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**ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND JUVENILE  
DELINQUENCY – THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG  
ABORIGINAL YOUTHS**

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# **ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY – THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG ABORIGINAL YOUTHS**

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## Summary

The aim of this study was to examine the nature of the relationship between substance abuse and juvenile delinquency among Aboriginal youth. It was a joint venture between the Aboriginal Sobriety Group and the University of South Australia, and was funded by the Criminology Research Council. The purpose of the study was to aid the Sobriety Group in the development of a facility that would help deal with Aboriginal substance abuse and juvenile offending. By examining the nature of the relationship between drug use and delinquency it was believed that more effective programs could be developed for dealing with the problem.

The study was conducted as follows. First, a questionnaire was administered to sixty-seven Aboriginal and ninety-one Non-Aboriginal school students between the ages of 10 and 18 years, in order to determine whether there is a relationship between drinking, drug taking, and delinquent behaviour. Interviews were then conducted with members of the police force and with Aboriginal youths from both recreational and correctional facilities in an attempt to better understand the nature of the relationship as it applies specifically to Aboriginal youths.

The major findings of the school study were that:

- Fewer Aboriginal students reported drinking alcohol than is generally expected. About half of the Aboriginal students indicated that they never drink alcohol at all.
- Alcohol use increased with age. Although somewhat less than half of the total sample of Aboriginal students indicated that they drink alcohol, 66% of those aged 14 years or over stated that they do drink. Of these, many suggested that they consume quite large amounts of alcohol at a time.
- Non-Aboriginal students reported drinking more often than Aboriginal students, although there was no (significant) difference found in the extent to which they reported "getting drunk".
- Marijuana use was found to be very extensive. 43% of the Aboriginal students and 30% of the Non-Aboriginal students indicated that they had tried it.

- Use of the other "hard" drugs was found to be fairly rare, and there was no (significant) difference found in the extent to which Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students reported using these "hard" drugs.
- Aboriginal students were involved in serious delinquent activities and acts of interpersonal aggression (significantly) more often than the Non-Aboriginal students. We believe that certain social factors which disadvantage Aboriginal youths may account for these differences.
- Alcohol use appeared to be closely related to delinquency for the Aboriginal students in particular, while marijuana use was found to be related to involvement in delinquent activities for both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students alike.

Results from the interviews also suggested that substance abuse is related to Aboriginal juvenile offending in the following ways:

- Many youths who commit crimes use alcohol and other drugs quite extensively. For example, 14 of the 15 youths interviewed in the detention centres stated that they had used marijuana, 11 reported the use of alcohol and 3 reported that they use the "harder" drugs fairly frequently.
- Many youths reported that they commit crimes when they are under the influence of certain substances.
- Many indicated that they often commit crimes in order to obtain alcohol and other drugs.
- Substance abuse and delinquency appear to be related in that they both seem to arise from common "causes". Peer group pressure and boredom were the primary reasons given by the youths when they were asked to indicate why they use drugs and why they commit crimes.

Although the results do not suggest that Aboriginal youths drink alcohol or use other drugs more often than Non-Aboriginal youths, they do suggest that substance abuse among Aboriginal youths is closely related to juvenile offending. The fact that the Aboriginal students were found to be involved in serious delinquent activities and acts of aggression against other people more often than the Non-Aboriginal students, and that alcohol use was found to be closely associated with juvenile delinquency for the Aboriginal students but not for those who were Non-Aboriginal, suggests that programs which deal



with substance abuse among young Aboriginal people can do much in reducing the rate of juvenile crime.

This report provides a detailed discussion of the findings and of the complex nature of the relationship between substance abuse and juvenile offending. It also discusses the role that negative attitudes towards school and the police may play in the development of delinquent behaviour patterns. Suggestions are then made as to how these findings can be used in order to make programs that deal with substance abuse and juvenile delinquency more effective when dealing with Aboriginal youths.

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## Chapter 1.

### Studying the Relationship between Substance Abuse and Delinquency - Purpose and Procedure

The Aboriginal Sobriety Group is an organisation that has been largely concerned with Aboriginal adult drug and alcohol abuse. However, in recent years concern has grown over the extent to which substances are being abused by young Aboriginal people. There has been an increase in the number of youths who have been using the Sobriety Group's Mobile Assistance Patrol or MAP. This is a service that operates between 5pm and 9am which offers transport to intoxicated people and links them in with other agencies such as detox centres if this is deemed necessary. What has been particularly concerning to the Sobriety Group is the extent of substance abuse and the types of substances that have been abused by the youths who are using this service. Also of concern have been the kinds of things that these youths have been 'getting up to' before MAP are contacted.

This increase in the demand for their services by young Aboriginal people, and their own personal experience and knowledge of substance abuse among these youths, led the Sobriety Group to determine that a facility designed specifically for Aboriginal youths was badly needed. Not only did the Sobriety Group believe that such a facility would help alleviate some of the drug and alcohol problems existing within the young Aboriginal community, but also that it would help reduce Aboriginal juvenile offending as they perceived juvenile crime to be closely associated with drug and alcohol abuse. Based on this, the Sobriety Group began planning and developing their own facility designed specifically for Aboriginal youths. When this facility is completed it will offer young Aboriginal people a much needed service that is currently lacking - one that is run by Aboriginal people which is relevant, acceptable, and culturally appropriate.

The Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths In Custody recommended that Aboriginal people should have more control over programs that deal with Aboriginal issues, and supported the establishment of programs and facilities such as the one that is being developed by the Aboriginal Sobriety Group:

*'...the problems affecting Aboriginal juveniles are so widespread and have such potentially disastrous repercussions for the future that there is an urgent need for governments and Aboriginal organisations to negotiate together to devise strategies designed to reduce the rate at which Aboriginal juveniles are involved in the welfare and criminal justice systems and, in particular, to reduce the rate at which Aboriginal juveniles are separated from their families and communities, whether by being declared to be in need of care, detained, imprisoned or otherwise' (Johnston, 1991).*

The Royal Commission also suggested that there is a strong link between substance abuse and crime among both Aboriginal adults and youths. They pointed, however, to the lack of available research in this area on which to substantiate such claims. The purpose of this study then, was to gather evidence in relation to the claim that there is a link between substance abuse and Aboriginal juvenile offending. This, we believed, would not only lend support to the Sobriety Group's proposal to develop a facility designed specifically for Aboriginal youths, but also, by examining the nature of this relationship, would enable the Sobriety Group to develop more effective programs for dealing with these issues. Research of this kind was strongly recommended by the Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths In Custody, and has been supported by the Criminology Research Council.

This research was conducted in four parts. Firstly, a questionnaire was administered to both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal school students. It asked them about the extent to which they drink alcohol, use other drugs, and are involved in delinquent activities. Secondly, interviews were conducted over the telephone with members of the police force who were asked about the types of substances that had been used and the types of offences that had been committed by Aboriginal youths with whom they had come into contact. Thirdly, structured interviews were conducted with Aboriginal youths in recreation facilities. They were asked about their own drinking and drug taking behaviours, and about the kinds of things that they 'get up to' after they've been using these substances. Finally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with youths in detention centres, who were asked to give their opinions on the nature of the relationship between substance abuse and juvenile offending.

After presenting a brief review of the available literature on substance abuse and its relationship to juvenile delinquency, we will discuss the findings from the various parts of this study and offer suggestions as to how these results can aid in the development of programs that deal with Aboriginal juvenile offending and substance abuse. Although the results from the interviews paint a very concerning picture of young Aboriginal involvement in substance abuse and juvenile crime, we would like to make it clear that not all Aboriginal youths use drugs or are delinquent. In fact, the results from the school study reveal that the majority of Aboriginal youths never drink alcohol, never use drugs, and never commit crimes. Also, when reading this report, the history of Aboriginal people since the 'settlement' of Australia by Europeans should always be kept in mind. We cannot ignore the past when considering the marginalisation of Aboriginal people from the social, economic and political structures of contemporary Australia. The actions of government in fostering the destruction of Aboriginal family structures and the disintegration of socio-cultural controls has created a wasteland of personal hopelessness and despair for many people. This report reflects how these past events have impacted on contemporary Aboriginal youth.

## Chapter 2.

### Extent of Substance Abuse and its Relationship to Juvenile Delinquency-Past Research

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, there have been very few studies conducted that have looked specifically at how alcohol and other drugs are related to juvenile delinquency among Aboriginal youths. In this chapter we will briefly discuss studies that have been concerned with the extent of substance abuse among youths generally, with substance abuse among Aboriginal youths specifically, and with the general nature of the relationship between substance abuse and juvenile offending. Although these studies are not directly related to our area of interest, they do bare some relevance to our research. Finally we will consider studies that have been concerned specifically with the nature of the relationship between juvenile offending and substance abuse among Aboriginal youths. A review of these studies will provide not only an overview of what is already known in relation to the substance abuse-juvenile delinquency link, but will highlight the fact that there are still a lot of things that we do not know and that there is still a lot of work to be done.

#### 1. The Extent To Which Young People Use Alcohol and Other Drugs

One aim of this research was to examine the extent to which Aboriginal youths in the Adelaide and surrounding areas are abusing alcohol and other dangerous substances. Although this has not been done before, some relevant research in other areas may offer a clue as to the extent of substance abuse by young Aboriginal people living in this area. Specifically, studies which look at substance abuse by youths generally (not just Aboriginal youths); by Aboriginal youths living in remote communities; and by Aboriginal youths living in the cities and towns of other states, may provide us with some idea as to what substances are being abused, the extent of the abuse, and the reasons why youths are turning to these substances.

##### 1.1. General Studies of Substance Abuse among Youths

While there have been other similar studies carried out interstate, the most relevant study to our research on substance abuse by youths generally would be the one that was conducted by the Drug and Alcohol Services Council (DASC) which looked at the drinking and drug taking behaviour of South Australian school children (Mawby, Neill, Christie, & Cormack; 1991). From 1986 to 1989 they carried out an annual survey with over 3,000 students ranging from 11 to 16 years of age. This study would have included some Aboriginal students, but the students were not asked to indicate whether they were Aboriginal or not, and so information about the drinking and drug taking behaviour of Aboriginal students specifically could not be determined from this research.

Although it is true that these results only represent the extent of substance abuse by youths who are still in school, school surveys are the most practical way in which a large number of youths can be questioned in a controlled situation and in such a way as to ensure that the information obtained is anonymous. It is true, as Mawby et al. (1991) point out, that the results may underestimate the extent of substance abuse as those youths who are absent from school on survey days are often the ones who use alcohol and other drugs the most. Still, a lot of the time school questionnaires are the only access we have to young people, and so they are able to offer us some idea about the extent of substance abuse in an area and about the types of drugs that are being used in the community.

In the 1989 study, Mawby et al. (1991) found that about half of the 11 year olds had tried alcohol but that by the time they were 14, this was true of more than 80% of the students. Alcohol use appeared to be mostly experimental and infrequent among the younger students but increased with age. By the time the students were 15 or 16, about 40% reported that they were using alcohol weekly. A cause for concern was the fact that of the 25% who indicated that they drink on a weekly basis, 53% could be classified as 'binge drinkers'.

Marijuana was the most commonly used illicit drug, although the extent of consumption was low in comparison to alcohol. From the age of 13 onwards the percentages of those students who had ever used marijuana increased until by the age of sixteen about 43% of males and 35% of females said that they had tried it. Mawby et al. (1991) found that the extent of use increased markedly at around the age of 14 or 15, with about 12% of 15 and 16 year olds reporting that they use marijuana regularly.

Mawby et al. (1991) also found that about 30% of the students in any age group reported having used tranquillisers at some stage, with 20% reporting that they had used sedatives. Less than 10% of the students in any age group reported having ever used stimulants, hallucinogens or narcotics, and less than 5% said that they had used these in the past week. Use of the 'harder' drugs then was found to be fairly rare.

What was concerning, however, was the extent to which inhalant use was reported by the students. A large proportion of 11 year olds indicated that they had used them in the past, suggesting that 'sniffing' is something that is taken up by youths at an even younger age. Inhalant use did decrease with grade, indicating that it is something that is more common among younger adolescents.

Also, as Mawby et al. (1991) point out, although less than 5% of students reported that they use inhalants regularly, a large proportion (20-30%) indicated that they had experimented with them. What is concerning about this is the dangerous consequences that can occur from even 'sniffing' just once. While the long term effects of certain solvents and aerosols can be devastating (liver, kidney, nerve,

muscle and brain damage), death can occur by suffocation when plastic bags are used to inhale the substances or when aerosols or lighter fluid are squirted straight into the mouth. As Dipiramo (1991) states, between 1980 and 1988, 131 deaths in Australia were reported to be associated with inhalants.

Mawby et al. (1991) offer some possible explanations as to why youths are using various substances. Alcohol, they argue, is regarded as being normal, and even integral to becoming a socially accepted person in Australia. It is not surprising then to find that youths who grow up in a society with this view will experiment with and later use alcohol themselves. Marijuana use, which is often experimented with in the company of friends, is driven by curiosity and a desire to experience new feelings, they suggest.

The findings from the DASC study may offer us some clue as to the extent to which substances are being abused by Aboriginal youths living in and around Adelaide. After all, the students who took part in this study live in the same areas and would potentially be exposed to the same things. Yet in some respects Aboriginal youths lead very different lives from their Non-Aboriginal classmates, even though they may live in the same location. So while the DASC study can offer some idea as to the extent to which alcohol and other drugs are being used by youths generally (including Aboriginal school students), a study which looks at Aboriginal youths specifically is necessary in order to confidently estimate the extent to which alcohol and drugs are being abused in the community.

## 1.2. Studies of Substance Abuse Among Aboriginal Youth

Previous studies of substance abuse among Aboriginal youths have been conducted in both remote and urbanised areas. Although the latter are likely to be more relevant to the present study which was conducted mainly in Adelaide, a background to substance abuse among Aboriginal people must also include those which have focused upon problems of substance abuse in Aboriginal communities outside the major metropolitan areas.

### 1.2(a) Substance Abuse by Aboriginal Youths Living in Remote Communities

Almost all of the studies which have dealt with substance abuse by Aboriginal youths specifically have been conducted in remote communities and have been devoted almost exclusively to petrol sniffing. Brady (1991a) writes that apart from the use of alcohol, tobacco and analgesics, petrol sniffing is '...the most notable use of a mood-altering substance by Aborigines' (p. 197). She goes on to say that it is the substance of choice in rural and remote regions as it is readily available, cheap, and because of its mood-altering properties. Primary regions that Brady (1991a) identifies which have been noted for the occurrence of petrol sniffing are Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory, Central Australia (southern part of the Northern Territory, far north of South Australia, and the borders of Western

Australia and the Northern Territory), and the eastern Goldfields region of Western Australia.

It is difficult to say exactly how many youths are sniffing petrol. Measuring the extent of volatile substance abuse generally is a difficult task for a number of reasons. As Dipiramo (1991) points out, volatile substances are not as widely used as other drugs, are often commonly used household products, and their abuse is not illegal. The extent of petrol sniffing is particularly difficult to ascertain as community members are often sensitive about the issue and are reluctant to state the number of people who are sniffing in their community (Yarranma, 1988).

Collinge (1991), commenting on the work of Brady, writes that in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia, there are about 600 chronic petrol sniffers and hundreds of recreational users. The use of petrol between communities varies greatly. Some communities have a high prevalence of use, while in near by communities petrol sniffing does not occur at all (Brady, 1991b).

Collinge (1991) writes that petrol sniffers are usually aged between 10 and 25 years. An article in Yarranma (1988), however, points out that youths as young as 9 are taking up the practise, while Gunter (1984) reports of its use by children as young as 7. Petrol sniffing is engaged in by children of both sexes (Brady, 1985; Brady, 1991a), although there is some evidence to suggest that it is predominantly a male activity (Rankin, 1983; Brady & Morice, 1982).

Although petrol sniffing is only practised by relatively few Aboriginal youths (Collinge, 1991), the practice of inhaling petrol is very concerning because of the dangers that are associated with it. As was mentioned above, the inhalation of many volatile substances can be extremely dangerous. The effects of petrol sniffing in particular can be quite devastating. As is discussed by Collinge (1991), the 1985 Parliamentary Senate Select Committee on Volatile Substance Fumes found that petrol abuse is "the most intrinsically hazardous form of drug abuse, being more dangerous than amphetamines, alcohol, tobacco, barbiturates and heroin" (p. 21). While '...in most cases the damage caused by alcohol can be treated, ... the effects of regular petrol sniffing are terminal' (p. 10, Yarranma, 1988).

As Brady (1991b) discusses, chronic inhalation of petrol can produce seizures, tremors, anorexia, hyperactivity, encephalopathy and ataxia. The lead in the petrol collects in the liver and kidneys, causes brain damage, and permanently damages the body (Yarranma, 1988). The hydrocarbon components in the petrol, when inhaled, can contribute to heart failure and cause sudden death (Collinge, 1991). Between 1981 and 1988 there were 35 deaths that were officially attributed to the use of petrol as an inhalant, although it is likely that this figure is an underestimate (Brady, 1991b).



Some of the studies which look at petrol sniffing in remote communities offer possible explanations as to why Aboriginal youths are engaging in this activity. As has already been mentioned above, the availability of petrol is a very important factor (Brady, 1991a). Youths living in remote areas would have very little access to the drugs that are available to adolescents living in the cities and towns. They may therefore engage in petrol sniffing because they want to get 'out of it' but there's nothing else around.

Other reasons for (or causes of) petrol sniffing suggested by Brady (1988) include the structuring of the education system, lack of direction, isolation, lack of resources and basic facilities, hunger, neglect, the abuse of alcohol by adults, family fragmentation and the peer group. Dipiramo (1991) discusses the fundamental factor of the 'pleasure principle' as a cause, the youths enjoy the effects of inhalation and get pleasure from it, while Brady (1991a) also includes the expression of autonomy and daring that the substance-induced state allows. Unemployment has also been cited as a cause, '...many people believe that boredom or inactivity (make) an environment in which children (experiment) with sniffing' (p. 88, Yarranma, 1988).

While most of the studies in remote communities have focussed almost exclusively on petrol sniffing, some reference to other substances is sometimes made. Kamien (1986), for example, states that in some remote communities alcohol initiation takes place at a very early age:

*'By the age of 7, children are beginning to imitate adults by staggering around the Reserve. By the age of 14 most children have started to drink and by 16 a large percentage are regular drinkers (60).'*

Still, petrol appears to be the major substance of abuse that is examined by researchers in this area.

It is obvious that Aboriginal youths living in remote communities will lead very different lives than those living in the cities and towns, yet there may also be many things that these youths have in common which makes the research conducted in remote areas relevant to those youths living in the more urbanised regions. In particular, why youths sniff petrol in remote communities may offer us some idea as to why it is taken up by youths living in the cities and towns.

Also, as people in these areas have been dealing with the problem longer, they obviously have more knowledge and experience and can provide us with information about strategies that they have found useful in dealing with volatile substance abuse in their communities. Moves that have been made in remote areas include adding unpleasant-smelling additives to fuel, banning petrol engined vehicles, organising sport and other activities, and sending some youths to outstations (Collinge, 1991; Yarranma, 1988). As it is stated in Yarranma, 'it would be a nice twist to black-white relations if the ideas developed by

Aborigines in the desert to cope with their problems found some use in the social problems of the cities' (p. 12, 1988).

In order to gain any understanding of the drinking and drug taking behaviour of Aboriginal youths specifically, we have to look at research that has been carried out by those working in remote communities as basically that is all that has been available to us. Yet just as it is likely that there will be significant differences between the drinking and drug taking behaviour of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal youths who live in the same location, it is also likely that there will be considerable differences between Aboriginal youths living in remote communities and Aboriginal youths living in the cities and towns. It is therefore necessary to conduct research that deals specifically with Aboriginal youths living in the more urbanised areas in order to determine the extent to which they are engaging in drinking and drug taking behaviour.

### 1.2(b) Substance Abuse by Aboriginal Youths Living in Urbanised Areas

Although very little research has been conducted in this area, the New South Wales Aboriginal Education Consultative Group did investigate the extent to which Aboriginal youths engage in drinking and drug taking behaviour by administering questionnaires to 272 school students in two metropolitan and two rural areas (Williams, 1986). Rather than asking directly about the extent to which they drink and take drugs themselves, they questioned the students on the number of young Aboriginal people living in their area that they knew of who were using certain substances. This was done because it was believed that the youths would be reluctant to admit to their own drinking and drug taking behaviour, but would probably be more honest if questions were made indirect and more general.

As Williams (1986) reports, the consumption of alcohol was found to be widespread among young Aboriginal people. Only 13% of the students indicated that they didn't know anyone who drinks alcohol, while 56% stated that they knew at least 20 people or more. Fifty five percent suggested that most of the youths that they had come into contact with who drink are usually younger than 15, with 39% stating that they knew someone younger than 12 years old who drinks alcohol.

When asked whether they knew of any other things that young Aboriginal people drink apart from beer, wine and spirits, the most common answers given were methylated spirits, mixing spirits and wine, and coke and petrol. They were also presented with a list of reasons for drinking and were asked to indicate how important each reason was for Aboriginal youths. To feel part of the group, to feel older and more grown up, and to forget problems were believed to be the most important. Other reasons that they gave themselves included to socialise, to ease pressure, because there's nothing or no-one else to turn to, and because it's a part of life for them.

'Sniffing' was also found to be quite common. Williams (1986) found that 56% of the youths knew at least one young Aboriginal person in their area who sniffed volatile substances, with 14% suggesting that they knew at least 20 people or more. Twenty five percent indicated that the sniffers they knew were usually under the age of 12, with 8% knowing someone younger than 9 years old. Petrol was the most common substance of abuse with 40% knowing someone who sniffed it; followed closely by glue (38%), thinner (28%) and spray cans (19%). There were regional differences in what was being abused and the extent of the abuse, with the rural areas seemingly experiencing a greater problem overall.

Williams (1986) also found that the use of other drugs was quite widespread among Aboriginal youths. Seventy five percent suggested that they knew someone who used drugs, with 36% indicating that they knew at least 20 or more young Aboriginal people. Nearly half of the students who completed the questionnaire suggested that they knew someone under the age of fifteen who had used drugs, with twenty one percent indicating that they knew someone under the age of twelve.

Marijuana was clearly the most commonly used drug, with 75% of students indicating that they knew someone who used it. The use of other drugs, however, was found to be less common. Thirty three percent of the students reported the use of tranquillisers, 19% the use of cocaine, and 19% the use of heroin (Williams, 1986). Other substances that the youths suggested were being abused included tea leaves, speed and hashish. Making them feel part of the group, making them feel more grown up and making them feel good were reported as being the most important reasons for using drugs. Other reasons that the youths gave themselves included because they felt depressed, because of peer pressure, and because they were bored.

Apart from the study by Williams (1986), very few studies have been conducted that have been concerned with substance abuse among urban Aboriginal youths. The Aboriginal Medical Service in New South Wales did write a report on heroin addiction in Sydney (Morgan & Sleight, 1986). However its distribution is restricted and so we will not comment on the findings here. (If people are interested they should contact the A.M.S. and request a copy of the report.)

Williams' (1986) study offers us a clue as to what substances are being abused by Aboriginal youths living in more urban areas. However, the nature of the questions makes it difficult to access the true extent to which alcohol and drug abuse is occurring in the community. In order to find out how many youths are using alcohol and other drugs and the extent to which they are using these substances, we need to ask the youths directly about their own drinking and drug taking behaviour. A study then which does this is necessary in order to determine exactly how widespread substance abuse is among young Aboriginal people living in this community.

## **2. The Relationship Between Substance Abuse and Juvenile Delinquency**

As Hundleby (1987) points out, the suggestion that drug use and delinquency go together can be dated back to early Egyptian and Chinese civilisations and has been the topic of a vast array of research that is still being conducted today. However, very few studies have been carried out that deal with the issue in relation to Aboriginal youths specifically and again, as with the studies on substance abuse, when such studies have been conducted they have concentrated almost exclusively on youths living in remote communities. Some of the studies which deal with youths generally though (not just Aboriginal youths), and some of the studies which look at youths living in remote communities, are relevant to our research. These studies then will be discussed briefly below.

### **2.1. General Studies Of The Relationship Between Substance Abuse and Juvenile Delinquency**

Many studies have found that youths who are delinquent tend to drink more alcohol and take more drugs. Warner (1982), for example, found a significant association between admitted delinquency and both alcohol and marijuana consumption when she administered a questionnaire to urban Australian high school students. Van Kammen, Loeber and Southamer-Loeber (1991) also found a significant relationship between substance abuse and delinquency among young American males, and suggested that even in grades one and four, substance use was indicative of boys who exhibit a wide variety of problem behaviours.

Further evidence that substance abuse and juvenile delinquency are related comes from studies involving juvenile offenders in detention centres. These studies have generally shown that juvenile offenders have a high rate of both alcohol and drug use. In a British study, McMurrin and Hollin (1989) found that 43% of youths in a juvenile detention centre were heavy drinkers and that their level of alcohol consumption was well above the recommended safe level. Dembo, Dertke, Schmeidler and Washburn (1986-87) also found higher levels of alcohol use among juvenile detainees than in the population generally. Sixty two percent of the detainees compared to only 27% of youths in the general population had used alcohol in the month prior to the investigation. They also found that detainees exhibited a relatively high rate of illicit drug use.

In addition, many studies involving youths in detention centres reveal that a substantial proportion of the youths were under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of committing their offence. Hollin (1983) found that 38% of youths in a juvenile detention centre had committed an offence while under the influence of alcohol, while a later study by McMurrin and Hollin (1989) found that 39% of offenders reported some kind of relationship between drinking and offending.

Of particular relevance to our research is a recent study by Putnins and Harvey (1992) in which youths from two of Adelaide's juvenile detention centres (SAYTC and SAYRAC) were interviewed. They found that 72.1% of the youths could be classified as problem drinkers, with 24.4% falling into the 'alcoholic-like' drinking range. Their rate of alcohol consumption was found to be much higher than that of a South Australian student sample, and 56.9% of the detained youths had been drinking at the time of their last offence.

One aspect of the substance abuse-crime link that has not been discussed so far is the extent to which youths commit offences in order to obtain drugs or alcohol. As Dobinson (1989) discusses, many American studies operate within this framework, believing that the primary motivation for committing crimes for many is to support a drug habit. However, the majority of studies which deal with this economically driven crime are usually concerned with 'hard' drugs, particularly heroin. As hard drug use is not common among youths, this explanation may not be particularly relevant in describing juvenile offending. Still, youths have less access to money than adults. This may mean that they need to go out and steal in order to obtain alcohol or marijuana, whereas adults could simply go out and buy whatever they wanted.

The exact nature of the substance abuse-delinquency link is still not known. As Hundleby (1987) reports, longitudinal studies suggest that delinquent behaviour tends to occur prior to drug use although, as Dembo et al. (1986-87) point out, the issue of whether drug use proceeds delinquency is still unresolved. Understanding how alcohol and other drugs are related to delinquency is very important if we want to develop programs to deal with the issue. If youths commit offences to get drugs or because they are under the influence of drugs, then stopping their drinking and drug taking behaviour should stop the youths from engaging in delinquent activities. Yet if substance abuse is just another form of delinquency that shares a common cause with other delinquent activities, then stopping youths from drinking and taking drugs will not stop them from committing crimes (Weisheit, 1984). We need to find out the reasons why the youths use drugs and why they commit crimes so that we can work out strategies to deal with these issues. If we do not do this and only treat the youth's alcohol or drug taking behaviours, we may find that our efforts will do very little in reducing the extent to which these youths become involved in the commission of juvenile crime.

The above offers a brief discussion on general studies that have dealt with the relationship between substance abuse and juvenile delinquency. While these studies may provide us with some important information. We should bear in mind that the nature of the substance abuse - delinquency link may differ from group to group, that is, it may be culture-specific. Studies that are concerned with the nature of the relationship among Aboriginal youths specifically are therefore necessary in order to fully understand the relationship as it applies to them. Though few studies have been carried out in this area, some of the findings will be discussed briefly below.

## 2.2. The Relationship Between Substance Abuse and Juvenile Delinquency Among Aboriginal Youths

As has already been mentioned, most of the literature that deals with the relationship between substance abuse and juvenile delinquency among Aboriginal youths has been devoted almost exclusively to those youths living in remote communities, and again deals primarily with those youths who sniff petrol. Brady (1991a), for example, notes that damaging school buildings is something that is often done by youths who are under the influence of petrol, while Hope (1987) suggests that offences such as car stealing, vandalism, house breaking, larceny and offensive behaviour are often committed by children after they have been 'sniffing'.

In an earlier study, Brady and Morice (1982) examined the adolescent offending behaviour of Aboriginal youths living in a remote community. They suggested that both petrol and alcohol were often used prior to committing offences. Alcohol and petrol were also mentioned by Barber, Walsh and Bradshaw (1989) as being related to Aboriginal juvenile offending by youths on Palm Island. This time, though, offences were committed to get petrol and beer, rather than because the youths were under the influence of alcohol or petrol at the time of committing the offences.

The above discussion briefly describes some of the work that has been conducted in the area of substance abuse and that has been concerned with how substance abuse is related to involvement in juvenile delinquent behaviour. This study examined the relationship as it specifically applies to Aboriginal youths living in and around the Adelaide area. The administration of a school questionnaire allowed us to discover the extent to which Aboriginal youths engage in both substance abuse and delinquent activities, and allowed us to determine whether there was any relationship between alcohol, other drug use, and juvenile crime. By including Non-Aboriginal youths as well, we were able to see whether the nature of the problem differs between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students. In addition, interviews with youths in detention and recreation centres allowed us to better understand the nature of the substance abuse-delinquency link. Through this we were able to gain not only an idea about the extent of the problem, but were also able to gain a better understanding about how substance abuse is related to delinquency, and why youths are turning towards alcohol, drugs and crime.

## Chapter 3.

### The School Study

The first part of our study involved administering a questionnaire to 67 Aboriginal and 91 Non-Aboriginal school students. The age and gender distribution of these students can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1. Number of male and female Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students in each age group.**

Age (years)	Males		Females	
	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
10	-	2	-	-
11	1	12	1	5
12	1	7	2	11
13	7	9	11	1
14	6	6	10	7
15	6	4	7	4
16	5	6	3	8
17	3	2	3	1
18	1	5	-	1
Total	30	53	37	38

The questionnaire was divided into two parts, Section A and Section B. Section A deals with the extent to which the students have used alcohol and other drugs, and with other issues that are related to drinking. It is based largely on the latest DASC questionnaire, which is being developed in collaboration with other researchers in Victoria and New South Wales who are also examining the extent of substance abuse among their own student populations. Because of a suspected link between self concept and the use of alcohol suggested in the research literature, Rosenberg's (1965) test of self-esteem was included in Section A of the questionnaire. In addition to this, the students were also asked whether they had ever used 'phinnies'. Phinnies are a fictional drug that was invented by the researchers. Its use was intended to allow us to estimate the extent to which the students were over-stating their drinking and drug taking behaviour.

Section B contains a measure of the extent to which students have engaged in various delinquent activities. It was modelled on a scale developed by Mak (see Rigby, Mak and Slee, 1989), but also included items from Fagan, Weis and Cheng (1990) as well as others devised specifically for the study. The final part of Section B examines whether alcohol is directly related to delinquency by asking the students if they have ever been drinking before committing particular delinquent activities and the amount of alcohol that they had had to drink before committing these offences "the last time". This allowed us to determine the extent to which students are under the influence of alcohol when they are

involved in certain delinquent behaviours. A copy of the questionnaire can be seen in Appendix 1.

### Administration of the Questionnaire

Before administering the questionnaires, permission was first obtained from the Aboriginal Education Unit and the South Australian Education Department. The majority of the students came from five schools in and around Adelaide. It was intended that more schools would be involved but due to some difficulties which were encountered, we were only able to administer the questionnaires in these schools. We realise that our results may not be as representative of the student population as we had hoped, but believe that our findings do give some indication of the situation among school students in this community, and provide a starting point from which to conduct further studies.

The questionnaire was administered to the students by the project officer and a member of the Aboriginal Sobriety Group. It was divided into two parts and once the students were instructed as to how the questionnaire was to be answered, they were given Section A. Students who completed this section quickly were also given one of two other short exercises to complete (see Appendix 2). The students were given a half an hour to do Section A and once this was done were given a soft drink and were allowed to take a 15 minute break. After the break the students completed Section B. When they had completed everything, Section A, Section B, and any other exercises that the students had completed were put into an unmarked envelope and were sealed before being put into a box. The students were not required to put their names on anything, ensuring that their responses would be completely confidential. After this the students were thanked and given the opportunity to ask questions or make comments.

As has already been mentioned above, we did face some difficulties with the administration of the questionnaire. Some schools felt that the students would be incriminating themselves by filling in the survey, although the fact that no names were to be used would have ensured that this could not have happened. Also, a few of the schools felt that some of the questions were inappropriate and that we should not be asking them. We tried to deal with this by meeting with parent groups and by offering to delete some of the questions if this was desired. Although these meetings went well, some people were still reluctant to have the questionnaire administered in their school. When this occurred we sent the questionnaires home with the students in a postage paid envelope with our address on the front so that their parents or guardians could decide whether or not their children could do the questionnaire. Unfortunately only a few of these questionnaires were returned.

Resistance seemed to come from both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal people. The resistance from the Aboriginal people was particularly understandable. The feeling seemed to be that a lot of research had already been done concerning Aboriginal issues but that very little benefit had arisen from this research so far. They were sceptical of past research and so this made it more difficult for us to



appear credible and to persuade them that our research was useful and would have some practical implications. Also, due to the sensitivity of the issue, some were concerned about questioning the students on their drinking, drug taking and delinquent behaviour. Due to the sensitive nature of the questions, we made it clear to all of the students that they could leave out any of the questions or not do the questionnaire at all if they wished. In fact, most appeared to really enjoy doing the questionnaire and did not express any concern.

Some of the Non-Aboriginal people who were reluctant to participate in the study basically did not want to step on anyone's toes. Issues to do with Aboriginal people are very sensitive and so many people just do not want to get involved in case there are any repercussions. Of course, some Non-Aboriginal people also showed concern about asking the students these questions too. In the future it would be wise to collaborate more with the Aboriginal Education Unit and the schools involved earlier on in the research so that they can have more involvement in the planning of the project. Meetings should also be set up with parent groups so that they can be properly informed and their questions can be answered.

## Results

### 1. The Extent To Which Aboriginal Students Drink Alcohol

The extent to which Aboriginal students reported drinking alcohol was lower than expected, with about half indicating that they never drink at all. Tables 2 to 8 show how often the students report drinking, how often they drink a lot, how many drinks they usually have when they do drink, and the extent to which they have experienced various effects as a result of drinking. The results suggest that many students begin to drink from about the age of fourteen, with over half of the fourteen year olds indicating that they drink alcohol at least every now and then.

**Table 2. How often Aboriginal Students in each age group drink alcohol.**

Age (years)	N	Never	Now and Then	Once or Twice a Week	Almost Every Day	Every Day
11	2	-	2	-	-	-
12	3	2	1	-	-	-
13	18	17	1	-	-	-
14	16	7	8	1	-	-
15	13	4	9	-	-	-
16	8	4	4	-	-	-
17	6	-	6	-	-	-
18	1	-	1	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Table 3. How often Aboriginal students in each age group have "a lot to drink".**

Age (years)	N	Never	Now and Then	Once or Twice a Week	Almost Every Day	Every Day
11	2	1	1	-	-	-
12	3	3	-	-	-	-
13	18	17	1	-	-	-
14	16	10	5	1	-	-
15	13	8	5	-	-	-
16	8	6	2	-	-	-
17	6	-	6	-	-	-
18	1	1	-	-	-	-
Total	67	46	20	1	0	0

**Table 4. The number of drinks usually consumed by Aboriginal students when they drink alcohol.**

Age (years)	N	Never Drink	1 or 2	2-5	5-10	10 or more
11	2	1	1	-	-	-
12	3	3	-	-	-	-
13	18	17	-	-	1	-
14	16	7	5	3	1	-
15	13	4	7	-	2	-
16	8	4	2	-	2	-
17	6	-	-	1	3	2
18	1	-	1	-	-	-
Total	67	36	16	4	9	2

**Table 5. How often Aboriginal students in each age group have felt "merry or happy" as a result of drinking.**

Age	N	Never	Once Only	A few times	Fairly Often	Very Often
11	2	2	-	-	-	-
12	2	1	-	-	-	1
13	14	12	-	1	-	1
14	14	7	1	3	1	2
15	12	4	1	5	-	2
16	7	3	1	2	1	-
17	6	-	1	2	3	-
18	1	-	1	-	-	-
Total	58	29	5	13	5	6

**Table 6. How often Aboriginal students in each age group have felt a "bit drunk or funny" as a result of drinking.**

Age	N	Never	Once Only	A few times	Fairly Often	Very Often
11	1	1	-	-	-	-
12	1	1	-	-	-	-
13	11	9	-	1	-	1
14	12	6	5	1	-	-
15	11	5	1	5	-	-
16	5	3	-	1	1	-
17	6	-	-	3	3	-
18	0	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>

**Table 7. How often Aboriginal students in each age group have felt "very drunk or sick" as a result of drinking.**

Age	N	Never	Once Only	A few times	Fairly Often	Very Often
11	1	1	-	-	-	-
12	1	1	-	-	-	-
13	11	9	1	1	-	-
14	12	7	-	5	-	-
15	10	6	2	2	-	-
16	5	3	1	-	1	-
17	6	1	4	1	-	-
18	0	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

**Table 8. How often Aboriginal students in each age group have "passed out or fainted" as a result of drinking.**

Age	N	Never	Once Only	A few times	Fairly Often	Very Often
11	1	1	-	-	-	-
12	1	1	-	-	-	-
13	11	10	-	1	-	-
14	12	12	-	-	-	-
15	8	8	-	-	-	-
16	5	5	-	-	-	-
17	6	5	1	-	-	-
18	0	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

A cause for concern was the fact that 31.3% of the students reported that at least every now and then they have a lot to drink. Again it was at the age of 14 that this began to occur, with over a third of the fourteen year olds reporting that they sometimes drink a lot. Mawby et al.(1991) suggest that those who consume five

or more drinks at a time can be described as 'binge' drinkers. Our results indicate that 35.5% of those students who drink usually have between five and ten glasses or more at a time, suggesting that a large proportion of the students are engaging in this activity. This is further supported by the fact that 21.8% of the students who answered the question reported having been very drunk or sick as a result of drinking at least a few times. Our results then seem to suggest that overall the number of Aboriginal students who drink alcohol is fairly low, although from about the age of fourteen onwards a large proportion begin to take it up, with many of these drinking large amounts of alcohol when they do drink.

Table 12 in Appendix 3 offers us some ideas about why the students drink alcohol. By far the most common reason given for drinking was 'to see what it's like'. This was followed by 'because I always have more fun when I'm drunk'; 'because I hate a lot of things about my life, drinking lets me escape and forget'; and 'to relieve stress'.

## 2. Comparison Of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Students In The Extent To Which they Drink Alcohol

Due to the fact that there were a large number of grade six and seven Non-Aboriginal students but very few Aboriginal students of the same age who completed the questionnaire, high school students only were used to make comparisons between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal youths in the extent to which they drink alcohol. A t-test revealed that there was no significant difference in the age distribution of Aboriginal ( $X=14.57$ ) and Non-Aboriginal ( $X=15.06$ ) high school students, ( $t=-1.77$ ,  $df=107$ ,  $p(2\text{-tail})=.08$ ). As there was also a similar proportion of male and female Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students, this comparison appears appropriate.

The assumption that Aboriginal students drink more than Non-Aboriginal students was not supported by our findings. In fact, chi-square tests revealed that Non-Aboriginal students actually reported having consumed alcohol significantly more times and that they drink significantly more often than their Aboriginal counterparts (see Tables 9 and 10).

Table 9. Number of times that Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal high school students have had one or more alcoholic drinks.

No. of times	Never	A Few Times	Lots of Times
Aboriginal	26	25	9
Non-Aboriginal	8	28	13

chi-square=9.41, df=2,  $p<.01$

**Table 10. How often Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal high school students drink alcohol.**

How often drink alcohol	Never	At least every now and then
Aboriginal	29	31
Non-Aboriginal	8	40

chi-square=11.87, df=1, p<.001

There was no significant difference, however, between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students in the number of drinks that they usually have when they do drink, or in the extent to which they drink a lot (see Tables 11 and 12). Also, even though Non-Aboriginal students reported feeling a little bit drunk significantly more often than Aboriginal students, there was no difference in the extent to which they have felt very drunk, had been sick or passed out as a result of drinking (see Tables 13 to 15).

**Table 11. Number of drinks consumed by Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal high school students when they drink alcohol.**

No. of drinks	1-2	2-5	10+
Aboriginal	15	4	11
Non-Aboriginal	15	6	14

chi-square=0.38, df=2, p>.05

**Table 12. How often Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal high school students have a lot to drink.**

How often drink a lot	Never	Now and Then
Aboriginal	40	20
Non-Aboriginal	22	27

chi-square=5.26, df=2, p>.05

**Table 13. How often Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal high school students have felt a bit drunk or funny as a result of drinking.**

How often	never	at least once
Aboriginal	23	18
Non-Aboriginal	15	17

chi-square=0.2, df=1, p>.05

**Table 14. How often Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal high school students have felt very drunk or sick as a result of drinking.**

How often	never	at least once
Aboriginal	26	17
Non-Aboriginal	20	14

chi-square=1.87, df=1, p>.05

**Table 15. How often Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal high school students have passed out or fainted as a result of drinking.**

How often	never	once or a few times	fairly often or very often
Aboriginal	40	2	0
Non-Aboriginal	32	5	0

chi-square=2.38, df=2, p>.05

The results suggest, then, that although Non-Aboriginal students may drink more often than Aboriginal students, there is no difference in the extent to which they report getting drunk.

### 3. Illicit Drug Use

Among the Aboriginal students, 43.3% reported that they had tried marijuana, with 10.4% reporting that they use marijuana all the time and a further 14.9% indicating that they use it occasionally (see Table 16). This number is large in comparison to the DASC studies which found that less than 22% of the students surveyed in any year reported that they had ever used dope (Neill et al., 1991). The number of Non-Aboriginal students who reported that they had tried marijuana (29.7%) was more in line with the results found by Neill et al. (1991). However, the difference between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal high school students in the extent to which they reported having used marijuana was not statistically significant (see Table 17).

**Table 16. Extent of marijuana use by Aboriginal students in each age group.**

Age	N	Ever Used	Tried it Once or Twice	Occasionally	All the Time
11	2	-	-	-	-
12	3	1	-	1	-
13	18	4	2	1	1
14	16	8	5	1	2
15	13	5	1	4	-
16	8	6	1	2	3
17	6	4	2	1	1
18	1	1	1	-	-
Total	67	29	12	10	7

**Table 17. Extent of marijuana use by Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal high school students.**

	Never Used	Tried it Once or Twice	Occasionally	All the Time
Aboriginal	31	12	10	7
Non-Aboriginal	31	5	9	4

chi-square=2.67, df=3, p>.05

Use of the other drugs was not common, although 11.9% of the Aboriginal students reported that they had tried 'sniffing'. This did not differ significantly, however, from the extent to which the Non-Aboriginal students reported having abused volatile substances. The extent to which the students reported that they had used other drugs can be seen in Tables 18 and 19. These results suggest that only a few of the Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students have ever used any of the 'harder' drugs. None said that they had ever used the fictional drug 'phinnies', suggesting that the students were probably not over-stating the extent to which they use alcohol and other substances.

**Table 18. The number of Aboriginal students in each age group who have ever used the following substances.**

Age	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Volatile Substances	-	1	2	2	1	1	1	-
Tranquillisers	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
Steroids	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Amphetamines	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Cocaine/Crack	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Narcotics	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-
Hallucinogens	-	-	-	2	1	-	1	-

**Table 19. The number of Non-Aboriginal students in each age group who have ever used the following substances.**

Age	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Volatile Substances	-	2	2	-	2	1	-	-	-
Tranquillisers	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Steroids	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Amphetamines	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2
Cocaine/Crack	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Narcotics	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Hallucinogens	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	2

#### 4. Involvement in Delinquent Activities

In order to determine the extent to which the students had been involved in delinquent activities, answers given by the students to questions in Section B about their delinquent behaviour were scored and added together to provide an overall delinquency scale. The answers were scored as follows: if the students said that they'd 'never' been involved in the activity they were given a score of 1. If they said they had done it 'once or a few times' they were given a score of 2; and if they said they'd done it 'lots of times' they were given a score of 3. The scores for all of the items were summed and then averaged (the students had to answer at least sixty seven percent of the questions for the average to be calculated). This provided a total Overall Delinquency Score for each student.

In addition to this, we sought to distinguish between delinquent activities which are of a serious nature and those activities which are not as serious. To do this, five independent judges rated whether they thought each item on the delinquency scale was 'not serious', 'fairly serious' or 'very serious'. If the judges did not agree closely on which category an item belonged to, it was excluded. Responses given to these items were also added together and the average was found to give the Minor Delinquency Score, the Moderate Delinquency Score and the Serious Delinquency Score. Appendix 4 shows which items were put into each category.

Finally, we identified items which involved acts of aggression towards other people. Scores on these items were averaged to give the Inter-personal Aggression Score. The items that were included in this category can also be seen in Appendix 4.

The reliability of each scale was computed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients. This provides a measure of the internal consistency of the scales. These were as follows:

Delinquency Type	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Overall Delinquency	56	0.96
Minor Delinquency	12	0.85
Moderate Delinquency	27	0.94
Serious Delinquency	13	0.87
Interpersonal Aggression	11	0.87

These results indicate that all of the scales showed good levels of reliability.



**Table 20. Mean Delinquency scores for male and female Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students.**

	Males		Females	
	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Overall Delinquency	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.3
Minor Delinquency	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7
Moderate Delinquency	1.6	1.3	1.4	1.3
Serious Delinquency	1.4	1.1	1.2	1.1
Interpersonal Aggression	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.2

Mean scores for male and female Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students are given in Table 20. ANOVAs were used to determine if there were any differences in the level of delinquency between these two subgroups (details are given in Table 1, Appendix 4). Overall there was no gender difference in the extent to which the students reported having been involved in delinquent activities. However, males were significantly more likely to have been involved in delinquent acts that are of a more serious nature than females, and were also significantly more likely to have acted aggressively towards other people.

Overall there was no difference in the extent to which Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students reported having been involved in delinquent activities. However, Aboriginal students did report having been involved in moderate and serious delinquent activities significantly more often than Non-Aboriginal students, and also reported a significantly higher level of involvement in acts of interpersonal aggression. Table 21 shows the number of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students who reported that they had been involved in particular delinquent behaviours. These items were selected because a relatively large number of students admitted to having been involved in these activities. As can be seen, quite a large number of Aboriginal students admitted to having committed quite serious offences. The number of Aboriginal compared to Non-Aboriginal students who admitted to having broken into a house, shop or school, for example, was very high.

**Table 21. Numbers of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal high school students reporting involvement in selected delinquent acts.**

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Wagged school.	39 (65%)	26 (53.1%)
Gone to school drunk or "high".	14 (23.3%)	16 (32.7%)
Got a detention.	38 (63.3%)	37 (75.5%)
*Put graffiti on walls, etc.	37 (61.7%)	20 (40.8)
Damaged public property.	22 (36.7%)	11 (22.4%)
*Shop-lifted.	40 (66.7%)	22 (44.9%)
*Run off with someone's bag.	11 (18.3%)	2 (4.1%)
Stolen more than \$10	19 (31.7%)	11 (22.4%)
Stolen over \$50's worth.	11 (18.3%)	8 (16.3%)
Been in a fist fight.	29 (48.3%)	17 (34.7%)
Hurt someone badly.	21 (35%)	13 (26.5%)
*Started a serious fight.	28 (46.7%)	11 (22.4%)
*Broken into a house.	17 (28.8%)	3 (6.1%)
*Broken into a shop.	11 (18.6%)	0 (0%)
*Broken into a school.	17 (28.3%)	3 (6.1%)

Note

1. \* indicates areas in which Aboriginal students report significantly more offending,  $p < .05$ .

It must be remembered that although the results were obtained from Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students who were studying in the same school environments, they were obtained from a relatively small number of respondents. The extent to which they are generalizable to the wider community is not known. Also, we would like to make it clear that we are not suggesting that there is something inherent in being Aboriginal that makes it more likely that the youths will act in a delinquent manner. Rather, we would like to suggest that the social situation in which many Aboriginal youths find themselves makes it more likely that they will become involved in delinquent activities.

It was found, for example, that the Mothers and Fathers of Aboriginal students were significantly more likely to be unemployed or on a pension than were those of the Non-Aboriginal students (see Tables 2 and 3, Appendix 4). Of the students who answered the question, 36% of Aboriginal compared to only 14% of Non-Aboriginal students indicated that their fathers were unemployed or on a

pension. Forty four percent of the Aboriginal students suggested that this was true for their mothers, compared to only 23% of those who were Non-Aboriginal. Having an unemployed mother was found to be related to involvement in delinquent activities, with those youths who indicated that their mother was on a pension or receiving unemployment benefits having a significantly higher level of both moderate delinquency and interpersonal aggression, regardless of whether they were Aboriginal or not (See Table 4, Appendix 4). As more Aboriginal students had a mother who was unemployed or on a pension then, this factor may help account for the differences in delinquency found between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students.

Also, far fewer Aboriginal students reported that they usually lived with both of their parents (see Table 5, Appendix 4). While 74% of the Non-Aboriginal students indicated that they usually live with both their mother and their father, this was found to be true for only 47% of the Aboriginal students. Living with both parents was found to be associated with having a significantly lower level of delinquency and interpersonal aggression, again regardless of whether the students were Aboriginal or not (see Table 6, Appendix 4). The fact, then, that fewer Aboriginal students live in traditional two parent - nuclear family situations, and that more of them come from 'broken homes', may also contribute towards the higher proportion of Aboriginal youths who are involved in acts of more serious delinquent behaviour.

Here we have pointed to two social factors that may contribute towards involvement in delinquent activities. Having an unemployed mother or one who is on a pension was found to be related to a higher level of delinquent behaviour. This may be due to the economic disadvantages that these youths could experience as a result of their mother being out of work. Living with both parents, in contrast, was found to be related to a lower level of delinquency. In relation to both of these factors, Aboriginal youths are disadvantaged. There is a much higher level of unemployment among Aboriginal people, and Aboriginal youths are much more likely to have suffered a breakdown of the family unit. It is these and other social factors that contribute towards Aboriginal involvement in delinquent activities. These factors affect all youths, but because Aboriginal youths are more disadvantaged in these ways, they are more affected by them. Further supportive evidence was discovered when conducting interviews with youths in both the recreational and correctional centres. How such social factors contribute towards delinquency will be discussed in later sections of this report.

## **5. The Relationship Between Substance Abuse and Juvenile Delinquency**

In order to determine the extent to which various factors contribute towards young people's involvement in delinquent activities, multiple regression analyses were used. The factors that we wanted to consider were alcohol use, age, gender, and whether the students were Aboriginal or not. If the students said that they never drink alcohol they were given a score of 1; if they said that they drink at least 'every now and then' they were given a score of 2. In order to calculate the effect of the gender variable, males were given a score of 1 and females a score of 2. Similarly, Aboriginal students were given a score of 1, while a score of 2 was

given to those who were Non-Aboriginal. These factors, together with the student's age, were entered into the multiple regression to determine the extent to which alcohol use, age, gender and being Aboriginal contributed individually and jointly towards involvement in delinquent activities and interpersonal aggression.

The results of the regression analysis can be seen in Table 22.

**Table 22. Results for correlation and multiple regression analyses on five measures of self-reported delinquency for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students.**

Correlation (r) and beta coefficients										
Delinquency measure										
Predictor Variables	Minor		Moderate		Serious		Overall Delinquency		Interpersonal Aggression	
	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta
Age	.39**	.32**	.32**	.20*	.30**	.17*	.36**	.24**	.23**	ns
Ever Drink Alcohol	.31**	.21**	.25**	.25**	.19*	.22**	.28**	.26**	.18*	.27**
Whether Aboriginal	ns	ns	-.19*	.23**	-.30**	-.34**	-.18*	-.21**	-.20**	-.33**
Gender	ns	ns	ns	-.16*	ns	-.19**	ns	-.15*	-.17*	-.23**
Multiple R	.44		.43		.47		.46		.41	
*Sig of R	<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001	
*Degrees of freedom	2,154		4,152		4,152		4,151		3,153	

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01

First, alcohol use was found to be a significant predictor of all of the delinquency types, including interpersonal aggression. In addition to this, whether the students were Aboriginal or not and also gender each were found to significantly predict involvement in all of the delinquency types except for minor delinquent activities. Age was found to significantly predict involvement in all of the levels of delinquency, except for acts of interpersonal aggression. What this suggests, then, is that those students who drink are more likely to be involved in delinquent activities, as are those who are older, those who are male, and those who are Aboriginal.

As such a large proportion of the students indicated that they had used marijuana, we decided to conduct a further analysis with marijuana use in place of alcohol use in the regression analysis to see if it too predicted involvement in delinquent activities. When this was done we found that marijuana use did significantly predict involvement in all of the delinquency types, including interpersonal aggression (see Table 23).

**Table 23. Results for correlation and multiple regression analyses on five measures of self-reported delinquency for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students when marijuana use was included in the analyses.**

Correlation (r) and beta coefficients										
Delinquency measure										
Predictor Variables	Minor		Moderate		Serious		Overall Delinquency		Interpersonal Aggression	
	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta
Age	.39**	.23**	.32**	ns	.30**	ns	.36**	.15*	.23**	ns
Marijuana Use	.47**	.37**	.55**	.55**	.48**	.45**	.56**	.49**	.39**	.37**
Whether Aboriginal	ns	ns	-.19*	ns	-.30**	-.26**	-.18*	ns	-.20**	-.22**
Gender	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	-.18**	ns	ns	-.17*	-.21**
Multiple R	.51		.55		.57		.57		.48	
Sig of R	<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001	
Degrees of freedom	2,155		1,156		3,154		2,154		3,154	

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01

To summarise then, those students who were older and those who were male were found to have a higher level of delinquency. Also, being Aboriginal was found to be associated with higher delinquency. Again we would like to stress that we are not implying by this that Aboriginal youths are inherently more delinquent but rather that certain social factors appear to disadvantage Aboriginal youths and make it more likely that they will engage in certain delinquent activities. In addition to the factors already mentioned, alcohol and marijuana use were found to be related to delinquency. In fact, while being Aboriginal, gender and age were significantly associated with delinquency and interpersonal aggression, marijuana use in particular was found to be much more important.

In order to determine whether there is any difference in the nature of the relationship between substance abuse and delinquency for the Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students, separate multiple regression analyses were performed independently for each group. Alcohol use was found to be a significant predictor of involvement in all of the delinquency types for the Aboriginal students however, including interpersonal aggression (see Table 24). In addition to this, age was found to significantly predict involvement in minor delinquent activities, while gender was found to be associated with aggressive behaviour. For the Non-Aboriginal students though, alcohol use was not found to be significantly related to involvement in any of the delinquency types. Age was the only factor that predicted all of the levels of delinquency, and gender was significantly associated with involvement in serious delinquent activities only (see Table 25).

**Table 24. Results for correlation and multiple regression analyses on five measures of self-reported delinquency for Aboriginal students.**

Correlation (r) and beta coefficients										
Delinquency measure										
Predictor Variables	Minor		Moderate		Serious		Overall Delinquency		Interpersonal Aggression	
	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta
Age	.40**	.29*	.27*	ns	.30*	ns	.34**	ns	ns	ns
Ever Drink Alcohol	.39**	.28*	.36**	.36**	.33**	.33**	.38**	.38**	.30*	.32**
Gender	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	-.27*	-.29*
Multiple R	.47		.36		.33		.38		.42	
Sig of R	<.001		.003		.006		.001		.002	
Degrees of freedom	2,64		1,65		1,65		1,65		2,64	

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01

**Table 25. Results for correlation and multiple regression analyses on five measures of self-reported delinquency for Non-Aboriginal students.**

Correlation (r) and beta coefficients										
Delinquency measure										
Predictor Variables	Minor		Moderate		Serious		Overall Delinquency		Interpersonal Aggression	
	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta
Age	.40**	.40**	.33**	.33**	.34**	.35**	.39**	.39**	.24*	.24*
Ever Drink Alcohol	.27*	ns	.25*	ns	.22*	ns	.28**	ns	ns	ns
Gender	ns	ns	ns	ns	-.21*	-.23*	ns	ns	ns	ns
Multiple R	.40		.33		.41		.39		.24	
Sig of R	<.001		.002		<.001		<.001		.02	
Degrees of freedom	1,88		1,88		2,87		1,87		1,88	

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01

The results, particularly those showing the significance of beta coefficients, indicate that alcohol use is a significant factor involved in delinquent activities for Aboriginal students but not for those who are Non-Aboriginal. Analyses were next conducted to see whether there was an 'interaction effect' between whether the students were Aboriginal or not and the use of alcohol, such that a differential relationship might be evident. Only for 'Serious Delinquency' was the interaction effect significant. The results from this analysis can be seen in Table 26.

**Table 26. Means of the Serious Delinquency score for those Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students who do and do not drink alcohol.**

	Never drink alcohol	Drink alcohol
Aboriginal	1.2	1.4
Non-Aboriginal	1.1	1.1

**ANOVA results:**

	df	Mean Square	F	Sig of F
<b>covariates</b>				
AGE	1	1.12	18.01	.001
<b>main effects</b>	3	.54	8.77	.001
GENDER	1	.44	7.13	.008
ABORIGINAL	1	1.24	20.08	.001
DRINKING	1	.5	8.08	.005
<b>2-way interactions</b>	3	.13	2.09	.10
GENDER BY ABORIGINAL	1	.07	1.12	.29
GENDER BY DRINKING	1	.06	1.04	.31
ABORIGINAL BY DRINKING	1	.34	5.41	.02
<b>3-way interaction</b>				
GENDER BY ABORIGINAL BY DRINKING	1	.004	.06	.81

As in the previous analysis, age, gender, being Aboriginal, and alcohol use were each found to be significant predictors of involvement in serious delinquent activities. What this analysis adds is the further finding that there was a significant interaction effect between being Aboriginal and drinking. The combination of alcohol use (not in itself greater for Aboriginal students) and being Aboriginal was particularly likely to make a contribution towards serious delinquency. It would seem, then, that drinking has an effect on Aboriginal involvement in serious delinquent activities that it does not have on those youths who are Non-Aboriginal.

Finally, we considered the results for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students separately when marijuana use was substituted for alcohol use in the multiple regression analyses for each of the delinquency types. For both the Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students, marijuana use was found to be a significant predictor of overall, minor, moderate and serious delinquency, as well as interpersonal aggression (see Tables 27 and 28). ANOVAs did not reveal any interaction effects between whether the students were Aboriginal or not, drug use or delinquency, indicating that the marijuana does not have a differential effect on delinquency for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students.

**Table 27. Results for correlation and multiple regression analyses on five measures of self-reported delinquency for Aboriginal students when marijuana use was included in the analyses.**

Correlation (r) and beta coefficients										
Delinquency measure										
Predictor Variables	Minor		Moderate		Serious		Overall Delinquency		Interpersonal Aggression	
	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta
Age	.40**	.28*	.27*	ns	.30*	ns	.34**	ns	ns	ns
Marijuana Use	.45**	.37**	.49**	.49**	.47**	.47**	.51**	.51**	.35**	.35**
Gender	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	-.27*	-.27*
Multiple R	.53		.49		.47		.51		.44	
Sig of R	<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001		.001	
Degrees of freedom	2,64		1,65		1,65		1,65		2,64	

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01

**Table 28. Results for correlation and multiple regression analyses on five measures of self-reported delinquency for Non-Aboriginal students when marijuana use was included in the analyses.**

Correlation (r) and beta coefficients										
Delinquency measure										
Predictor Variables	Minor		Moderate		Serious		Overall Delinquency		Interpersonal Aggression	
	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta	r	beta
Age	.40**	ns	.33**	ns	.34**	ns	.39**	ns	.24*	ns
Marijuana Use	.49**	.49**	.59**	.59**	.55**	.56**	.60**	.60**	.42**	.42**
Gender	ns	ns	ns	ns	-.21*	-.23**	ns	ns	ns	ns
Multiple R	.49		.59		.59		.60		.42	
Sig of R	<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001	
Degrees of freedom	1,89		1,89		2,88		1,88		1,89	

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01,

To summarise the main findings of the regression analyses, marijuana use was found to be associated with all levels of delinquent behaviour for both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students. The more extensive the use of marijuana, the more likely it was that the youths had been involved in delinquent activities and acts of interpersonal aggression. Alcohol use, however, appeared to be more important for predicting Aboriginal involvement in acts of delinquency. For serious delinquency in particular, there appears to be a relationship between drinking and involvement in these activities for



Aboriginal youths that does not appear to exist for those youths who are Non-Aboriginal.

## 6. Delinquent Behaviour While Under The Influence Of Alcohol

The final part of the questionnaire asked the students to indicate how often they had been involved in certain delinquent behaviours, whether they had ever been drinking alcohol before taking part in these activities, and how much alcohol they had had to drink before committing these offences the last time. Table 29 summarises the results relating to whether students have ever been drinking prior to committing a delinquent act.

**Table 29. Number of students who reported having engaged or not engaged in specific delinquent activities, and whether the offenders had ever been drinking alcohol before committing the act.**

Delinquent Activity	ABORIGINAL		NON-ABORIGINAL			
	offenders (drinking) yes	non- offenders no	offenders (drinking) yes	non- offenders no		
Fighting	8	33	25	7	39	39
Beating someone up	4	23	38	5	23	61
*Using force to get something	4	8	54	2	4	82
*Stealing a car	3	5	59	0	3	86
*Break and enter	4	9	52	1	3	85
*Damaging public property	5	26	35	3	20	63

**Note**

1. \* indicates areas in which Aboriginal students report significantly more offending,  $p < .05$ .
2. Proportion of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students reporting having been drinking before the reported activity were all non-significant,  $p > .05$ .

First, the results suggest (as did Table 21) that Aboriginal students are significantly more likely to have been involved in using threats or force to get something from somebody, stealing a car, committing a break and enter, and putting graffiti on or damaging public property. Again we would like to make it clear that we are not suggesting by this that Aboriginal youths are inherently more delinquent. As has already been mentioned, we believe that certain social factors disadvantage Aboriginal youths and make it more likely that they will become involved in certain delinquent activities.

It is clear from these results that only a minority of students had ever been drinking alcohol before committing any of the delinquent acts; for example, about one fifth reported having ever been drinking before fighting, one quarter

prior to engaging in such activities as stealing a car and break and enter crimes. The differences between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal youth were not significant in this regard. Further analyses of data relating to the amount of alcohol consumed before engaging in delinquent acts did not yield any significant differences between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal youth either. It must, however, be explained that the samples of youth reporting delinquent acts in this study were quite small, and tests of differences between the two groups could not therefore be very powerful.

These results, although based on small numbers, suggest that for neither Aboriginal nor Non-Aboriginal youths is alcohol use a common precursor to committing delinquent acts. We had expected to find that a large proportion of both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students who had committed offences would have been under the influence of alcohol at the time, but instead found that the majority of students had never been drinking prior to taking part in any of these delinquent activities. One possibility for these results is that alcohol is not as big a factor as we had first assumed it to be. During the interviews (which will be discussed later), it became apparent to us that young people do not drink as much as we had originally believed but that the extent of marijuana use is far greater than what we had expected. The results from our questionnaire also indicated that marijuana use is very extensive among both the Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students surveyed in our study. So while the youths may not have been drunk at the time of committing these offences, there is the possibility that they may have been "stoned". Another possibility is that alcohol is not causatively linked to delinquency in a direct way but that the relationship is much more complex than this. The simple idea then that we had, that young people (whether Aboriginal or not) go out and get into trouble because they're drunk, was not supported by these results.

## 7. Other Relationships

### Self-esteem

It has been suggested that self-esteem may play a significant role in understanding the relationship between substance abuse, being Aboriginal and delinquency. In this study, self-esteem was assessed using a reliable 10-item measure with good internal consistency ( $\alpha=.78$ ). Mean scores for self-esteem are given in Table 30 for the Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal and gender subgroups.

**Table 30. Mean self-esteem scores for male and female Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students.**

	Aboriginal			Non-Aboriginal		
	mean	sd	N	mean	sd	N
<b>Males</b>	3.68	.53	28	3.66	.58	51
<b>Females</b>	3.19	.63	32	3.30	.66	38

An ANOVA revealed that there was no significant difference between the self-esteem of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students (see Table 31). This result may appear surprising in view of the suggestions that have been made in the literature that Aboriginal people have relatively low self-esteem. Males in general, however, had a higher level of self-esteem than females, which is consistent with past findings. Further analyses correlating self-esteem with other variables indicated that neither drinking nor taking drugs was related to self-esteem and that, in general, self-esteem was not related to involvement in delinquent activities. It may be concluded then that self-esteem does not play a significant part in explaining the causes or effects of substance abuse, or in explaining the differences between the results found for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students.

**Table 31. ANOVA results-The effects of gender and whether the students are Aboriginal or not on self-esteem.**

	df	Mean Square	F	Sig of F
<b>main effects</b>	2	3.28	9	<.001
<b>GENDER</b>	1	6.26	17.2	<.001
<b>ABORIGINAL</b>	1	.08	.21	.65
<b>2-way interaction</b>				
<b>GENDER BY ABORIGINAL</b>	1	.15	.41	.52

### Attitudes towards drinking

Tables 13, 14, 22 and 23 in Appendix 3 show the responses given by the students to questions which deal with attitudes towards drinking. The majority of both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students agreed that it was okay to get drunk if people only did it every now and then, although most felt that it was wrong for people to get really drunk all of the time.

The majority of these students did not feel that sometimes after they have been drinking they find that they are looking for a thrill. Very few students suggested that alcohol sometimes makes them aggressive. However, the majority of both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students did agree that alcohol does make people violent, and most also agreed that alcohol makes people not care about what they're doing and makes them more likely to break the law.

### Drinking behaviour of others

Tables 16, 17, 18 and 19 in Appendix 3 show how many of the student's friends drink alcohol, how often their friends drink, and how often their parents drink. Thirty five percent of the Aboriginal students indicated that most of their friends do drink alcohol (if not all of them), with 23% indicating that they drink at least once or twice a week. There was no significant difference found between the extent to which the friends of Aboriginal students and the friends of Non-Aboriginal students were reported to consume alcohol.

The majority of Aboriginal students indicated that their father never drank alcohol or only drank every now and then, although eleven of the fifty-nine students who answered this question suggested that their father drinks every day or at least almost every day. Again the majority of students indicated that their mother only drinks every now and then if at all, with only ten of the students indicating that their mother drinks fairly regularly. As was the case with their friends, there was no significant difference found between the parental drinking behaviour of the Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students. This finding is important, because it runs counter to the myth that among groups of Aboriginal people, drinking alcohol is a much more common activity.

### The Concept of Blame

The students were asked whether they thought someone should be blamed for doing something wrong if they were really drunk when they did it. The results for this question can be seen in Table 32.

**Table 32. Numbers of students who thought someone should be blamed for doing something wrong if they were drunk at the time.**

	Yes	No
Aboriginal	22	10
Non-Aboriginal	44	10

chi-square=1.82, df=1, p>.05

A relatively large proportion of students did not commit themselves to a definite answer on this question. Of those who did though, no significant difference was found between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students in their responses. In general, most students believed someone should be blamed. However, students

who indicated that they had committed offences while under the influence of alcohol and who had been drinking before committing an offence on the last occasion were significantly more likely to say that someone should not be blamed for doing something wrong if they were drunk when they did it (see Tables 33 & 34). Generally, then, the students felt that someone should be blamed for doing something even if they were drunk at the time, although those students who have committed offences while under the influence of alcohol are more likely to view being drunk as an acceptable excuse.

**Table 33. Drinking before committing an offence and whether the students believed someone should be blamed for doing something wrong if they were drunk at the time.**

Should be blamed:	Yes	No
Never been drinking before committing an offence	40	7
Have been drinking before committing an offence.	7	8

chi-square=9.16, df=1, p<.01

**Table 34. The amount of alcohol consumed before committing an offence the last time and whether or not the students thought someone should be blamed for doing something wrong if they were drunk at the time.**

Should be blamed:	Yes	No
No alcohol	44	9
A bit of alcohol	3	6

chi-square=10.36, df=1, p<.01

The students were also asked to indicate why they thought someone should or should not be blamed for doing something wrong if they were really drunk when they did it. The results for Aboriginal students can be seen in Table 15, Appendix 3. Reasons given for blaming someone included: 'it's no excuse, they're still responsible', and 'they shouldn't have got drunk in the first place'. The main reason given for not blaming someone was that 'sometimes they don't know what they're doing'. Students also offered explanations as to why they didn't know whether someone should be blamed for doing something wrong, with a couple suggesting that 'it would depend on the situation' as to whether drunkenness excuses the drunk person's behaviour.

In summary then, no differences were found between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students with respect to the responsibility people who drink alcohol have for their behaviour. This difference was between those who drink and those who do not, regardless of racial group, with those who commit offences while under the influence of alcohol, having less responsible attitudes.

## Relations with the police

Thirty-five percent of Aboriginal and 22.4% of Non-Aboriginal high school students claimed that they had been picked up by the police for something that they didn't do. Although a higher proportion of Aboriginal students indicated that this had happened to them, the difference was not significant (chi-square=4.23, df=2,  $p>.05$ ). In addition to this, 18.3% of Aboriginal and 10.2% of Non-Aboriginal high school students claimed to have been pushed around or hit by the police. Again the difference between the two groups was not significant (chi-square=1.43, df=2,  $p>.05$ ). The fact that any of the students reported having been hit by the police is quite disturbing. Relations with the police will be examined more fully when the results from the interviews are discussed.

## Chapter 4.

### Interviews With The Police

Six members of the police department from different locations around Adelaide were contacted by telephone and told about the study and its purpose. They were asked if they would mind talking to us confidentially over the phone about the types of things that they come into contact with in their line of work - specifically in relation to Aboriginal youths, substance abuse and juvenile offending. If they agreed, the conversations were tape recorded. If not, notes were taken.

The officers were asked about the types of drugs that they are coming into contact with and the ages of the Aboriginal youths who are abusing these substances. They were also asked whether they thought substance abuse was related to juvenile offending and were asked to explain the nature of this connection if they thought that it did exist. Specifically, the officers were questioned about the types of crimes that youths commit when they are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, and whether they believe that certain drugs are associated with certain types of crime. In addition, the officers were asked to speculate about why youths abuse drugs, and were asked if they believed that there were other reasons why youths become involved in juvenile offending.

### Results

The six members of the police force who were interviewed over the telephone indicated that a lot of the Aboriginal youths who they come into contact with are under the influence of alcohol at the time and that marijuana use is also very extensive among the Aboriginal youth population. When asked how young these youths were, most said that they were about fourteen years of age or older, although one officer indicated that they had seen youths as young as eight years old affected by both alcohol and marijuana.

Many of the officers also indicated that they are concerned about a number of youths who are sniffing glue. Sniffing butane gas was identified by one officer as being a problem in their community. A few felt that 'other drug use' was not very common among young Aboriginal people, although some of the officers suggested that a number of the youths are taking rohypnols. One suggested that some of the youths who are picked up show signs that they've been taking speed. Heroin use, however, was not seen as being widespread among Aboriginal youths, although there was some concern that it is becoming a problem for young Aboriginal people once they are about eighteen years of age.

All of the officers interviewed suggested that alcohol is mainly related to the commission of street offences such as disorderly behaviour, offensive language, property damage and assault. Some also suggested that youths commit house breaks, hotel breaks and chemist breaks when they are sober in order to get alcohol and other drugs. In addition to this, one officer noted that the crimes that are committed by youths who are under the influence of rohypnols are usually of a violent nature.

Peer group pressure was identified by the officers as being behind a lot of juvenile crime. One officer suggested that young people get together in groups, get under the influence of alcohol and other drugs, and then commit crimes. Boredom was also seen as being a factor by some officers. One suggested that:

*'...they haven't got anything to do, they don't know what to do like constructively, so that's when they get into the alcohol and take pills and stuff and it just gives them dutch courage and then they think, well they're not thinking straight and all the rest of it, "well let's go out and do something". And then that's when they do usually find themselves in a whole mess of trouble'.*

Another officer described the situation as a 'vicious cycle'. Committing crime, being bored and taking drugs are all inter-related in a complex manner and dealing with one of these problems will not necessarily solve the others:

*'Unfortunately there's not a starting point that you can target, "well if we handle this then everything else'd fall into place".'*

Other important points that were made by the members of the police department were that there is a need for follow-ups after youths have been through programs and that there needs to be more communication between agencies that deal with youth issues. Points of concern that were expressed by a couple of officers about youths generally were that there has been an increase in the number of youths who have been 'rolled' (mugged) for their sports shoes, and also that there has been an increase in the number of youths who are carrying weapons.

To summarize, then, many of the Aboriginal youths who are coming to the attention of the police are under the influence of alcohol and/or marijuana at the time. Some officers expressed concern over the extent to which the youths are 'sniffing' glue or butane gas, and some were also concerned that heroin use is becoming a problem for youths once they turn about 18 years of age. Alcohol use was seen to be related mainly to the commission of street offences; although it was also suggested that house, hotel and chemist breaks are sometimes committed by Aboriginal youths when they are sober in order to obtain alcohol or other drugs.



## Chapter 5.

### Interviews with Aboriginal Youths in Recreation Centres

Nine male and three female Aboriginal youths from a number of different recreation centres agreed to be interviewed in order to find out what sorts of substances they use and whether they engage in delinquent activities when they are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. The youths were all aged between ten and eighteen years of age. A structured interview schedule was used, with the interviews being conducted by the project officer who usually had a member of the Aboriginal Sobriety Group with her (see Appendix 5). No names were recorded and the youths were ensured that everything they said would be treated with the utmost respect and confidentiality.

We were pleased at how well these interviews went. The youths seemed to treat the interviews very seriously and the answers that were given appeared to be very honest. If anything, the impression that we received while we were conducting the interviews was that the youths were under-reporting rather than over-reporting their own drug taking and delinquent behaviour. However, after some initial apprehension many of the youths appeared to really open up. We believe that many of these youths really benefited from talking about their experiences; many even commented that this was the case for them. It gave them a chance to get things out in the open and have someone listen to what they had to say about what's really going on in their lives and why they've done the things that they have.

### Results

#### Substance Abuse

Ten of the twelve youths interviewed said that they had used both alcohol and marijuana. Of these youths, three said that they had only ever tried alcohol and marijuana once or twice. One of these youths was only twelve years old. Of the remaining seven youths, two indicated that they use marijuana on the weekends or every now and then, with both stating that they used to drink alcohol but have now given it up. The other five youths indicated that they smoke marijuana every day or nearly every day, but that they only drink alcohol on the weekends. What is disturbing about this is the fact that three of these five youths are only thirteen or fourteen years old. One youth who uses marijuana daily also stated that he occasionally uses serepax and rohypnols.

The extent of substance abuse, then, by Aboriginal youths in the recreation centres appears to be much higher than that of the school students, and many of these youths appear to be abusing substances from a very early age. One youth

suggested that they had first started drinking alcohol when they were only eight years old; three suggested that they were twelve, one said that they were thirteen, and three said that they were fourteen. When asked why they drink or why they have tried drinking, the most common answer given was 'to see what it's like'. Other reasons given were 'you have more fun when you've been drinking'; 'I like the effects'; 'it's something to do'; 'to feel part of the group'; 'because everyone else is doing it', and 'because there's no drugs around to smoke'.

The youths were also asked to tell us how they get alcohol when they want it. Most of the youths said that they get it from friends, from older people or from cousins. When asked where they drink, the most common answers given were at a park or at a friend's house. A few also suggested that they walk around the streets with a two litre bottle of coke that has got alcohol in it.

In addition to the questions about alcohol use, the youths were asked why they use other drugs and how they get them. One youth suggested that they use drugs because 'life's not good enough without a buzz'. Most of the youths said that they get marijuana from cousins or friends. A few suggested that they buy marijuana themselves, while five indicated that they sometimes rip plants off from people's back yards. Perhaps the saddest account came from a twelve year old youth who said that his mum gives him marijuana when she's drunk and that sometimes when she's been drinking alcohol she makes him drink as well. Stories like this are very depressing and highlight the types of environments in which youths whose parents abuse alcohol sometimes find themselves living in.

In order to get more of an overall picture, the youths were asked to tell us about other drugs of which they knew of that were being used in the community but which they were not using themselves. Tranquillisers (rohypnols, serepax) and hallucinogens (trips, magic mushrooms) were identified, as was the sniffing of petrol, glue, butane gas and liquid paper. There was some disagreement as to the extent to which heroin is being used in the community. Some believed that it is quite widespread and that many people were moving on to it, while others suggested that there is not much injecting going on at all. Speed was also identified by quite a few of the youths, with cocaine also being suggested by one or two of them. One youth had even heard of people 'bonging up' cocaine, although they were not sure how this had been done.

### **Substance Abuse and Delinquency**

As has already been mentioned, five of the twelve youths stated that they get marijuana by stealing dope plants from people's back yards, indicating that drugs and delinquency are related to each other in this way. Another aspect of the drug-delinquency relationship that we wanted to investigate was the extent to which youths become involved in delinquent activities when they are under the

influence of alcohol or other drugs. We looked at this by asking them about the sorts of things that they do once they've been drinking or using marijuana.

Four of the youths said that they had been involved in fights; three said that they had smashed things up; one said that they had bashed people, and two said that they had 'rolled' (mugged) someone when they had been drinking. In addition to this, three said that they had committed break and enters; two said that they had stolen someone's handbag, and five said that they had stolen a car (with two of these stating that they had been involved in ram raids - ramming a car into a store window or door and then stealing items from the store) when they were under the influence of alcohol or marijuana.

Most of the youths indicated that they hardly ever do these things when they're 'straight'. A few suggested that it's only alcohol and not marijuana that makes them do things; marijuana just seems to make them lazy and mellow. One youth who doesn't drink, however, suggested that marijuana is related to offending for him. He suggested that when he smokes the leaf of the plant he is quiet but that when he smokes the head he goes off of his head. This youth stated that he only ever does crime when he's 'out of it', and suggested that when he's straight he's a different person.

Only three of the youths stated that they do crimes when they're sober. One suggested that they do it because they're bored or because they're hurt or angry about something, while another suggested that sometimes other people push him into things and that it depends on who he hangs around with. The third youth suggested that particular crimes are committed for economic reasons and stated that he 'rolls' people when he's sober because he needs the money. Still, all three of these youths said that they usually commit crimes only when they're out of it. One suggested that he does it more when he's drunk because he doesn't think of it as being a crime, and he doesn't think that he'll get caught, when he's under the influence of alcohol.

The results from the recreation centres are quite disturbing. Nearly all of the youths indicated that they had used both alcohol and marijuana, with many of them seeming to have started abusing these substances at a very early age. Marijuana use was found to be more widely used than alcohol among all of the youths, with five of the twelve youths indicating that they use it every day or nearly every day, and another two suggesting that they use it at least every now and then. Alcohol on the other hand did not appear to be used as frequently, with most youths suggesting that its use is restricted mainly to the weekends, if it is used at all.

Eight of the ten youths who had used marijuana and alcohol indicated that they had been involved in committing quite serious crimes while they were under

the influence of these substances. In fact, all of them had been involved in either 'break and enters' or car thefts. Some suggested that they only offend when they've been drinking and not when they're stoned, suggesting that marijuana just makes them lazy and mellow. Only a few of the youths suggested that they commit offences when they are straight. The main reasons given by them for committing offences when sober were boredom, peer group pressure, and because they need the money.

We realise that our sample size for this part of the study is small and that the information we obtained from these youths is limited. However, it is very difficult to gain access to youths when they are not in a controlled situation such as a school. Many of the youths whom we interviewed, in fact, don't go to school regularly. We felt that it was particularly important to get some input from them as they are the ones who appear to be most likely to become involved in substance abuse and juvenile crime. Talking to these youths allowed us to gain some idea about what's going on out in the streets. We feel that their answers were very open and honest, and think that what they said reflects quite closely on what is going on out in the community.

## Chapter 6.

### Interviews With Aboriginal Youths in Detention Centres

Depth interviews were conducted with 15 Aboriginal youths ranging from fourteen to eighteen years of age from the South Australian Youth Training Centre (SAYTC) and the South Australian Youth Remand and Assessment Centre (SAYRAC), with permission first being obtained from the FACS research committee. The youths were told that what we were looking at was how alcohol and drugs are related to young people getting into trouble, and that what we wanted to know was how they thought substance abuse was related to offending, if at all. The youths were asked if it was all right to tape record the conversations and were ensured that no-one but the interviewers would hear the tapes. All of the youths agreed to this.

Specific issues that were examined during the interviews included the extent to which the youths use alcohol and other drugs, why they started using these substances and why they still continue to use them, how alcohol and drugs are related to offending, what other reasons are there for offending, possible solutions that they think might work when dealing with these issues, and their relationship with the police. While some interviews only lasted for about ten minutes, there were others that went for over an hour. Many of the youths were very open and honest with their responses and we were impressed with the amount of insight that some of these youths appeared to possess in relation to their own drinking, drug taking and offending behaviours. These youths were able to provide us with some very valuable information that may in fact help us develop programs that are more acceptable to them, and thus more effective.

### Results

#### 1. The Extent of Substance Abuse

The interviews with the youths from SAYTC and SAYRAC suggest that the extent of substance abuse among juvenile offenders is very high. All of the youths except for one indicated that they had abused substances to varying degrees. This youth, however, may not have admitted to substance abuse even if it were true. During the interview he appeared to be very quiet and seemed to be reluctant to talk about anything he had done. It is unlikely, then, that he would have admitted to drinking or using drugs, even if he had.

Alcohol use was found to be quite extensive among the juvenile offenders, with eight of the youths indicating that they drink about once or twice a week, two suggesting that they drink every now and then, and another stating that he had tried alcohol but only on one occasion. One of the youths said that he was only

thirteen years old when he first started drinking. Others stated that they had been about fifteen when they first began to drink alcohol.

Marijuana use, however, was found to be even more extensive than alcohol use. Fourteen of the fifteen youths suggested that they smoke marijuana at least weekly, with three of the youths suggesting that they use it every day. Half of the youths who said that they use marijuana stated that they were fourteen years old or younger when they first started to use it. Three of these youths suggested that they were only twelve years old when they first began smoking dope.

These results suggest again, then, that marijuana use is even more extensive than alcohol use. In fact, many of the youths made this point quite clear. One youth, for example, said:

*'...never drank much though, I just smoke dope all the time'.*

Another important point is that many of the youths appear to have started smoking marijuana well before they ever began drinking alcohol. Seven youths clearly indicated that this was the case for them, while only one youth said that he had started drinking before he had started smoking marijuana.

Another interesting point to come out of the interviews was the fact that many of the youths did not seem to think that using marijuana was really a form of drug abuse. One youth said:

*'Oh, I don't think yandi is, oh marijuana's any, you know, nothing'.*

and another stated that:

*'...dope don't do nothing really. Smokin' dope's nothin''.*

Apart from marijuana and alcohol use, four of the youths also indicated that they used to 'sniff' but that they don't do it any more. Two of the youths said that they used to sniff petrol. One stated that when he was only thirteen years old he used to sniff it every day for about six months. When asked what petrol does to you, one youth said that it gets you high for a couple of minutes and then makes you feel sick. Another youth said that it makes you 'blank out' and that you start seeing things. One youth had experienced some long term effects from sniffing petrol and said that he'd lost a lot of his school work from it because he'd lost a bit of his memory.

Another youth said that they used to sniff about twenty bottles of liquid paper a day when they were only eleven years old. They described the effects of sniffing in the following way:

*'...you hear it, like when you're sucking the bag in and that it goes [MAKES SUCKING NOISE], that's what you hear in your head all the time. And when you get up to about ten of that, and then you just start seeing things. Just start spinning out...You sit down, and you think before you sniff, you think of what you want to see. And when you start sniffing everything just comes alive. But if we was in 'ere, I could make all these books start walkin' around, whatever'.*

This youth had also suffered negative effects from long term sniffing:

*'...I started talking real slowly, and stuttering all the time...I was freakin' out. Even though I wasn't sniffin', like after effects. I'd be sittin' at the kitchen table man, and my head'd just start shaking...And I'd come in and I'd be sittin' there and all dribble would be dribblin' down...When I was trying [to give it up] it was hard then, cause when I'd have my after effects I just thought "I need one more sniff, just one more, no more"...I used to lay in my bed, I thought the devil and all was talkin' to me '.*

Three of the youths also indicated that they had used tranquillisers such as Rohypnols and Serepax at least every now and then, with another youth suggesting that they'd tried a couple of Rohypnols on one occasion. Two of the youths stated that they had used speed quite regularly in the past, and two of the youths interviewed said that they had been dependent on heroin before being locked up. Given the small number of youths interviewed then, the extent of 'hard' drug use by the juvenile offenders was found to be quite high. Why the youths abuse these substances and the 'softer' drugs, and how substance abuse is related to the youth's offending behaviour, will be discussed in the following parts of this report.

## **2. Why Youths Use Alcohol And Other Drugs**

By far the most common reason given for both using drugs initially and for continuing to use them was peer group pressure. Some of the answers given when the youths were asked why they started drinking or taking drugs were:

*'Oh, cause my brothers and that smoked it so, I just started'.*

*'Other people were just drinking'.*

*'Oh, other people are using, you just start...you just do what the group is doing'.*

and:

*'I don't know. My brother was drinkin' and my cousins were drinkin' so I just, started, ended up started drinkin' '.*

As the above suggests, a lot of this pressure appeared to come from older brothers and cousins. This pressure, however, was not of an overt nature; the youths were not forced into using the drugs by their friends for fear of rejection if they didn't, nor did their friends appear to press the use of alcohol or drugs onto anyone else but themselves. The pressure was a lot more subtle than this. The youths found

themselves in situations where other people were using alcohol or other drugs and just seemed to be swept along with the tide. They just did it because everyone else was doing it, without appearing to make any conscious decision at all about whether or not they really wanted to. In fact one youth summed it up quite well with the following analogy:

*"It's just like what they're doin', you know, it's what your mates do...You want to do what they do...Say if he's, you know, playin' a computer or somethin'. "Oh yeah, he's got a computer over his house, I'll go there, play the computer", you know. Just like "oh yeah, he smokes dope, I'll go with ya, smoke the dope" '.*

Of course sometimes the peer group pressure became more open and obvious. One youth, for example, said:

*'...your cousin's about seventeen, sixteen, oh about eighteen, you know...And he smokes, you know, he tells you about, yeah older than you, standin' up listenin', you're only young. "Yeah, I was smokin' dope, you know, I was drinkin' and all that there". And like, it's like, it's makin' that you wanna do it...you got your, big brothers, they come home with mates, you know. But they're sayin', "oh yeah", they're pretty loose, spinning yarns, you know. And it's making you wanna get into it, especially when you're small'.*

This was true not only for the softer drugs but also for the 'harder' ones too. One youth described his first experience with heroin in the following way:

*I started off like, you know, I was round, you know, round my cousins. I'm not blaming my cousin, it was my choice, you know. But, you know, they said "oh yeah, try this", and I said "yeah, no worries", you know. So I tried it, you know, I didn't know how to do it, you know. I just turned my head and laid there and held out my arm. And next minute I just, you know, I had this, buzz, you know, like I never had before. I was thinkin', "oh yeah, this is all right, you know. And then they said "oh try this one out, try this one out, it's deadly", you know. And when I took it, it was different all together, you know. I started vomiting, straight away, you know, dry reaching, but just like, spewing up like water, you know. I don't know. Spewing up. I said, "nah, fuck that man, I'm not touchin' that no more", you know. And they said, "nah, that wasn't speed", you know, "that was heroin". I said "oh no, fuck you".*

The above demonstrates the often passive way in which the youths sometimes appear to be introduced to drugs and alcohol. Sometimes it's a failure to say 'no' rather than a decision to say 'yes' that leads young people to become involved in alcohol and other drugs.

Boredom was another reason that was commonly given by the youths for using drugs and alcohol. One youth said:

*'...that's what drinkin' main, cause when you got nothin' to do, you just drink, ya know. And like when I was doing that ... I never used to worry about drinking. Cause I had something to do to pass time'.*



Another youth said:

*'...you know, got nothin' to do on the outside...If you're only on the dole then you get bored, you know, you wanna get more drunk, more stoned'.*

The above youth made two very important points. Firstly, there is nothing for these youths to do on the outside. Many of them said that for various reasons (which will be discussed later), school was inappropriate for them. Many then had a lot of time on their hands and used alcohol and other drugs to kill this time. The fact that many of the people who they 'hang out' with also have a lot of time on their hands makes it even more likely that the youths will turn to drugs and alcohol, especially when there is peer group pressure to do so.

Secondly, unemployment also has a large part to play in this boredom. Many of these youths are not working or going to school; they've got nothing to do and they're bored. Also, if they're not working there's no reason to stay straight. It doesn't matter if they're 'hung over' or unable to function the next day because there's no where that they have to be. One youth said that having a job would have made a large difference to him because it would have given him 'something to look forward to'.

One youth suggested that they drink because it lets them forget about their problems for a while. This youth said:

*'...it makes me feel like all my problems leave me, and I got nothing to worry about. Know what I mean?...Like I just feel like weight off my shoulders, I can have a good drink and relax. And then as soon as I get drunk and off my face, it just all come back to me. And I just go off my head then'.*

Another reason given for using alcohol and other drugs was because of the effects that the substances have on them. Some youths said that they use certain drugs because they like the way that the drug makes them feel:

*'I don't know why I smoke it though. Cause of that funny feeling you get, you know.'*

while others indicated that they use drugs because of the negative effects that they get if they don't use them, because they are dependent on the drug. One youth said:

*'And I couldn't stop. Like, if I stopped I'd get pains from, you know. In a way I'm glad, you know, I got locked up. Cause I might've been dead or something by now'.*

### 3. The Relationship Between Substance Abuse and Juvenile Crime

Substance abuse appears to be related to juvenile offending in two ways. Firstly, crimes are committed by youths when they are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Seven of the fifteen youths interviewed claimed that they had been drinking or using drugs prior to committing the offence for which they are currently serving time. Another two youths suggested that although they may not have been under the influence when they committed their last crime, they have at other times committed offences while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The following comments were made by the youths:

*'...all the time I've been caught, you know, mainly, I'm charged up...'*

*'Oh just mainly when you drink, you get involved...Just another person'.*

and:

*'I never do crime when I'm sober. It doesn't, never crosses my mind...Cause lot of fellas say that to me, you know, "you're better when you're sober than when you're drunk"...I've never been sober, ya know all my crimes or every time I get picked up, I'm always drunk'.*

Different substances appear to be related to juvenile offending in different ways. Alcohol, for example, appears to have a disinhibiting effect. One youth said:

*'Yeah, like when you're pissed and that, like, you do anything you want, you don't care if you get caught'.*

Particular things that the youths said they had done when they'd been drinking included fighting, stealing people's handbags, committing break and enters, smashing windows, robbery with violence, stealing cars, committing ram raids and minor street offences such as disorderly behaviour. The youths go out, get drunk and 'run amuk'. The alcohol removes all of their inhibitions and they do things that they probably would not usually do if they were sober.

Marijuana on the other hand does not seem to be related to juvenile crime in the same way; in fact a couple of the youths suggested that it is not related to juvenile crime at all. Most of the youths said that smoking dope just makes them lazy, it doesn't appear to make young people 'go off' like drinking does. A couple of the youths, however, did say that they had stolen cars and been involved in ram-raids when they were under the influence of marijuana. One youth suggested that while alcohol only makes you do 'silly' things, marijuana is related to involvement in more serious crimes, such as ram-raids and high speed chases. Crimes committed by youths who have been smoking dope appear to be more thought out and purposeful than those committed by youths who have been drinking. Youths who have been smoking marijuana have usually planned to go out and commit a particular crime, whereas crimes that are committed by youths who have been drinking are usually more opportunistic. They're out, they're

drunk and running amok, and while they're walking around they run into trouble - because they're disinhibited.

Mixing rohypnols and alcohol was usually found to be associated with violent crime. This mixture tends to make the youths 'blank out', during which time they commit many offences that they don't often remember. One youth described how they had committed over twenty housebreaks and stabbed a man after drinking and taking a script of rohypnols. Youths, however, did not appear to commit crimes after they'd been sniffing, probably due to the fact that they were incapable of walking around.

The other way in which substance abuse appears to be related to juvenile offending is that young people commit crimes so that they can get alcohol and other drugs. At least twelve of the fifteen youths interviewed said that they commit crimes so that they can get drugs or alcohol. Most of the youths said that they get marijuana by ripping it off from people's back yards. However, when they can't find any marijuana they steal so that they can buy it. The money that they get from 'break and enters', 'ram-raids' and stealing handbags is used primarily to buy dope, and bottle shops are also broken into so that the youths can get alcohol. The youth who used to sniff liquid paper when they were only eleven years old used to get it by breaking into the local high school and stealing it, and the two youths who were dependent on heroin before being locked up had to go out stealing regularly in order to support their habit.

Even though we have identified two separate relationships between substance abuse and juvenile crime, it must be pointed out that these two explanations are connected. Many of the youths are under the influence of alcohol or marijuana when they go out stealing to get more drugs. In fact, drinking and smoking dope often makes them want more alcohol and marijuana, and that's when they go out looking for it. One youth said the following:

*'...oh, you know, just smoke dope, and you want more, so you go look for more...we want some more to bong up on'.*

while another youth said:

*'oh once, done a break, when we was drunk, cause we wanted more drink...so, done over a bottle shop'.*

Youths commit offences, then, when they are under the influence of alcohol and drugs, and also commit offences to get alcohol or other drugs. These two separate relationships between substance abuse and delinquency though are actually inter-related. Often when youths have been drinking or taking drugs they find that they want more of them. It's then that they often go out and commit crimes in order to get more alcohol or marijuana.

#### 4. Other Reasons For Offending

While the use of alcohol and other drugs was found to be closely related to Aboriginal juvenile offending, the youths indicated that there were other reasons why they go out and commit crimes too. Peer group pressure was again found to be very important. Some of the answers given when the youths were asked why they commit crimes were:

*'...you just do what the group is doing'.*

*'I mixed with the wrong people...just mixed in with them, then I just done what they done'.*

*'...it's just um, mixin' up with the wrong blokes and that'.*

*'cause the other fellas were'.*

*'...well I don't really want to do it's just, peer group pressure'.*

and:

*'Just people who you hang round with and that...just hanging round with cousins and that. If they all get up to something, we'll do it too'.*

As was the case with alcohol and drug use, this pressure was usually very subtle and not of an overt nature. No obvious coercion or force was used to make the youths commit crimes; they generally just followed the group and did whatever the group was doing without really thinking about it and without making any conscious decision about whether or not really wanted to do it. This is reflected in the comments made by one youth:

*R (Respondent): ...like we was gonna stay home. I wanted to stay home....But, them all other boys didn't want to. So I just thought I better go along with 'em.*

*I (Interviewer) Why?*

*R: I don't know.*

*I: They didn't put any pressure on you or anything?*

*R: Nah. They just, they were just talkin' about, all this money and all this...I don't know, just, and I just thought, you know, go out, just go out with my mates.*

Another youth had the following to say:

*'...goin' out and you bump into few of your mates and that, you know. You don't know what they're doin' and you, you know, go for a walk with 'em. Then, next minute, you know, they do, do something like break into a car or, you know, steal handbags and all that shit. So like, I don't, you know, I don't do that but I just follow 'em and that. But, you know, I'm always getting the blame for it...'*

The above is an obvious example of how the youths sometimes just follow the group blindly, just get swept along with whatever everyone else is doing.

Of course, sometimes this pressure is more open and obvious. One youth said the following:

*'...every time I'm home right, there's always someone comin' around there with a stolen car and that, you know...sayin', "oh come for a cruise", and all that. And I say, "nah I gotta watch", you know, "I gotta stay home and watch the house". And they'll say, "come on, we'll be out, for only about two, three minutes". Then when we go out we don't come back until the next mornin''.*

And while most of the youths felt that there were no real leaders of the groups that they hang around with, one youth had the following to say:

*'It's the leaders of the group that just tell 'em which place to hit, they get away with it, and just sit back and watch, they get away with it, and we get caught...They never get caught, we're the suckers that get caught'.*

Alcohol and drugs were also found to be related to this peer group pressure. One youth said:

*'...when I'm pissed, like, I just follow 'em'.*

and another one said:

*'...when you drink on the street, you know, just like, you know, listen to the boys, you know. Listen to your mates, what they say. Like, "go fight that bastard", you know, "go and have a fight", you know, when you're drunk, you just follow on with your mates when you get drunk...You wanna do what they do, you know, when you get drunk, you know, you want to follow each other".'*

It seems then that drinking makes it more likely that the youths will just follow along with whatever everyone else is doing.

Boredom was also given as a reason for committing crimes by many of the youths. Some of the comments made by the youths were:

*'if we got, if we're heaps bored and nothin' to do we end up just goin' out, we end up gettin' into trouble'.*

*'...I reckon it's mainly boredom as well, you know, a fella gettin' bored straight out, and he's thinking, "fuck this man, lets go and do somethin' exciting", you know'.*

*'if I'm by myself and I get bored I just go and do something'.*

and:

*'...sometimes I just get bored, and I just go and do it'.*

Alcohol is sometimes a factor in this too. One youth said:

*'just get drunk, get bored, so, just go look for somethin' to do, have a bit of fun'.*

Many of the youths also indicated that they commit crimes for economic reasons, that they need the money for other things besides alcohol and other drugs. Most said that they needed the money for food or for clothes, while one youth also suggested that he needed to steal in order to pay for bus fares. Some of the comments made by the youths were:

*'...they'd want money to be like the other kids. To have money in their pocket...just to be like the others'.*

*'A lot of white kids, they got a lot of good stuff, we don't get nothing ay, hardly no money'.*

and:

*'...it's mainly to get money, you know. That's another thing I reckon, like young fellas don't get enough money, you know. Really, you know, you see all these other fellas with money, you know, gettin' paid money, you know. And you're just thinkin', "where's our money", you know. That's what I thought all the time, you know. I said, "oh fuck, I'll go get my own, I'll rook some other cunt's money", you know'.*

Boredom was sometimes found to be related to this economically driven crime too. Basically young people who are bored need money so that they are able to do things. This was reflected in the following comments that were made by two of the youths:

*'You need money these days. You need money to do things, to have fun'.*

and:

*'You got bored, you got nothing to do, see. You gotta be spending money...to have something to do'.*

Unemployment was also found to be related to juvenile crime for the above reasons. Firstly, youths who are unemployed have a lot more time on their hands and are much more likely to suffer from boredom. One youth said the following about not having a job:

*'...cause then you've got more time to yourself, you can do what you want, like, you do everything you can, like, do crime'.*

Secondly, youths who are unemployed haven't got any money and so some go out stealing in order to buy the things that they want. Some of the youths suggested that if they worked they'd still drink and use drugs, but that they wouldn't have to go out stealing in order to get them. One youth said:

*'Oh, if more Nunga kids were employed then they wouldn't have to go out and, they might still be on the drugs and that, but they wouldn't have to go out and pinch or anything, they've got work, they've got money coming in'.*

Unemployed youths, then, are particularly vulnerable when it comes to juvenile crime, committing crimes both because they're bored and because they need the money. When you consider the fact that boredom also contributes to substance abuse, and that substance abuse is also related to crime, it is not too surprising to find that some of these youths who are not going to school and who are not going to work are filling in their time by drinking, taking drugs, and committing crimes.

## 5. Other Issues

### Relationship with the police

In order to 'break the ice' with the youths that we were interviewing and make them feel more comfortable, we decided that the first question we would ask would be completely non-threatening to them and largely impersonal. We decided to ask them 'what do you think about the police' as we believed that this question would open them up and really get them talking. This question would give them an opportunity to talk about something that they probably felt strongly about but which they probably had had little opportunity to discuss in the past. By asking this question then, we hoped to open up a floodgate of information about juvenile offending that was neither self-incriminating nor judgemental.

Although this question was only intended originally to be an 'ice-breaker', the passionate responses that were generated by it and the importance of the information that these responses conveyed prompted us to include a section in the report on how the police are perceived by Aboriginal youths. The following offers a brief discussion of how Aboriginal youths perceive the nature of the relationship between themselves and the police.

As was expected, generally the attitudes held towards the police by the Aboriginal youths interviewed were very negative. What surprised us, however, were some of the stories that the youths told us about their experiences with the police. Of the fifteen youths interviewed in SAYTC and SAYRAC, eight claimed that they had been bashed or 'flogged' by the police, with another four youths indicating that they had been pushed around or roughened up. Here are some examples of comments that were made by the youths:

*'Oh, they're racists, sometimes they bash us, and that. Treat us like shit when they throw us in the cells'.*

*'Try slappin' it out of ya. But when you, like, you know you can't, you can't try, you know you can't tell the truth to 'em because, you know, they know everything'.*

*'Oh sometimes they go in cells, punch ya head in 'times'.*

*'Oh, they mostly pick on us black kids really. And when they lock us up, they always flog us...If we're gettin' chased in a car, they'll flog us, put us in the car, flog us, then take us to the cells, flog us, put us in the cell and flog us again'.*

and:

*'...the night we were caught, they were just hitting us, they were punching us full on in the face, and then they'll go, like when we go..., take your fingerprints and photos and they go. "have you got any serious injuries", and you just look at the coppa and, go oh, you feel like saying it, but if you say it they'll bash you up, so you just go, "nah, nothing"'.  
'*

One youth even showed us the scars from when they'd had their clothing set on fire and been burned by the police, while a thirteen year old youth from one of the recreation centres showed us the mark where he'd had a bone broken when they'd hit him with a baton. We were also told of an instance when two youths were taken down a back alley and bashed by a few officers in front of a whole group of other Aboriginal youths. There were many stories of transit police pushing youths around and taking the youth's tickets off them so that they couldn't catch the train. Complaints made about the transit police ranged from using more force to apprehend youths than was necessary, to actually breaking their bones.

In addition to this, nine of the youths in the correction centres also said that they are often harassed by the police and that they're often pulled over when they've done nothing wrong. Some of the comments made were:

*'Just pull you over, check ya if you've got any warrants. You get smart to 'em they just start calling you "black cunt" and all that...threaten to lock you up and that if you haven't done nothing wrong'.*

*'...whenever something went like, you know if there was a break or somethin', they'd come straight to us and always blame us. Me, my brother and my cousins...they just always come up to us, the first thing that goes wrong. They come and accuse us, drag us down the station and question us about it'.*

and:

*'They hassle me and my friends. Like they make us, we walk down...and the...cops make me and my friends always take off our shoes, socks, and get all our pockets, in case we've got drugs in 'em...or stole something. Get annoyed'.*

Constant harassment and unfair treatment by the transit police such as kicking Aboriginal youths off of train stations whenever anyone did anything wrong, regardless of whether Aboriginal youths were actually involved or not, was also reported by the youths.



The constant harassment and actual violence that the youths suggest is shown towards them by the police must have a huge impact on their lives and must effect their involvement in juvenile crime. Firstly, to these youths the law is not fair. They have the perception that they are 'picked on' more than other youths and are often the subjects of police violence. This has led them to resent and even hate the police, a view which is probably reinforced by their parents knowing the history of Aboriginal and police relations. They may therefore rebel against the police and the laws that the police are supposed to enforce. The law is not fair and the people who instigate it are not fair, so why should they co-operate with a system that they believe is totally unjust.

Secondly, the fact that the youths are still the victims of police harassment even when they haven't done anything wrong offers the youths no incentive to abide by the law. Why stop committing crimes when you're going to get into trouble even if you do the right thing any way? Tied in with this is the idea that if you label someone as being something, they may behave in that way because of the labelling - a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy. The police officers are obviously labelling Aboriginal youths (or at least particular Aboriginal youths) as being 'criminal' by frequently questioning them about crimes that have been committed. This labelling of the youths as 'criminal' may lead the youths to accept this label themselves. Thinking that they are criminal then, the youths may continue to commit crimes in line with the view that they, and others, hold about themselves.

While the above points to a very bleak picture of Aboriginal and police relations, positive references were made towards some members of the police force. A few of the comments made, for example, were:

*'Oh the old, the best cops I like is the old, old cops...you know, cause they're real kind on ya and that'.*

*'Oh you get some real good ones'.*

and:

*'Cause when I went in the cells...I was freakin' out man...Just sit there wait for them to come in the cells, give me a hiding or something, but nut, just walked straight past. They gave me boolies and bought me McDonalds for tea and all'.*

This points to the fact that positive experiences with the police and not just negative experiences can have an impact on Aboriginal youths. There is a lot of potential then for police officers to do a lot of good, simply by showing some understanding and respect.

Despite evidence that some police officers have made an effort to be understanding and caring in their dealings with Aboriginal youths though, the

overwhelming evidence from our interviews is that Aboriginal youths are often targeted by police and that sometimes the police use violence against these youths in an excessive and totally unacceptable manner. We hope that the claims made by the youths about police violence and harassment will not go unnoticed.

### Attitudes towards school

As a lot of the youths indicated that they commit crimes and drink or take drugs because there's nothing else to do, we decided to ask them why they weren't going to school which is the usual way in which young people fill in their time. As was expected, most of the youths said that they didn't like school, with only a couple of youths indicating that they go on a fairly regular basis. Reasons given for not liking school included not getting along with the teachers and not liking or understanding the work. One youth suggested that the class sizes are too big. He said that if you don't understand something then you're just left behind, the rest of the class have moved on and there aren't enough teachers to deal with individual students. He suggested that there should only be about five students in a class so that the students can get the individual attention that they need, rather than having the work put out in front of them and being left to do it alone without any help if they don't understand.

Peer group pressure was also found to be related to non-attendance at school. Sometimes it was just a case of not going because other people weren't going. One youth said the following:

*'cause he doesn't go to school, you know. And you're thinkin', "oh he doesn't go to school, so I'm not going to school"'.*

At other times, however, friends actually put pressure on the youths not to go to school:

*'it was all right but it's just that, you know, your friends and that, like, they tell ya, "nah, don't go to school cause it's shit", you know. And you follow em and that...they lead you on'.*

Two particularly sad reasons were given for not going to school. One youth said that when they informed the school at which they were trying to enrol about their juvenile record, the school had said that they weren't allowed to attend because they had to consider the safety of the other children. Another youth gave the following account of why he didn't go to school:

*'Oh, yeah school's good once you're in, in there doin' the work. It's alright. But, you know, you got no lunch and the other people they got lunch. Like you gotta go to a, supermarket or somewhere. Just go in, get, big block of chocolate, steal it, come back. Go back to school. Cause you're hungry at lunch time'.*

We are not in a position to examine the possible differences between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal youth on the question of attitude to school. But the well-documented evidence that Aboriginal children are less likely to attend school consistently suggests that an aversion to school may be more prominent among Aboriginal children and be an important contributing factor in the development of delinquent behaviours.

### **Ideas about programs that deal with substance abuse and juvenile offending**

As the aim of this study was to aid the Aboriginal Sobriety Group in the development of a program designed specifically for Aboriginal youths, we decided to ask the youths interviewed whether they had any thoughts on how such a program could be most effective. The youths were told about the Sobriety Group's plan to set up a place for young people which would deal with both substance abuse and juvenile offending, and were asked whether they had any ideas about how this place should be run or about the sorts of things that they would like to see included there. Most of the youths said that there shouldn't be any bars on the windows or doors as this was the main thing that they didn't like about SAYTC and SAYRAC. Another common criticism made was that the staff at SAYTC and SAYRAC often make up the rules as they go along. One youth suggested that the Sobriety Group should set out its rules and goals clearly from the start so that the youths will know exactly what the Sobriety Group expects of them. They can then make an informed decision about whether or not they really want to go there, knowing full well what it will be like if they decided that they want to attend.

There were some other things about SAYTC and SAYRAC that the youths said that they did not like which should be considered by anyone planning to start up their own program dealing with juvenile offending and substance abuse. Firstly, a few of the youths said that sometimes when they're in a bad mood the staff act sarcastically towards them. This does nothing but frustrate them more and make them feel even wilder. Secondly, a few of the youths said that they didn't like being treated like little kids and felt that some of the rules were fairly petty and stupid. Other youths complained about not being able to speak their mind, while others said that they didn't like being told what to do.

The youths also indicated that they would like to spend more time with their families than is currently the case when detained in SAYTC or SAYRAC. Throughout the interviews many of the youths made it clear that their mother is very important to them and that she plays a rather significant role in their lives. The power of the mother then should be remembered when designing programs for Aboriginal youths, and her influence should be used when working with young Aboriginal people.

When youths 'play up' in SAYRAC they are either put into 'time out' or into the 'cabin'. When the youths are in 'time out' they do nothing but just sit there. One youth had the following to say about this form of punishment:

*'Cause when we get time out we gotta sit in a corner, when we have time out by ourselves, sittin' in a corner and just look at the walls...ya know even lookin' at the walls makes ya feel really depressed when you're already depressed, it's terrible'.*

When the youths are really bad or are 'going off' (are uncontrollable) they're put into a small concrete room called the 'cabin'. The same youth had the following to say about this:

*'And they lock you in a room, a real small little room...and you just think, "oh true, what are they puttin' me in here for"'.*

Considering the fact that the main criticism the youths made about SAYRAC and SAYTC was the feeling of being locked in, it seems that confining these youths even more when they are upset is not the answer. In fact, it may very well have the opposite effect and hinder any possible rehabilitation by making them 'go off' even more.

Comments made by the youths also suggest that the mainstream drug and alcohol services offered by Elura may not be appropriate for Aboriginal youths. One youth resented the woman from Elura preaching to them that drinking is 'bad'. Another youth did not like the way that the woman from Elura was talking to them about their 'personal life'. They felt that it was not right to talk about these things with such a person. It was when people came in and talked about their own drinking and drug taking experiences that the youths seemed to take more interest and learn more about the effects of drugs and alcohol. Talks given by a woman who had used speed and by older Aboriginal people seemed to have the most impact on the youths.

Another thing that the youths said that they do not like about SAYTC and SAYRAC is the fact that if one person in a unit does something wrong, then the rest of the unit is also punished. The reason behind this appears to be quite good - the peer group will put pressure on the youths to behave. However, there are problems with this. As was found in this study, peer group pressure appears to be the main reason why the youths use drugs and commit crimes. We need to teach youths then to be responsible for their own actions and to think for themselves before they do anything. In order to do this, the rewards and punishments that they receive must be based on their own actions and not on the actions of others. We do, however, agree that the peer group can play a large role in strategies which deal with drug use and crime. These strategies will be discussed later.

While the above may sound like a criticism of SAYTC and SAYRAC, it should not be construed in this way. Most of the youths indicated that the Centres are "alright" and that most of the staff genuinely do want to help them. One particular thing that a few of the youths said that they liked about SAYTC was the use of 'levels'. When youths are good they move up to higher levels, gaining more and more privileges as they move towards level one. A lot of the youths also praised the programs that are offered in SAYTC and SAYRAC, indicating that many of them should be incorporated into the program which is being planned by the Aboriginal Sobriety Group.

All of the youths felt that it would be a good idea for the Sobriety Group to set up a place especially for Aboriginal youths. One youth indicated that he didn't like SAYTC because a lot of the white youths who come in are racist. When asked what sort of programs they thought should be available, most said anything as long as it gives them something to do and stops them from being bored. Specific ideas for programs that the youths came up with were: carpentry, ceramics, motor mechanics, metal work, gardening, farming, drawing, painting, leatherwork, welding, landscaping, music, cooking, sewing and shearing. Some youths also indicated that they would like to learn more about their culture, while some felt that youths should be given the opportunity to be educated, especially if they can't read or write. This need not be compulsory, however. One youth said that no-one should have to do school work unless they really wanted to do it.

Other things that the youths said that they'd like to do included motor bike riding, horse riding, rabbit shooting, camping, playing pool, playing table tennis, riding go-carts, playing computer games such as Sega or Nintendo, being able to go for their licence when they're sixteen, and being able to smoke. Sports were also mentioned by a lot of the youths, with one youth suggesting that they should form football and netball teams that could take part in local competitions.

One youth suggested that the youths should be responsible for themselves and that they should be allowed to do their own thing. They should cook and work in groups with other youths, and the role of the workers should be that of resource people who they could go to if they needed help. A couple of youths suggested that in order to make the place work the Sobriety Group would need to make it really 'good' and attractive, otherwise people wouldn't want to go there. One youth said:

*'...but really you just like, you get 'em, like, not to make it, you know like real shit and that you know. Just tell 'em to make it like real good and that and, that's the only way you're gonna keep someone out of trouble is, you know, gettin' something like building racing cars and going out racing against other people, you know'.*

One youth made a very important point. He said that if he was on heroin or coming off heroin he wouldn't consider going to the Sobriety Group's planned

centre. It would be too much for him. Perhaps youths who have serious drug problems may need to go through some form of detoxification before any programs are planned. One criticism made by a few of the youths who had been using the harder drugs before being locked up was that they had had a really bad time coming off them and that they had received very little help when they were taken into SAYTC and SAYRAC. Most youths were just left in a room until they came around, with panadol being the only relief that they were usually offered.

## Chapter 7.

### Summary Of The Major Research Findings

Before offering a discussion of the results of the study and how these results can be utilised, we will first provide a brief overview of the major research findings.

#### Results of the School Study

- About half of the Aboriginal school students reported that they never drink alcohol at all. However, from about fourteen years of age a large proportion of youths (over 50%) appear to take it up, with many of these youths suggesting that they drink large amounts of alcohol when they actually do drink.
- A large proportion (43.3%) of Aboriginal students reported having tried marijuana. Use of the 'harder' drugs, however, was found to be fairly rare.
- Non-Aboriginal students reported that they drink more often than Aboriginal students, although there was no difference in the extent to which they reported getting drunk. No significant difference was found between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students in the extent to which they reported having used other drugs.
- Although there was no difference found between males and females generally in relation to their level of overall delinquency, males reported having been involved in serious delinquent activities and acts of interpersonal aggression significantly more often than females.
- Similarly, while the level of overall delinquency did not differ significantly between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students, Aboriginal students were significantly more likely to have been involved in serious delinquent activities and to have acted aggressively towards other people. We suggested that social factors which disadvantage Aboriginal youths may account for these differences.
- Alcohol use was found to be significantly related to juvenile delinquency for Aboriginal students but not for those who are Non-Aboriginal. For serious delinquency in particular, there appears to be a relationship with alcohol use for the Aboriginal youths that does not seem to exist for the Non-Aboriginal students. However, only a minority of both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students who had committed particular offences reported that they had ever been drinking alcohol beforehand.
- Marijuana use was found to be closely related to delinquency for both the Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students.

To summarise then, there was little difference in the extent to which the Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students reported using alcohol or other drugs.

However, even though marijuana use was found to be related to juvenile delinquency for both the Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students, alcohol use appeared to be related to delinquency for the Aboriginal students only. Aboriginal students were also more likely to have been involved in serious delinquent and aggressive activities.

### **Interviews With Aboriginal Youths In Recreation Centres**

- Ten of the twelve youths interviewed had used both alcohol and marijuana. Five of these youths indicated that they use marijuana nearly every day and that they drink alcohol quite regularly.
- No other drug use was reported by the youths interviewed in the recreation centres except that one youth stated that he occasionally uses serepax and rohypnols.
- Eight of the ten youths who indicated that they had used marijuana and alcohol stated that they had been involved in quite serious offences when they had been under the influence of these substances. All of these youths had committed either a 'break and enter' or a car theft when they had been drunk or stoned. Few suggested that they ever commit crimes when they are straight.

In general, both high levels of drug use and delinquent behaviour were found among the sample of Aboriginal youth in the recreation centre, with substance abuse being a common precursor to delinquent behaviour.

### **Interviews With Aboriginal Youths In Correction Centres**

- Eleven of the fifteen youths interviewed stated that they have used alcohol. Eight of these youths suggested that they drink about once or twice a week.
- Marijuana use was found to be very extensive among the youths in the detention centres, with fourteen of the fifteen youths suggesting that they use marijuana at least weekly. Three of these youths suggested that they use it every day.
- Four of the youths indicated that they used to sniff liquid paper or petrol, although all of them suggested that they no longer do this. Four of the youths indicated that they had used rohypnols or serepax, two indicated that they had used speed quite regularly, and two youths had been dependent on heroin before being locked up.
- Peer Group pressure was identified as being the major 'cause' of both substance abuse and offending. This pressure was not overt, however. The youths simply found themselves in situations where other people were using drugs or committing crimes, and so just went along with whatever everyone else was doing.



- Boredom was also identified as being a common 'cause' of both substance abuse and offending.
- Substance abuse appeared to be related to juvenile crime in that youths commit crimes when they are under the influence of certain substance, and also in that crimes are committed in order to obtain alcohol and other drugs.
- Negative attitudes towards the Police in response to perceived unfair and sometimes abusive treatment, and a dislike of school also appeared to be contributing factors.

Interviews with youths in detention centres therefore reveal a high level of substance abuse among Aboriginal juvenile offenders. Substance abuse was found to be related to offending in that crimes are committed in order to obtain alcohol and other drugs when under the influence of these substances, and also in that both appear to have arisen from the common causes of "peer group pressure" and "boredom".

The above offers a brief summary of the major research findings. We will now discuss these results in more detail, and will offer suggestions as to how the results can be utilised in order to develop effective programs for dealing with Aboriginal substance abuse and juvenile delinquency.

## Chapter 8.

### Discussion of the Results and their Implications for Future Program Development

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between substance abuse and juvenile delinquency among Aboriginal youths. It is unique for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is one of the only studies that has examined the relationship as it specifically applies to Aboriginal youths living in an urban area. Secondly, quantitative methods which were employed to determine whether there is a relationship between juvenile offending and substance abuse were complemented by qualitative methods which allowed us to examine the nature of this relationship. A large part of this study involved allowing youths to tell their stories - these are their accounts in their own words. If our findings do not reflect the actual reality of how life is for them, they at least show us how the youths perceive their lives as being.

One important finding to arise from our study was the fact that, although alcohol use is quite extensive, the extent to which the youths use marijuana is much greater than was expected. While less than half of the Aboriginal school students reported that they had used alcohol, over forty percent indicated that they had used marijuana. Similarly, almost all of the youths interviewed in both the recreational and detention centres said that they use marijuana, with over half of the youths in the recreation centres and almost all of the youths in the detention centres indicating that they use it at least once a week. Alcohol use, however, was not found to be as extensive, with only about half of the youths indicating that they drink alcohol on a fairly regular basis. We would even go so far as to suggest that marijuana is used by more youths and is used more often than alcohol.

Substance abuse was found to be related to juvenile delinquency. This was demonstrated in a number of ways. Firstly, as was expected, the extent of substance abuse was found to be highest among the youths in detention centres, followed by youths in recreation centres, and was lowest among the school students. Substance abuse therefore increased as the youth populations became more delinquent. The results from the school studies also demonstrate the existence of a relationship between delinquency and substance abuse among Aboriginal youth. Those students who drink alcohol and who use marijuana to a larger extent are more likely to have been involved in delinquent activities.

While the results from the school questionnaire allowed us to demonstrate the existence of a relationship between substance abuse and juvenile delinquency, interviews with youths in recreational and correctional centres allowed us to gain some insight into the nature of this link. Substance abuse appears to be related to delinquency in two ways. Firstly, youths commit crimes when they are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Alcohol in particular appears to

have a disinhibitory effect. Youths run amok and do things that they probably would not do if they were sober, while mixing alcohol and rohypnols appears to be related specifically to the commission of violent crimes.

Secondly, youths commit crimes in order to get drugs or alcohol. These crimes usually involve 'ripping off' plants from people's back yards or stealing things in order to buy drugs. Youths who are dependent on heroin are particularly likely to be involved in crimes of this nature. They need to steal regularly in order to support their habit. Still, even youths who only use marijuana indicated that the main thing that they buy with the money they 'earn' through stealing is 'dope'. Committing crimes to get alcohol or drugs, then, is another way in which substance abuse is related to delinquency.

Substance abuse and juvenile delinquency were also found to be related in that both appear to have arisen from common 'causes'. By far the most common reason given for both was peer group pressure, with older brothers and cousins being particularly likely to have applied this pressure. The pressure to use drugs or to commit crimes, however, was not obvious and did not appear to be consciously applied. The youths did not feel like they 'had' to do something, but rather found themselves in situations where the group was using drugs or committing crimes, and so simply went along with whatever everyone else was doing.

This may account for why some youths reported committing offences while they were under the influence of marijuana, even though most felt that marijuana just makes them lazy and is not related to their involvement in juvenile crime at all. Committing crimes, drinking alcohol, and using other drugs are just things that the youths do when they are 'hanging out' with their group of friends. It is not surprising then to find that marijuana and juvenile offending go together - simply because smoking dope and committing crimes are associated with the same people in the same situations. The social context in which drugs are used then, and not just the physical effects that the drugs have, may account for why youths commit crimes when they are under the influence of particular substances.

Boredom was another factor that appears to be related to both substance abuse and juvenile delinquency. Having nothing to do was a common reason given for drinking, using other drugs, and committing crimes. Unemployment and school dissatisfaction were also found to be associated with this. Youths who haven't got jobs or who don't go to school because they find it inappropriate have a lot of time on their hands, and have nothing of value (for themselves or for the community) to do with this time. Negative relations with the Police may exacerbate the difficulties Aboriginal youth experience in their everyday lives and increase a tendency to behave aggressively with others.

The results from our study clearly demonstrate a relationship between Aboriginal juvenile delinquency and substance abuse, and so support the Aboriginal Sobriety Group's plan to establish a facility which will deal with juvenile offending and drug abuse. In fact, results from the school study suggest that Aboriginal school students are significantly more likely to have been involved in serious delinquent activities and acts of interpersonal aggression. While we wish to make it clear that it is the social disadvantage that affects Aboriginal youths and not the fact that they are Aboriginal which may lead to their higher level of involvement in delinquent behaviours, the finding that Aboriginal students were involved in serious delinquent activities more often than Non-Aboriginal students indicates that Aboriginal youths may be a group who require more intensive interventions in regard to juvenile offending, thus providing a strong case for developing a facility which caters specifically for Aboriginal youths.

Also, results from the school survey indicated that alcohol had an effect on the Aboriginal student's involvement in serious delinquent activities that it did not have for those students who were Non-Aboriginal. This suggests that it is even more important when developing programs for Aboriginal youths that issues to do with alcohol be addressed, which lends further support to the Sobriety Group's plan to deal with alcohol and drug issues in an effort to reduce juvenile offending among Aboriginal youths.

So far we have said that the findings from our study support the Aboriginal Sobriety Group's proposal to establish a facility which will deal with substance abuse and juvenile delinquency, but how can the findings from our study be used to help develop this facility? Firstly, the knowledge that we gained in regard to how youths are influenced by their friends should be kept in mind when planning any program that deals with juvenile offending or substance abuse. Usually when youths get into trouble they are sent away individually with other offenders, go through some program, and then are sent back home. While they are away they may decide that they don't want to use drugs or commit crimes any more, but once they get back with their friends they are influenced again and soon get back into their old way of life. When youths use drugs or commit crimes they are usually engaging in 'group behaviour', they lose their individuality and just do whatever everyone else is doing. Taking youths away individually and changing their attitude will not do any good if they go back to a group who are still using drugs and still committing crime.

We propose that instead of sending youths away on their own, the youth and the group that they hang around with should all be sent away and worked with together. By doing this we may be able to change the attitudes and behaviours of the whole group. This would ensure that what the youths learn and achieve while they are on the program will have a more long term effect and will have a better chance of being maintained once they return home. In order to do this we

need to make the facility extremely attractive so that the youth's friends will want to come up and spend some time there while the offenders are serving their sentences. That's why it's important to look at the things that the youths said they wanted in such a facility, the things that were discussed in Chapter 6. We need to have horse riding and motor bike riding at this facility, things that the youths will find enjoyable. Otherwise, youths will not want to go there, and nothing can be done to help these youths if we cannot even get them to attend.

Having youths involved in the running of programs themselves may prove to be a useful strategy in dealing with juvenile offending and substance abuse. As the youths progress further they could be given more and more responsibility. Eventually some of the youths could be employed by the Sobriety Group as workers. This would advantage not only the youths but the Sobriety Group as well. The youths would benefit because it would give them something important to do with their time and would give them a sense of pride. Because other youths would be looking up to them, this would put pressure on them not to return to a life of substance abuse and crime. The Sobriety Group would benefit in that they would be getting the best possible workers with the best possible experience, youths who had been in the same situation themselves. Finally, youths just entering the program would be given something to strive for. They would see youths who had been just like them in positions of respect and responsibility, positions that they too could achieve in the future.

The results from our study indicate that other issues apart from peer group pressure need to be addressed. Boredom was found to be a major contributor to both substance abuse and juvenile delinquency. When we asked why the youths weren't attending school (which is how most young people fill in their time), we found that for them school is largely irrelevant and that what they learn has nothing at all to do with their lives. If they were taught skills that would help them with day to day living or would help them to get a job, then the youths may find school more relevant and so might attend more regularly. Also, some of the youths said that when they don't understand something they are not given adequate help. More individual attention needs to be given to students when they are behind. It is particularly important if they are having trouble with the work because it is at this time that they might decide to give up and stop attending school all together.

Unemployment also contributes to boredom. In fact, unemployed youths commit crimes not only because they're bored but also because they haven't got any money. Until youth unemployment is greatly reduced, any efforts to deal with substance abuse and juvenile crime can never be completely effective. Another problem that has been identified is the lack of facilities that exist for youths out in the suburbs. Most of the services are in the city and so large numbers of youths congregate in town. Given the group nature of substance abuse and offending then, it is not surprising to find that when large numbers of youths get together in the city they often get into trouble. Efforts should be made

to establish facilities for youths in the suburbs. Youths could even be involved in running these facilities themselves, thereby helping to alleviate some of the boredom that for many contributes towards their involvement in juvenile crime and substance abuse.

Other important factors should also be considered when developing programs to deal with juvenile delinquency and substance abuse. The amount of poverty that exists is greatly underestimated by most. Youths indicated that they have to steal in order to fulfil basic human needs; many said that they steal to get food. Another common reason given for committing crimes was to get clothes. Some resented the fact that other youths have a lot while they have so little and so felt justified in going out and stealing in order to get what they wanted. At a more social or political level then, problems to do with poverty and inequality need to be addressed.

Another important issue that needs to be addressed is alcohol abuse in the home. While most youths did not say very much about their home situation, alcohol abuse by parents was often eluded to. Having parents who abuse alcohol must have a profound effect on the youth's lives and must contribute towards their own drug taking behaviour and to their involvement in juvenile crime. Just as it is no use sending youths away and working with them if they are going to return to a group of friends who are still using drugs and who are still committing crimes, there is no use in sending youths away if they are going to return to a home where their parents are still drinking or using other drugs. Efforts should be made, then, to deal with any substance abuse problems that the parents may have as well as dealing with the youth's own drinking and drug taking behaviour. The Aboriginal Sobriety Group could simultaneously work with youths and their parents, utilising the services that they already provide for adult Aboriginal people.

Finally, the relationship between the police and Aboriginal youths needs to be greatly improved. The amount of violence that the youths reported being subjected to by the police is totally unacceptable and suggests that the behaviour of the police needs to be more closely monitored. Aboriginal youths are constantly harassed by the police and by transit officers. Usually this harassment serves only to antagonise the youths and often creates more of a problem than the original one for which the police intervention was intended. Officers need to be taught about Aboriginal culture, about the situation in which many Aboriginal youths find themselves today, and about how to resolve conflict situations rather than fuel them. Until the relationship between the police and Aboriginal youths is greatly improved, Aboriginal youths will continue to rebel against the police and the laws that the police enforce.

We hope that this report will do more than simply confirm that there is a problem of delinquency associated with drug use among Aboriginal youth. It

should take us further, in helping to develop a deeper understanding of why this is so and the range of factors that are implicated in the association. By allowing us to gain some insight into the lives of the Aboriginal youths who participated in our study, we hope that this report will suggest ways in which some of the problems that face young Aboriginal people today can be addressed.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **School Questionnaire**

## Booklet A

**Please do not write your name  
anywhere in this booklet.**

The first part of this booklet asks you some questions about yourself and then asks you some questions about alcohol and other substances. Please try to answer all questions honestly by putting a tick in the box next to the answer that you think applies to you.

eg. Do you like Jimmy Barnes?

Yes

No

If you like Jimmy Barnes you would put a tick in the 'Yes' box, but if you don't like Jimmy Barnes you would put a tick in the 'No' box. I like Jimmy Barnes so I've put a tick in the 'Yes' box.

You do not have to write your name anywhere in this booklet and no-one from your school will see it so there is no way that anyone will be able to see what you have written.

Do not write  
in boxes

--	--	--

1. What sex are you?

Male

Female

[ ]

[ ]

2. What year are you in at school?

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

--	--

3. What age did you turn on your last birthday?

8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19+

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

--	--

4. Who do you usually live with? \_\_\_\_\_

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--	--

5a. Which country were you born in? \_\_\_\_\_

--	--

b. Which country was your: Mother born in? \_\_\_\_\_

--	--

Father born in? \_\_\_\_\_

--	--

6. Are you an Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander?

Yes

No

[ ]

[ ]

7. Write down your parent's present occupation (what job they've got now or whether they are unemployed or on a pension).

Your Father's Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

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Your Mother's Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Have you ever had a sip or a taste of alcohol (eg. beer, wine or spirits like Jim Beam, Southern Comfort, vodka, brandy, rum, scotch, bourbon)?

Yes	No
[ ]	[ ]

9. Have you ever had more than just a sip or a taste of alcohol, say a whole glass or more?

Yes	No
[ ]	[ ]

10. How many times have you had one or more alcoholic drinks?

Never	A few times	Lots of times
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

11. How often do you drink alcohol?

Never	Only Every Now and Then	About Once Or Twice A Week	Almost Every Day	Every Day
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

12. On a day when you do drink alcohol, how many drinks would you usually have?

I never Drink	1 or 2 Glasses	Between 2 and 5 Glasses	Between 5 and 10 Glasses	More than 10 Glasses
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

13. How often do you have a lot to drink?

Never	Only Every Now and Then	About Once Or Twice A Week	Almost Every Day	Every Day
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

14. Put a tick under which days of the week you usually drink on.  
(you can mark more than one box)

I don't usually drink	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

--	--

15a. How often do you drink alcohol in each of these places?

	never	occasionally	a lot
In your home.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
In a hotel or club.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
In the home of your friends.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
At a dance/disco.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
In a car.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
In a street.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
In a restaurant.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
In the open air (eg. in a park or on the beach).	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

  
  
  
  
  
  
  


15b. Where else do you drink alcohol (please write)\_\_\_\_\_

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16. How often do you drink alcohol...

	never	occasionally	a lot
With your parents?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
With other adults who are responsible for you?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
With a friend or friends?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
With people that you've just met?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
By yourself?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

  
  
  
  


17. In which of these places have you given someone money so that they could go up and buy you an alcoholic drink?  
 (you can mark more than one box)

- [ ] I have never got anyone to buy me alcohol
- [ ] Hotel or disco
- [ ] Licensed club (eg. a Football club)
- [ ] Bottle shop
- [ ] Other places (please write)\_\_\_\_\_

-----

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18. In which of these places have you gone up and paid for an alcoholic drink?

(you can mark more than one box)

- I have never gone up and paid for an alcoholic drink
- Hotel or disco
- Licensed club (eg. a Football club)
- Bottle shop
- Other places (please write)\_\_\_\_\_

19a. How do you get alcohol if you want it?

(you can mark more than one box)

- I never drink alcohol
- I buy it myself
- I get someone older to buy it for me
- My parents give it to me
- I get it from home without my parent's permission
- A friend buys it
- Some other way (please write)\_\_\_\_\_

19b. If you do buy alcohol yourself, how do you usually pay for it?

(you can mark more than one box)

- With money I earn
- With money I've been given
- With money I get through stealing
- Some other way (please write)\_\_\_\_\_

20a. About how old were you when you had your first alcoholic drink (not just a sip or a taste)?

I never have	Less than 8	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17 or older
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



20b. About how old were you when you first began to drink alcohol regularly?

I Don't drink regularly	Less than 8	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17 or older
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

21a. Which of these things do you drink?  
(you can mark more than one box)

- I never drink alcohol
- Alcoholic cider (eg. Strongbow)
- Low alcohol beer (light beer)
- Beer
- Spirits (eg. whiskey, rum & coke, Southern Comfort, UDL cans, vodka, Jim Beam, scotch, brandy etc.)
- Red or white wines
- Liqueur (eg. Tia Maria, Kahlua, Cherry Brandy, etc.)
- Port or sherry
- Wine Coolers (eg. St Tropez, West Coast Cooler)
- Other alcoholic drinks (please write)\_\_\_\_\_

  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  


21b. Which one do you drink the most and why (please write)\_\_\_\_\_

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22. How often have you ever felt any of the following as a result of drinking?

(mark only one box in each line)

	Very Often (more than once a week)	Fairly Often (more than once a month)	Only a few times	Only once	never
a. merry or happy	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
b. a bit drunk or funny	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
c. very drunk or sick	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
d. passed out (fainted)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

23. Here are some statements about drinking alcohol. How much do you agree or disagree with each statement?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know	
a. Sometimes when I've had a few drinks I feel more confident.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. People who drink alcohol are usually more popular than people who don't.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Sometimes when I've had a few drinks, I find I'm looking for a thrill.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. You can have a good time at a party where there is no alcohol.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. After I've had a few drinks I often get aggressive (aggro).	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. If people don't have a few drinks then they're not really part of the group.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>

24. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
a. Only idiots drink alcohol.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. People shouldn't drink until they're 18 and it's legal.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. It's okay to have one or two drinks, but people shouldn't get drunk.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. It's alright if people only get drunk every now and then.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. It's okay for people to get really drunk all the time if they want to.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>

25a. Below are a list of statements about why people drink. Please put a tick in the box next to each statement if it is a reason why you drink alcohol.

(you can mark more than one box)

- [ ] I never drink alcohol.
- [ ] I've only ever drunk it to see what it's like.
- [ ] I drink alcohol so that my friends will accept me.
- [ ] I drink because I'm bored and there's nothing else to do.
- [ ] I like being drunk. I like the feelings and sensations.
- [ ] I drink because I hate a lot of things about my life, drinking lets me escape and forget.
- [ ] I drink to relieve stress.
- [ ] It gives me the nerve to do things that I would never do if I was sober.
- [ ] I drink because I always have more fun when I'm drunk.
- [ ] I drink to rebel.
- [ ] Other reasons (please write)\_\_\_\_\_

  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  


25b. Which of these reasons is the main reason why you drink alcohol? (please write)\_\_\_\_\_

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26. Should someone be blamed for doing something wrong if they were really drunk when they did it? (mark one box only)

- |     |            |     |
|-----|------------|-----|
| Yes | Don't Know | No  |
| [ ] | [ ]        | [ ] |

Give a reason for your answer\_\_\_\_\_

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27a. How many of your friends drink alcohol?

None of them	A few of them	Most of them	All of them
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

27b. How often do they drink?

Never	Only Every Now and Then	About Once Or Twice A Week	Almost Every Day	Every Day
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

28. How often does your...

	Never	Only Every Now and Then	About Once Or Twice A Week	Almost Every Day	Every Day
Father drink?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Mother drink?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

29. How often do you smoke cigarettes?

Never	Occasionally	Regularly (all the time)
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

30a. Have you ever sniffed things like glue, petrol or thinners, or from spray cans in order to get high?

No	Yes, a few times	Yes, lots of times
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

30b. What sorts of things do you usually sniff (please write)\_\_\_\_\_

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31. How often do you...

	Never	I've tried it once or twice	occasionally	all the time	
a. Smoke or use marijuana (grass, hash, dope, ganja, cannabis)?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Take tranquilizers (eg. serepax)?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Use or take steroids?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Use or take amphetamines (speed, 'ecstasy', uppers)?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Use or take 'phinnies'?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Use or take cocaine or crack?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Use or take heroin or other narcotics (eg. methadone, morphine or pethidine) <u>without a doctor's prescription?</u>	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Use or take acid, LSD, 'trips', 'magic' mushrooms or other hallucinogens?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>

32. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
a. On the whole I am satisfied with myself.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. At times I think I am no good.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. I certainly feel useless at times.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal level with others.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Booklet B

This booklet asks you about some of the things that young people might do. Nearly everyone breaks some rules from time to time, especially when they are growing up.

To answer the questions, tick how many times you've done each of the following things - whether you've **never** done them, whether you've done them **once or a few times only**, or whether you've done them **lots of times**.

eg. How often have you...

	Never	Once or a few times only	Lots of times
1. Caught a bus?	[ ]	[ ]	[✓]
2. Won X-Lotto?	[✓]	[ ]	[ ]
3. Fallen asleep in class?	[ ]	[✓]	[ ]

I've caught a bus lots of times, fallen asleep in class twice, and never won X-Lotto.

Please try to answer all of the questions as honestly as you can. Remember, there is no way that anyone will be able to see what you have written.

## How often have you...

	Never	Once or a few times only	Lots of times	
1. Wagged school?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Done something that your parents did not want you to do?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Thrown stones or other things at people's houses?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Been picked up by the police for something that you <u>didn't</u> do?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Run away from home (at least overnight)?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Shop-lifted from supermarkets, department stores or shops?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Driven a car or a motor bike on the road without a driver's licence or a learner's permit?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Stolen money of less than \$10 (in one go) from shops, school, locker rooms, home, people's milk money, etc.?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Been late for school, a meeting, an appointment, etc.?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Purposely damaged school desks, windows, or other school property, eg., kicking holes in walls?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Been pushed around or hit by the police?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Broken into a house?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>



## How often have you...

	Never	Once or a few times only	Lots of times	
13. Put graffiti on walls, toilet doors, bus panels, or other public places?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Gone onto someone's land or into some house or building when you weren't supposed to be there?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Argued or had a fight with either of your parents?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Driven dangerously (eg. by doing 'doughnuts' or 'burn-outs' or by going really fast)?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Been loud and abusive to other people in public places?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Urinated or defecated (pissed or crapped) in public?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Stolen someone's mail or destroyed it?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Grabbed someone's handbag or some other type of bag and run off with it?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Driven a car or a motor bike when drunk?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Stolen money of more than \$10 in one go?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Purposely messed up other people's property, eg. turning on water taps in people's gardens, letting off fire crackers in mail boxes, burning rubbish bins, etc.?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>

## How often have you...

	Never	Once or a few times only	Lots of times	
24. Been warned by the police (but without being charged) for something that you did?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Told a lie to someone?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. Taken part in a fist fight in which one group of people was against another group of people?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. Taken something not belonging to you worth under \$50?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. Broken into a shop or supermarket?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. Gone to school drunk or high?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
30. Stolen money from your parents or other members of your family?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
31. Appeared before a Children's Aid Panel for something that you did?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
32. Hurt someone badly enough to need bandages or a doctor?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
33. Got a detention or been kept in at school?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
34. Taken something not belonging to you worth over \$50?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
35. Hung around in a group, hassling people?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>

## How often have you...

	Never	Once or a few times only	Lots of times	
36. Used a weapon (eg. gun, knife, club, baseball bat) to get something from a person?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
37. Watched people through their windows or doors without them knowing?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
38. Broken into a school?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
39. Bought something that you knew had been stolen?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
40. Appeared in the Children's Court for something that you did?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
41. Purposely damaged property by starting a fire?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
42. Used a weapon of some sort, eg. knife, stick, chains, or bottle in a fight?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
43. Purposely damaged things in public places, eg., telephone boxes, street signs, road lamps, etc.?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
44. Taken something from someone's purse or wallet?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
45. Cheated or stolen food, drinks, or other goods from dispenser machines, eg. by tilting or banging the machines, or using the 'wrong' coins?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
46. Raced with other vehicles while driving a car or a motor bike?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>

How often have you... °

	Never	Once or a few times only	Lots of times	
47. Sold marijuana or other drugs?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
48. Obtained free games from coin-operated space invaders or other game machines by cheating?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
49. Started a serious fight with another person?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
50. Driven an unregistered car?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
51. Stolen things or parts out of a car?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
52. Stolen a bicycle or parts of a bicycle?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
53. Gone to see an R film in a cinema?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
54. Failed to keep a promise?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
55. Got onto a bus or into a cinema, swimming pool, disco, etc., without paying the proper fee?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
56. Tricked someone on the telephone, eg. false restaurant bookings, false reports of fire alarms, bombs, etc.?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
57. Made abusive phone calls, eg. saying nasty and obscene things?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>
58. Made prank phone calls?	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	<input type="checkbox"/>

59. How often, if ever, have you been in a physical fight?

never  
[ ]

a few times  
[ ]

lots of times  
[ ]

If never,  
go to Question 60

a. Have you ever been drinking alcohol before getting into a fight?

Yes  
[ ]

No  
[ ]

b. Think about the last time that you got into a fight. How much alcohol had you had to drink beforehand?

No alcohol  
[ ]

A bit of alcohol  
[ ]

A lot of alcohol  
[ ]

60. How many times have you ever purposely hurt or beat someone up?

never  
[ ]

a few times  
[ ]

lots of times  
[ ]

If never,  
go to Question 61

a. Have you ever been drinking alcohol before you've hurt someone or beaten them up?

Yes  
[ ]

No  
[ ]

b. How much alcohol had you had to drink the last time that you beat someone up?

No alcohol	A bit of alcohol	A lot of alcohol
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

61. How often have you got money or something else off of another person by threatening to hurt them if they didn't hand it over, or by actually physically forcing them to give it to you?

never	a few times	lots of times
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

If never,  
go to Question 62

a. Have you ever been drinking alcohol before you've used threats or force to get something off of another person?

Yes	No
[ ]	[ ]

b. Think back to the last time that you got something off of another person by threatening them or by forcing them to give it to you. How much had you had to drink beforehand?

No alcohol	A bit of alcohol	A lot of alcohol
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

c. Below are some reasons why people might get things off of other people by using threats or by forcing them to hand something over. Please put a tick in the box next to each reason if it is a reason why you have used threats or force to get something off of another person.  
(you can tick more than one box)

- [ ] To get money for drugs or alcohol
- [ ] To get money for things other than drugs or alcohol
- [ ] Other reasons (please write)\_\_\_\_\_

-----  
-----  
-----

62. How many times, if ever, have you stolen a car?

- never [ ]                      a few times [ ]                      lots of times [ ]

If never,  
go to Question 63

a. Have you ever been drinking alcohol before stealing a car?

- Yes [ ]                      No [ ]

b. Think about the last time that you stole a car. How much alcohol had you had to drink beforehand?

- No alcohol [ ]                      A bit of alcohol [ ]                      A lot of alcohol [ ]

63. How often, if ever, have you broken into a house or building in order to get money or other things?

never                      a few times                      lots of times  
[ ]                              [ ]                              [ ]  
If never,

go to Question 64

a. Have you ever been drinking alcohol before you've broken into a house or building in order to steal something?

Yes                              No  
[ ]                              [ ]

b. How much alcohol had you had to drink before you broke into a house or building the last time?

No alcohol                      A bit of alcohol                      A lot of alcohol  
[ ]                              [ ]                              [ ]

c. Below are some reasons why people might break into houses or other buildings. Please put a tick in the box next to each reason if it is a reason why you have broken into a house or a building.

(you can tick more than one box)

- [ ] To get money for drugs or alcohol
- [ ] To get money for things other than drugs or alcohol
- [ ] Other reasons (please write) \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
-----  
-----



64. How often, if ever, have you put graffiti on or purposely damaged things (eg., sprayed graffiti on fences, walls, bus shelters or bus panels; smashed people's windows or smashed up telephone boxes etc.)?

never	a few times	lots of times
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

If never,  
go to Question 65

a. Have you ever been drinking alcohol before you've put graffiti on things or smashed them up?

Yes	No
[ ]	[ ]

b. How much alcohol had you had to drink the last time that you damaged property by spraying it with graffiti or by smashing it up?

No alcohol	A bit of alcohol	A lot of alcohol
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

65. Do you agree or disagree that drinking a lot of alcohol has the following effects on people?

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
a. It makes them more fun to be with.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
b. It makes them more violent.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
c. It makes them not care about what they are doing.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
d. It makes them ill.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
e. It makes them more likely to break the law.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

66. If you had ever used marijuana (grass, hashish or cannibas) would you have admitted it on this questionnaire?

Yes  
[ ]

Not sure  
[ ]

No  
[ ]

Thank you for completing this Questionnaire.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Additional School Exercises**

## Sentence Completion Task.

In this task you will be given the beginning of a sentence. Your job is to finish it off.

eg.

1. The Olympics were good because Australia won a lot of gold medals.

2. I get bored when I have to wait a long time for the bus.

You can write anything you want, anything that comes into your mind but remember, you don't have to do this task if you don't want to, only if you've got some time left at the end and you want something to do.

1. School \_\_\_\_\_

2. At home \_\_\_\_\_

3. I envy \_\_\_\_\_

4. Friends \_\_\_\_\_

5. At night \_\_\_\_\_

6. Aborigines \_\_\_\_\_

7. I feel the most proud of \_\_\_\_\_

8. My teachers \_\_\_\_\_

9. The laws we have \_\_\_\_\_

10. The future \_\_\_\_\_

11. When young people drink alcohol they \_\_\_\_\_

12. I fear \_\_\_\_\_

13. If someone is not part of the group \_\_\_\_\_

14. Our family \_\_\_\_\_

15. My greatest ambition\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16. When there is no-one else around I\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17. My greatest trouble\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

18. Young people get into trouble when\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

19. Sometimes when I think about myself\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

20. I feel hurt\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

21. Other people\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

22. Now and again I realize that\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

23. I get pleasure from\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

24. I am ashamed\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

25. Suicide\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

26. Fighting\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

27. I cannot understand what makes me\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

28. I am sorry\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you've still got some time left, we'd like to know what you think about kids drinking alcohol. It can be about what you think and feel about it, or it can be about your own personal experience.

You can write as much or as little as you like. You don't have to write anything if you don't want to. We're just giving you a chance for you to have your say.

## **Appendix 3**

### **Results from School Questionnaire**



**Table 1. Number of students who usually drink at these times.**

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Don't usually drink	43	51
Friday	1	2
Saturday	4	7
Sunday	1	1
Weekend	17	22
A few days a week	0	2

**Table 2. Number of Aboriginal students who drink alcohol at each of the following places.**

	Never	Occasionally	A lot
Your home	46	19	1
Hotel/Club	54	8	1
Friend's home	41	21	2
Dance/Disco	48	12	3
A car	52	8	3
A street	46	14	3
Restaurant	53	9	0
Open Air	39	18	5

**Table 3. Number of Aboriginal students who also wrote down that they drink at the following places.**

Party or Wedding	9
School	1
Other Relative's house	1
Camping	1
Drive-in	1

**Table 4. Number of Aboriginal students who drink with the following people.**

	Never	Occasionally	A lot
Parents	45	17	1
Other Adults	46	16	1
Friend/s	37	18	9
People just met	53	10	0
Yourself	55	9	0

**Table 5. Number of Aboriginal students who have ever got someone to buy them a drink at the following places.**

Hotel or Disco	10
Licensed Club	8
Bottle Shop	11

**Table 6. Number of Aboriginal students who have gone up and paid for a drink at the following places.**

Hotel or Disco	6
Licensed Club	6
Bottle Shop	7

**Table 7. Number of Aboriginal Students who get alcohol in the following ways.**

Buy it myself	8
Get someone older to buy it	12
Parents give it to me	13
Get from home without permission	7
Friend buys it	17

\*Plus two wrote down they steal it and one wrote down that they take it from friend's houses without their friend's parent's permission.

**Table 8. Number of Aboriginal students who pay for alcohol in the following ways.**

With money I earn	14
With money I've been given	12
With money I steal	4

**Table 9. Number of students who had first drink at each age level.**

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Never drink	17	20
Less than 8	1	8
8	3	4
9	1	6
10	5	7
11	4	6
12	7	11
13	7	5
14	7	8
15	6	6
16	2	3
17+	1	1

**Table 10. Number of students who had begun drinking regularly at each age level.**

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Never drink	37	46
Less than 8	0	3
8	0	0
9	0	0
10	3	0
11	1	2
12	4	2
13	1	2
14	3	5
15	3	5
16	3	5
17+	3	4

**Table 11. Number of Aboriginal students who drink the following things.**

Cider	8
Light Beer	4
Beer	22
Spirits	28
Wine	6
Liqueur	7
Port/Sherry	5
Wine Coolers	12

**Table 12. Number of Aboriginal students who drink for the following reasons.**

	Number who said it is a reason why they drink	Number who said it's the main reason why they drink
Only ever drank to see what it's like	22	7
So my friend's will accept me	3	-
Because I'm bored and there's nothing else to do	5	-
I like being drunk. I like the feelings/sensations	6	1
I hate a lot of things about my life. Can escape	11	5
To relieve stress	10	1
Gives me the nerve to do things	9	1
Have more fun when I'm drunk	12	5
Drink to rebel	3	-
To be social/have a good time with friends*	-	1
Because of hassles with parents*	-	3
Because I feel like it*	-	1
Because it's a special occasion*	1	-
To have a drink with my parents*	1	-

(\*These answers were written down by the students when they were asked to give 'other reasons' for drinking, they were not given on the questionnaire)

**Table 13. Number of Aboriginal students who agree and disagree with the following statements.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Sometimes when I've had a few drinks I feel more confident	4	17	11	1	27
People who drink are usually more popular than people who don't	0	5	27	10	17
Sometimes when I've had a few drinks I find I'm looking for a thrill	2	10	18	9	20
You can have a good time at a party where there's no alcohol	25	15	9	2	9
After I've had a few drinks I often get aggressive	3	4	22	13	18
If people don't drink then they're not really part of the group	2	7	25	17	10
Only idiots drink alcohol	6	11	22	11	11
People shouldn't drink till they're 18 and it's legal	15	24	14	2	9
It's okay to have 1 or 2 drinks but people shouldn't get drunk	14	23	10	1	14
It's ok if people only get drunk every now and then	11	36	4	2	10
It's ok for people to get really drunk all the time if they want to	4	11	15	22	10

**Table 14. Number of Non-Aboriginal students who agree and disagree with the following statements.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Sometimes when I've had a few drinks I feel more confident	3	18	14	13	32
People who drink are usually more popular than people who don't	5	5	27	24	19
Sometimes when I've had a few drinks I find I'm looking for a thrill	6	11	14	17	30
You can have a good time at a party where there's no alcohol	36	25	6	7	9
After I've had a few drinks I often get aggressive	1	7	14	30	27
If people don't drink then they're not really part of the group	1	3	25	33	18
Only idiots drink alcohol	14	12	33	14	10
People shouldn't drink till they're 18 and it's legal	21	27	25	5	7
It's okay to have 1 or 2 drinks but people shouldn't get drunk	22	33	16	5	9
It's ok if people only get drunk every now and then	7	39	16	10	12
It's ok for people to get really drunk all the time if they want to	7	11	24	32	12

**Table 15. Number of Aboriginal students who gave the following reasons for blaming or not blaming people for doing something wrong if they were drunk at the time.**

It's no excuse, they're still responsible	6
It's their fault for drinking, they shouldn't have got drunk in the first place	6
You can say 'no' no matter how drunk you are.	1
Should be blamed, if not they may use it as an excuse and keep doing it	1
Sometimes they don't know what they're doing	8
It's not their fault	1
The alcohol makes them act like that	2
It depends on the situation	2

**Table 16. Number of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal student's friends who drink alcohol.**

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
None of them	14	32
A few of them	29	33
Most of them	20	18
All of them	3	6

chi-square=5.12, df=3, p>.05

**Table 17. Number of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students whose friends drink alcohol to the following extent.**

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Never	14	32
Every Now and Then	37	45
Once or twice a week	12	7
Almost every day	3	2
Every day	0	1

chi-square=7.6, df=4, p>.05

**Table 18. Number of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students whose Fathers drink alcohol to the following extent.**

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Never	12	14
Every Now and Then	27	39
Once or twice a week	9	24
Almost every day	7	6
Every day	4	4

chi-square=4.0, df=4, p>.05

**Table 19. Number of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students whose Mothers drink alcohol to the following extent.**

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Never	20	31
Every Now and Then	33	44
Once or twice a week	5	8
Almost every day	4	4
Every day	1	1

chi-square=0.51, df=4. p>.05

**Table 20. The extent to which Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students smoke cigarettes.**

	Never	Occasionally	Regularly
Aboriginal	45	8	14
Non-Aboriginal	68	11	10

**Table 21. Number of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students who reported that they had tried sniffing the following substances.**

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Petrol	5	1
Glue	3	1
Liquid Paper	1	2



**Table 22. Number of Aboriginal students who agreed and disagreed that alcohol has the following effects on people.**

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
It makes them more fun to be with	17	20	23
It makes them more violent	35	11	13
It makes them not care about what they're doing	41	7	12
It makes them ill	39	6	15
It makes them more likely to break the law	40	4	15

**Table 23. Number of Non-Aboriginal students who agreed and disagreed that alcohol has the following effects on people.**

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
It makes them more fun to be with	19	45	16
It makes them more violent	55	13	8
It makes them not care about what they're doing	61	9	7
It makes them ill	57	7	12
It makes them more likely to break the law	58	10	9

## **Appendix 4**

### **School Questionnaire - Delinquency Results**

## Items included in delinquency scales

### Minor Delinquency Items:

- Wagged school.
- Done something that your parents did not want you to do.
- Been late for school, a meeting, an appointment, etc.
- Argued or had a fight with either of your parents.
- Told a lie to someone.
- Got a detention or been kept in at school.
- Watched people through their windows or doors without them knowing.
- Cheated or stolen food, drinks, or other goods from dispenser machines, eg. by tilting or banging the machines, or using the 'wrong' coins.
- Obtained free games from coin-operated space invaders or other game machines by cheating.
- Gone to see an R film in a cinema.
- Failed to keep a promise.
- Got onto a bus or into a cinema, swimming pool, disco, etc., without paying the proper fee.

### Moderate Delinquency Items:

- Thrown stones or other things at people's houses.
- Run away from home (at least overnight).
- Shop-lifted from supermarkets, department stores or shops.
- Stolen money of less than \$10 (in one go) from shops, school, locker rooms, home, people's milk money, etc.
- Put graffiti on walls, toilet doors, bus panels, or other public places.
- Gone onto someone's land or into some house or building when you weren't supposed to be there.
- Driven dangerously (eg. by doing 'doughnuts' or 'burn-outs' or by going really fast).
- Been loud and abusive to other people in public places.
- Stolen someone's mail or destroyed it.
- Stolen money of more than \$10 in one go.
- Purposely messed up other people's property, eg. turning on water taps in people's gardens, letting off fire crackers in mail boxes, burning rubbish bins, etc.
- Been warned by the police (but without being charged) for something that you did.
- Taken part in a fist fight in which one group of people was against another group of people.
- Taken something not belonging to you worth under \$50.
- Gone to school drunk or high.
- Stolen money from your parents or other members of your family.
- Taken something not belonging to you worth over \$50.
- Hung around in a group, hassling people.

- Bought something that you knew had been stolen.
- Taken something from someone's purse or wallet.
- Raced with other vehicles while driving a car or a motor bike.
- Started a serious fight with another person.
- Stolen things or parts out of a car.
- Stolen a bicycle or parts of a bicycle.
- Tricked someone on the telephone, eg. false restaurant bookings, false reports of fires alarms, bombs, etc.
- Made abusive phone calls, eg. saying nasty and obscene things.
- Made prank phone calls.

### **Serious Delinquency Items:**

- Purposely damaged school desks, windows, or other school property, eg., kicking holes in walls.
- Broken into a house,
- Grabbed someone's handbag or some other type of bag and run off with it.
- Driven a car or a motor bike when drunk.
- Broken into a shop or supermarket.
- Appeared before a Children's Aid Panel for something that you did.
- Hurt someone badly enough to need bandages or a doctor.
- Used a weapon (eg. gun, knife, club, baseball bat) to get something from a person.
- Broken into a school.
- Appeared in the Children's Court for something that you did.
- Purposely damaged property by starting a fire.
- Used a weapon of some sort, eg. knife, stick, chains, or bottle in a fight.
- Purposely damaged things in public places, eg., telephone boxes, street signs, road lamps, etc.

### **Interpersonal Aggression Items:**

- Been loud and abusive to other people in public places.
- Grabbed someone's handbag or some other type of bag and run off with it.
- Taken part in a fist fight in which one group of people was against another group of people.
- Hurt someone badly enough to need bandages or a doctor.
- Hung around in a group, hassling people.
- Used a weapon (eg. gun, knife, club, baseball bat) to get something from a person.
- Used a weapon of some sort, eg. knife, stick, chains, or bottle in a fight.
- Started a serious fight with another person.
- Made abusive phone calls, eg. saying nasty and obscene things.
- Purposely hurt or beat someone up.
- Got money or something else off of another person by threatening to hurt them if they didn't hand it over, or by actually physically forcing them to give it to you.

**Table 1. ANOVA results to determine the effects of gender and being Aboriginal on involvement in delinquent activities when age was controlled for.**

Delinquency type:	MAIN EFFECTS		2-WAY INTERACTION
	Gender (F-value)	Whether Aboriginal or not (F-value)	Gender X Whether Aboriginal or not (F-value)
Minor Delinquency	.02	.34	.36
Moderate Delinquency	3.15	4.36*	.28
Serious Delinquency	5.42*	13.85***	.46
Overall Delinquency	2.72	3.37	.1
Interpersonal Aggression	6.83*	9.4**	1.64

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

Note: 1. All had df=1.

**Table 2. Number of students whose Fathers are unemployed or on a pension.**

Unemployed/ Pension	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
yes	15	10
no	27	62

chi-square=7.38, df=1, p<.01

**Table 3. Number of students whose Mothers are unemployed or on a pension.**

Unemployed/ Pension	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
yes	14	13
no	18	43

chi-square=4.04, df=1, p<.05

**Table 1. ANOVA results to determine the effects of gender and being Aboriginal on involvement in delinquent activities when age was controlled for.**

Delinquency type:	MAIN EFFECTS		2-WAY INTERACTION
	Gender (F-value)	Whether Aboriginal or not (F-value)	Gender X Whether Aboriginal or not (F-value)
Minor Delinquency	.02	.34	.36
Moderate Delinquency	3.15	4.36*	.28
Serious Delinquency	5.42*	13.85***	.46
Overall Delinquency	2.72	3.37	.1
Interpersonal Aggression	6.83*	9.4**	1.64

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

Note: 1. All had df=1.

**Table 2. Number of students whose Fathers are unemployed or on a pension.**

Unemployed/ Pension	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
yes	15	10
no	27	62

chi-square=7.38, df=1, p<.01

**Table 3. Number of students whose Mothers are unemployed or on a pension.**

Unemployed/ Pension	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
yes	14	13
no	18	43

chi-square=4.04, df=1, p<.05

**Table 4. Mean scores on delinquency and aggression scales for students according to whether or not their Mother is unemployed or on a pension.**

	Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal	
	Unemployed/ Pension	Not Unemployed/ Pension	Unemployed/ Pension	Not Unemployed/ Pension
Minor Delinquency	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.7
Moderate Delinquency	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.2
Serious Delinquency	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.1
Overall Delinquency	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.3
Aggression	1.6	1.4	1.3	1.2

**ANOVA results:**

Delinquency type:	MAIN EFFECTS		2-WAY INTERACTION
	Mother Unemployed or not (F-value)	Whether Aboriginal or not (F-value)	Mother Unemployed or not X Whether Aboriginal or not (F-value)
Minor Delinquency	1.3	<.002	.14
Moderate Delinquency	5.1*	4.7*	.20
Serious Delinquency	2.5	11.6**	.03
Overall Delinquency	3.9	3.9	.04
Interpersonal Aggression	5.5*	7.1**	.08

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

**Table 5. Number of students who usually live with the following people.**

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Both Parents	31	66
Mother+Stepfather	4	7
Father+Stepmother	0	1
Mother	21	11
Father	3	1
Grandparent/s	4	1
Other relations	1	0
Friend's parents	0	1
INC/Foster Care	2	0
Sibling/Friend	0	1

**Table 6. Mean scores on delinquency and aggression scales for students according to whether or not they live with both of their parents.**

	Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal	
	Live both parents	Don't live both parents	Live both parents	Don't live both parents
Minor Delinquency	1.7	1.8	1.6	2.0
Moderate Delinquency	1.3	1.6	1.3	1.5
Serious Delinquency	1.2	1.4	1.1	1.2
Overall Delinquency	1.4	1.6	1.3	1.5
Aggression	1.3	1.6	1.2	1.3

**ANOVA results:**

Delinquency type:	MAIN EFFECTS		2-WAY INTERACTION
	Whether live both parents (F-value)	Whether Aboriginal or not (F-value)	Whether live both parents X Whether Aboriginal or not (F-value)
Minor Delinquency	10.53**	.32	1.57
Moderate Delinquency	13.59***	2.37	.02
Serious Delinquency	9.86**	8.37**	1.51
Overall Delinquency	13.82***	1.81	.01
Interpersonal Aggression	14.62***	4.11*	2.58

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001



## **Appendix 5**

### **Interview Schedule - Recreation Centres**

How old are you?

Are you at school, working, unemployed?

What sorts of things do you do in your spare time?

IF DON'T BRING UP DRINKING:

What about drinking, do you drink alcohol?

IF THEY SAY THEY DON'T DRINK, MAKE THE QUESTIONS GENERAL  
"KIDS YOU KNOW WHO DRINK".

How old were you when you started?

Do most of your friends drink?

What sorts of things do you drink?

How much do you drink?

How often?

How do you get it?

Whereabouts do you drink?

Why do you drink?

What about drugs, what other things do you use?

IF THEY DO USE ANY DRUGS:

How often do you use it?

How do you get it? (MAYBE)

What other sorts of things are being used (friends, people you know, things you've heard about, etc.)

When you've been drinking (or taking drugs) what sorts of things do you get up to?

IF THEY DON'T TALK ABOUT DELINQUENT ACTIVITIES:

Do you ever do things that could get you into trouble, that are illegal? What sorts of things?

Do you only do these things when you've been drinking/taking drugs?

How are you/people you've heard about treated by the police?

What sorts of things could be done to help young people who have a problem with drinking or drugs?

What sorts of things could be done to help young people who get into trouble with the law?