitlock Street, Carnarvon, Western Australia 6701**

**ROSE, Mr Gregory John, Manager, Department of Social Security, PO Box 767, Carnarvon, Western Australia 6701**

**CHAIR**—Welcome. We are not a government committee, we are a committee of the House of Representatives of the parliament. We report to the parliament, and ultimately the Minister for Employment, Education and Training will respond to our recommendations, in a formal manner, back to the House.

We are here to talk about employment, not unemployment. We might ask Gregory a couple of questions about unemployment rates and real lack of employment opportunities. We are essentially trying to come to grips with two things. The first is how we can help young people to become more employable and how we can encourage employers to make more positions available for our youth. That is really in essence what we are all about.

Having said all that, do either or both of you have a brief opening statement that you would like to make about the matters that we are referring to here today?

**Mr Cuttiford**—Yes, I would like to make a couple. It sounds like the essence of what you are after is the same as what I am after. The way I see the Instep program is providing that opportunity for the students to get out and gain the skills in the workplace. The spin-off from that is that the employers get a chance to know who is available and who they would like to choose from. Often the outcome of that is they know that the worker has done good work and they often get a job out of it. So that is a by-product of them doing the training in the work force. My concern is for students to be trained ready for work too, and the best place to get it is in the work force. So I see it as a complementary thing to their education. I am hoping that it works both ways, that when the students get out in the workplace they get convinced that yes, they do need to go and do their maths and that all the other things they are learning in school are important because when they get out in the work force they find they have got to learn lots of things. So that is probably the key thing.

We have had quite a strong response from students wanting to participate in the Instep program. When I started in October 1995 there was 12 students as part of the program. The next year it doubled to about 25 applicants and this year we looked like having about 39 applicants, and that dropped down to about 34 actually applied. We have placed 28 of those, with two more we need to finalise their placements, and the other four have either left school or are doing something else. That is quite a high percentage of the school. It is almost half of the year 11s and 12s, the figure we were looking at there.

**CHAIR**—One school?

**Mr Cuttiford**—Of our school, yes. We have only got one senior high school.

**Mr BARRESI**—It is interesting that you mention so many applications, because when we asked the 35 kids in this room today, they all said that it was available to them—

**Mr Cuttiford**—Yes, Instep was available.

**Mr BARRESI**—But only one of them, or was it two, put their hand up.

**Mr Cuttiford**—Clinton Edel was one. Anyway, the board—

**Mr BARRESI**—Only two put their name up, so where are the rest of them?

**Mr Cuttiford**—You must not have had all the students.

**Mr BARRESI**—No, we did not.

**Mr Cuttiford**—I looked at the board in the staff room today. I noticed, ‘These are the students to please be excused.’ So I was looking through which Instep students are in there and I saw two in there. I thought, ‘That is a pity, I would have liked a few Instep students in there so you heard how Instep was going.’

**Mr BARRESI**—So which year is it offered at?

**Mr Cuttiford**—Year 11 and 12. Did you have mainly year 12s?

**Mr BARRESI**—We had 11, 12 and 10s from St Mary.

**Mr Cuttiford**—Okay. I will be asking the school how come there were no more Instep students. I saw one Instep student.

**CHAIR**—Who do you work for? I am terribly confused.

**Mr Cuttiford**—The Education Department pay me two hours a day to coordinate the Instep program.

**CHAIR**—What do you do with the other six?

**Mr Cuttiford**—I have got another job.

**CHAIR**—Right. So you do not work for the school?

**Mr Cuttiford**—Yes, well, employed through the school, yes.

**CHAIR**—You report to the principal?

**Mr Cuttiford**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—Two hours a day?

**Mr Cuttiford**—Yes.

**CHAIR**—Right, okay, got that. Do you want to tell us briefly what the Instep program is? We heard about it in Darwin, but did we also hear about it in Kununurra?

**Mr BARRESI**—No, in Broome, I think.

**Mr Cuttiford**—Briefly, it is an opportunity for students to continue their education while gaining skills in the work force.

**CHAIR**—So it is one a day a week?

**Mr Cuttiford**—That is how ours operates, yes. There are a few models but that is how ours operates. My role is coordinating, finding the employers for the work placements, arranging an induction day for the students so they get one day of what to expect in the work force and what is expected from them, and interviewing the students prior to them coming into the program. They are my key responsibilities, and visiting the students while they are in the workplace.

**CHAIR**—One of the students today that was talking to us said that she would like to have done a program but she also wants to keep her options open for going to university, and for her it was impossible.

**Mr Cuttiford**—Exactly right.

**CHAIR**—What a shame.

**Mr Cuttiford**—Yes, I feel the same way. For a student to do Instep they have got to virtually drop a subject because it takes the time of a subject, so therefore out of the six you have only got five subjects left. Also in year 11 work studies is compulsory, so you are still only left with the choice of four subjects, and English and maths you really need to do to be part of Instep, so you really are only left with two different ones. So your options are narrowed down by doing Instep. Instep really is a process I would like to see at every subject.

This is getting onto a personal opinion on what I think an answer is, that every



subject have a component of work placement where teachers are teaching a subject and then they do a bit of work on finding how this subject gets used in the workplace, and every student picks up a bit of experience in the work force, even those that are going to uni, because those that are going to uni cannot afford to drop those subjects, whereas I think it is very important to gain those skills in the work force. If they gain them now, they have got an idea of what they are heading towards after they have left uni, rather than leave uni and still have not rung up for a job application.

Students who come through Instep have applied to a program, have been interviewed by a panel with an employer, teacher and myself—so they know what that feels like—and have had to ring up to go to their work placement. It is quite a significant thing for them to actually ring that employer and say who they are and that they need to make an appointment about their Instep placement. When they have done that, they say, ‘Phew, it was not so hard after all,’ although some baulk at it.

Some of the bosses with whom I have got students placed would not do that. They will take students in and say, ‘That is why I have got my own business.’ They would not do that; they would not ring someone to get a job. They have their own business, but they would not ring up someone. So it is quite a significant thing that they are learning in Instep.

**CHAIR**—Are you from here originally?

**Mr Cuttifford**—I have been in Carnarvon for five years.

**CHAIR**—I reckon—and I think my colleagues would support me—that the group of students we talked to today had less idea of what they wanted to do with their lives than any group of similar students that we have talked to anywhere in the nation.

**Mr Cuttifford**—That annoys me.

**CHAIR**—Can you tell me why that is?

**Mr Cuttifford**—They get no idea because that group of students do not get Instep, so they have got no idea.

**CHAIR**—Regardless of Instep or no Instep—

**Mr Cuttifford**—That is the answer as to why they do not know—because they have not experienced it.

**CHAIR**—You missed the point.

**Mr BARRESI**—The point Bob is making is that it was the most disoriented group

out of any group in Australia. Instep is not a national program.

**Mr Cuttiford**—Sorry, I was not trying to make it an Instep answer.

**Mr BARRESI**—Instep cannot be the reason because other states do not have Instep either. So is there anything peculiar about this group, this school or this town that makes the students less aware of their options?

**Mr Cuttiford**—Yes, it is unique in a few ways. It is isolated.

**CHAIR**—So is Broome. So is Kununurra.

**Mr Cuttiford**—It is not as isolated as Broome. We are stuck out on the edge of the desert here.

**CHAIR**—So is Mount Isa.

**Mr MOSSFELD**—If we had all Instep students here, they would have been able to give us some idea of what they were intending to do when they left school?

**Mr Cuttiford**—Possibly so, but they still might have had that Carnarvon ‘lostness’ that you have noticed.

**CHAIR**—If you do not know, we will move on. Greg, tell us about employment opportunities here for youth?

**Mr Rose**—For youth?

**CHAIR**—For young people aged 16 to 24.

**Mr Rose**—As Rhonda from Skillshare previously touched on, in Carnarvon there is a reasonable opportunity for unskilled work on a temporary basis, but I feel you really would have to leave Carnarvon to get into the skilled categories. It is a pity the representative from Dampier Salt did not come down. I would like to have heard what they said as well in regard to the opportunities.

**CHAIR**—He is still coming.

**Mr Rose**—I am sorry. I was listening before and I thought you had said he was not coming. There just does not seem to be a great deal of opportunity in the skilled department for youth. There is ample opportunity to get a job as a night packer, as a trolley person, as a fruit picker, perhaps on a fishing fleet or doing general type duties. There is little opportunity to get professional jobs.

**CHAIR**—Mechanic? Carpenter? Electrician? Plasterer? Plumber?

**Mr Rose**—I am not in the CES, so I would not like to say this is what it is, but not that I am aware of. I know for a fact that a lot of jobs are advertised in the CES. There is a fairly high opportunity for jobs in this town, which is quite amazing. I was in Hervey Bay prior to coming here and there are amazing employment opportunities in Carnarvon comparatively, but they are not skilled jobs and are not jobs that are going to be a lifetime career. There are ample opportunities to get a job for any age group really.

As for apprenticeships and such, I really do not know. I can remember hearing one particular job advertised. CES advertises on our local radio—they have ‘jobs talk’ or whatever the program is called. They advertised the same job for three consecutive weeks. It was an unskilled job, they paid award wages and it was aimed at youth. It was not picked up—I know for a fact—for at least four weeks. There are ample youth in town; there was no difficulty in them fitting the requirements for the position.

**CHAIR**—In other words, you are paying benefits to enough young people that you know somebody could have picked it up?

**Mr Rose**—That is a personal opinion, but yes, without a doubt. There is opportunity for those types of jobs.

**Mr BARRESI**—What is the unemployment rate in Carnarvon, and what is it for young kids?

**Mr Rose**—The CES has that figure. I really would not be able to tell you. It would be reasonably high, though. I would imagine probably—

**Mr BARRESI**—Doesn’t it get advertised in the papers?

**Mr Rose**—No, not really. I would only be guessing, to be honest. I really do not have a breakdown. I have a breakdown of the numbers but I do not know what percentage they would represent, and I do not have them with me at the moment. I came along as a person who employed someone through Instep, not as a DSS representative, so I do not have DSS information. I would be happy to get it for you, but I did not bring it with me as such.

**CHAIR**—Because you were here we thought we would pound on you!

**Mr Rose**—Yes, fair enough, I can understand that.

**CHAIR**—Why not? Free kick whenever you get a bureaucrat!

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Your program, though, is very similar to TRAC. Are you aware of the TRAC program?

**Mr Cuttiford**—I have only read briefly about it. It seems like that one is more geared up to getting them into a job and getting them in quick. Is that—

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—No, it is a very similar organisation.

**Mr Cuttiford**—I have only heard of it briefly.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—They are placed in workplaces for a period of 12 months or two years. It is a HSC subject, and it seems to work very effectively. The only thing is that it is fairly restricted at this stage in the classifications that it covers—it is not as broad as I would like to see it. It seems to be very similar to yours.

**Mr BARRESI**—I was going to pursue that. Are you working closely with the local Chamber of Commerce?

**Mr Cuttiford**—I invited them along to our committee. When I started there was no committee: it was just the coordinator saying, ‘You go off and find the work placements.’ I thought that the whole situation deserved a better backup than just depending on one person. I read through my job description when I could find a bit more information on it. I found that my responsibility was to find an employer representative for that committee, and the committee did not exist. I rang around to organise a committee, and we have now got a student rep, a parent rep and a school rep. I have been heading down the track of trying to get more employers and now employer representatives involved.

I did invite Jo Rebola to our last one, and hopefully he will keep coming along. He is in the Chamber of Commerce. I want him to head more down that track of getting the four big industries represented on our committee: Dampier Salt, the fishing industry, the horticultural industry and the tourism industry. Part of this is saying, ‘These are the people who are going to be looking for into entry into your industries. How do you want them to turn out ready for you? Now is your chance to have an input into the school ones’—which is part of the reason for them taking on work placements—‘and this is your opportunity to train them how you want them.’ That is moving down the track of wanting to develop that further.

**Mr BARRESI**—Are you finding employers receptive to what you are trying to do?

**Mr Cuttiford**—Yes.

**Mr BARRESI**—Are they queuing up to be part of the program?

**Mr Cuttiford**—In a sense possibly so, because I get very few knock-backs. For the size of the town and the number of students requiring a work placement, I think we have done very well to be able to find 30 work placements around town. A feature of

Instep here is the employers' enthusiasm and willingness to take workers.

**Mr BARRESI**—I want to lead on from that. One of the other comments that was made by the kids today—I was fairly surprised about it—is the comment that employers have not come to the school to let them know what opportunities there are or what their industry is about. I am surprised, for example, that the mining industry—which is, in relative terms, just next door to you—has never come down to the school or sent representatives or literature explaining the opportunities available through the mining industry. That same criticism can be levelled at other local industries as well. This is coming from the kids, who are basically saying, 'We've never had a careers day or a day when there has been a display or when representatives from local industries come in.'

**Mr Cuttiford**—I think it is a shame that that is not a well coordinated process.

**Mr BARRESI**—That in itself may help to explain the fact that they have no idea what is available. Can you play a part in that?

**Mr Cuttiford**—I am trying to play a part in that, yes. I am trying to get, and do get, placements in those industries like Dampier Salt and the seafood industry, but really I only nibble at the edges. When I get a placement there, it is no different from getting a place in a small business: a mechanical placement in the seafood, meaning that the employee works down the bottom of a boat on a motor; working out in a mine; working in an office. The one student who was probably here today will be working in the plant operations out at Dampier Salt.

I feel as though I am infiltrating, trying to break down those barriers. Ultimately, yes, I feel as though I have been carrying the responsibility of this transition from school to work at the same time as I have been learning about my responsibilities; how is this going to work? As it is becoming clearer, I think, 'Well, my job is really just small part in it.' I think many more people are needed to be doing more. There seem to be a lot of people missing along the line in taking up this responsibility of helping them transfer from school to work.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—Is there any cost to the employer to be involved in this program?

**Mr Cuttiford**—No. They do not pay the students; that is a condition of it. They are insured by the school. It is just as though they were at school. No, they are donating their time and effort in training that student. So we expect them to be able to pick up the benefits of their doing some useful work for them while they are there. They will have an opportunity to have input into students, so that will help them come out more as they would like them to. It is that sort of joint benefit. Otherwise, it is based just on their generosity.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—How is small business responding to this program—

restaurants, small shops? We expect that employment growth will be in small business over a period of time. I was wondering just how they were responding.

**Mr Cuttiford**—Everyone is responding, ‘Yes, I’ll take a student.’ It feels as though a lot of work goes into my thinking before I ask someone. I am not just ringing up and saying, ‘Will you take one?’ I think about where the particular student would be well placed, based on what they have told me through interviews. For example, if they have told me that they want to be a mechanic in a motorbike shop, I ask whether they will try anything else—‘Do you want to try something else as well as the motorbike shop?’ I have an idea from the student about what they want. Then I just look around town and think of the businesses we have got, the people who work in those businesses and think, ‘Yeah, that would be a good one.’ Then I approach them and ask whether they would consider taking them on, and usually they say yes.

We have a huge range—the day care centres, including Multicultural Bridge Care Centre; Jetset Travel; Northwater Homes; Hospitality Inn; Department of Social Security; shire offices; Homestead Hardware; Gascoyne Plumbing; Dampier Salt; family support; Gascoyne River Co-op; Carnarvon Police Station, two students there; Homeswest; Minoo Malgoo, which is a kindergarten; Norwest Seafoods; Woolworths; Dampier Salt again; the regional hospital; Carnarvon Motor Wreckers; Westcotts; Carnarvon Primary School; Department of Family and Children’s Services; Gascoyne Constructions; and the Youth Project Coordinator. That is the sort of range we have.

**Mr MOSSFIELD**—So you have a good range of businesses?

**Mr Cuttiford**—Yes.

**Mr BARRESI**—You are only two hours per day.

**Mr Cuttiford**—Yes.

**Mr BARRESI**—Is that the norm for an Instep coordinator in the state?

**Mr Cuttiford**—There probably is no norm. I have tried to find a few norms to find out whether it should be this busy. There is a rough figure of one coordinator per 80 students. That was the figure originally. I think that figure now might be one coordinator per 100 students, and there may be other factors that come into that rough figure.

**Mr BARRESI**—Year 12 students?

**Mr Cuttiford**—Years 11 and 12. If you are coordinating placements for that many students, finding placements for 100 students, it is a full-time job. It probably comes down to about three or four hours on those ratios for the number of students we have had coming through.

It is a little bit underdone, I think, in the coordination area. The coordinator before me had four hours, but there were two sources of funding. One of those disappeared, and I was asked whether I would do it at two hours a day—and that is about all the time I had available. So we have been sort of nursing it along with that restriction.

As the numbers of students have increased, I have had to handball a lot of the administrative work on to the school. A school liaison person, one of the teachers, does all the letters now. When you place a student, a letter goes to the employer, to the student and to the parent, and there are various insurance letters that have to be filled in. I would not have been able to carry any load larger than the one I was carrying. But I have been able to handball all of that on to the school teacher. The work is being better distributed now, so we are able to keep coping on that small amount of funding time—but it does get pretty tight.

**Mr BARRESI**—How close do you work with the careers counsellor in the school?

**Mr Cuttiford**—Not very closely. I have been nominated as one of the advisers. That whole process needs to be tightened up. The school psychologist is the guidance officer and various teachers have been nominated as people to give advice to students towards the end of the year. I saw my name on the list. I was not approached in any formal way and told, ‘This is the process and the advice we will give them.’ So I am left to work off my own bat with my knowledge of workplaces. If any student comes to me for advice I am happy to talk to them and to seek out more information if I need it, but it does not seem to be a strong area, and this would tie in with the students feeling lost.

I have heard stories of students who have left school saying the same thing and I have thought, ‘That just doesn’t seem right.’ That is what I want to find out: who is going to take responsibility for the transition? I am in a key position to be involved. I am happy to be involved in that and maybe I am the closest one to be involved. The job I am doing has that effect, it does assist that process, that is the whole point of it.

**CHAIR**—Are there any service clubs in town?

**Mr Cuttiford**—Yes, Apex and Rotary.

**CHAIR**—Have you thought about enlisting them in this process?

**Mr Cuttiford**—For work placements?

**Mr BARRESI**—Or any assistance in general.

**Mr Cuttiford**—No, not a great deal. A lot of the employers that are employing are probably in those service clubs. A lot of those service clubs are all voluntary and there would not be any training placements there.

**CHAIR**—That is not what I am leading to. We visited a school in East Elizabeth in South Australia, a very disadvantaged area with very high structural unemployment and a very high proportion of single parent families. It is a socioeconomically disadvantaged area with unbelievably poor literacy and numeracy skills. Everything you can think of has gone wrong. The school went to Rotary and Rotary developed a program in conjunction with the school. The principal was a member of Rotary and approached the whole club to assist the school as a vital Rotary project to get his young people involved in the workplace. As in your program, there was one day a week at work and vocational programs at school to back that up. I think 30 per cent of their kids are involved this year and they reckon by 1999 they will have over 80 per cent of the young people in the school involved. Mind you, a number of those will still go on to university, notwithstanding that they are doing one day a week work placement. Rotary has become a driving force behind that whole program and it has just gone boom.

**Mr Cuttiford**—I have had them on my list of people to approach for funding when the funding was getting a bit tight, but I have not really followed them up for involvement in the program.

**CHAIR**—I simply mention it to you; we are not here to advise you what to do. I simply mention it to you as an experience that we have had. We have also been to Hervey Bay and the circumstances at Hervey Bay are substantially different from those in Carnarvon, there is no question about that. They also have a fantastic senior secondary college at Hervey Bay, the likes of which is not really replicated, to the best of my knowledge, anywhere in Australia. That would tend to produce an awful lot of work-ready young people or young people who are ready to continue on with apprenticeships or TAFE. It does not happen in a lot of other places.

**Mr BARRESI**—I guess what we are saying is that there are other services out there. Sometimes you may feel like you are on your own in all this, but there are other groups out there and it is a matter of approaching them. For example, today the kids from St Mary's were saying that they get taken down to Perth once a year on camps and they have a look at the various industries, which is excellent. Carnarvon High School does not do that. The kids at St Mary's go through interview and resume writing skills. The Carnarvon High School kids did not mention that at all. This is where perhaps the school is not bringing in other groups, for whatever reason—whether it be through apathy or incompetence; I won't say which. My wife, for example, provides a lot of curriculum and resume counselling to the local high school through Rotary. There is a bit of involvement there.

**Mr Cuttiford**—I think that is a good point. I have noted visiting industries. I could possibly get involved with that, subject to my time being available, and coordinate at least the Instep students doing a few visits like that. I would see that as being part of my role and have thought about that a little bit. I haven't really done any of it, though.



Just a comment on resumes and things, I expect that that is the sort of thing students that do work studies will be doing. I suspect that none of the students you had here today do work studies.

**CHAIR**—There were a couple.

**Mr Cuttiford**—There were a couple, yes. So that is probably the group missing out on a few things. An observation is that those sorts of skills are not spread through the whole school. It is almost a specialised thing. After thinking about it, it does not make sense because everyone has got to work and everyone needs to write a resume.

**CHAIR**—Everybody does not have to. Greg certainly pays a lot of people to sit at home.

**Mr BARRESI**—We just made your job a four hour a day job.

**Mr Cuttiford**—Thank you very much; I am very grateful. I would just like to thank Greg for coming. Greg is a good example of an employer that is very supportive. Greg has spoken at our induction days over the last couple of years to give students a good idea of what is expected in his industry. We have had speakers from other industries, and Greg really lays it on the line in relation to the importance of confidentiality in his industry. So that is a good point to get across to the students.

The student that we had placed at Social Security last year also became a trainee this year. We got a good bit of good press on that in the paper here. They did a write-up on Instep and then they did a write-up on the traineeship. Talking about traineeships, I am trying to find out from Gail Wilkins, who is a group employer, I think the word is—

**Mr MOSSFELD**—Group trainer.

**Mr Cuttiford**—Yes, group trainer; that's the one. I am trying to find out what she is doing in the traineeship area and apprenticeship area. I am also trying to find that out from Rowena, who you spoke to before. I have spoken to them because I need to know what they are doing and they will probably need to know what I am doing and what students I have got available so that we can link up and I can place students with employers that are looking for trainees so they can start sampling students, in effect, and we can make those necessary links. I have started talking to those people as I need to know what is happening in that area. I have tried to find out a bit of information about MAATS. That is probably one thing I would like to feed in. It would have been good if I could have got a bit of that information directly. I am getting through the backdoor information as to what is happening. By the look of it, you may be getting it through the backdoor, too.

**CHAIR**—No.

**Mr Cuttiford**—You're not; okay. Just trying to read the eyebrows.

**Mr BARRESI**—DEETYA could provide that information for you.

**Mr Cuttiford**—Okay. That's a nice idea.

**CHAIR**—They have got an office here, don't they?

**Mr Rose**—Yes. Starting tomorrow, DEETYA and DSS will begin to merge.

**CHAIR**—Yes; so just go and ask Greg.

**Mr Cuttiford**—Okay.

**Mr Rose**—Give me a couple of weeks.

**CHAIR**—Give him a couple of hours; fair go.

**Mr Cuttiford**—We have got a little bit of funding from DEETYA, just approved by phone so far, from VEGAS, which is the vocational educational guidance for Aboriginal students. So we have got a little bit of funding, a couple of thousand dollars, to put in a bit of extra effort to help the Aboriginal students maintain their participation in the program.

**Mr BARRESI**—What do you do for the other six hours of the day?

**Mr Cuttiford**—The other eight hours a day—it is a long day. It is almost education. I am employed with Family and Children's Services to be a Beststart coordinator at Mungalla Village. Beststart is a pilot project, and it aims to be a coordination process between health, education and family support services.

**Mr BARRESI**—Mungalla Village is the Aboriginal village out of town?

**Mr Cuttiford**—Correct. Our target group are the zero to five-year-olds to get them ready for school. So doing Instep is helpful for me in doing that job because I know where I want those kids to end up in the Instep program later on.

**CHAIR**—Perhaps you could do something now about letting the kids know where industry wants them to end up because at the moment they obviously do not, not in Carnarvon. Thank you for coming. We do appreciate your input very much; it has been most helpful.

Resolved (on motion by Mr Mossfield):

That the committee receive as evidence and authorise the publication of the submissions received from Carnarvon Skillshare Inc.

That the committee receive as evidence and include in its record as an exhibit the documents received from Carnarvon Skillshare Inc. entitled *Gascoyne Region Economic Development Strategy, October 1996* and *Gascoyne Economic Perspective*.

That the committee authorises publication of the evidence given before it at public hearings this day, including publication on the electronic parliamentary database of the proof transcript.

**Committee adjourned at 3.17 p.m.**