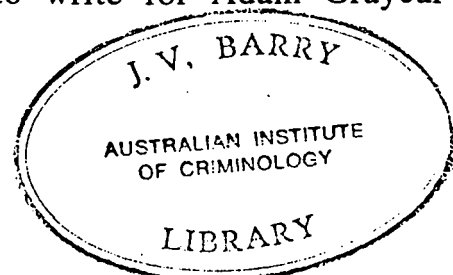


Final Report for the Criminology Research Council of the
Alternatives to Violence Program At Moreton Correctional
Centre, as at 18th February, 1997

- 1.0 Period Covered. This final report covers the whole period of this research project, from early 1993 to date. It will refer briefly to processes and procedures that have been covered in greater detail in progress reports that have already been provided to the CRC from time to time.
- 2.0 Function of this report This report does not constitute the major research outcome of this CRC grant. That role is fulfilled by the completed videotape - Another Way - which will be broadcast on SBS television on May 21st, 1997 at 8.30pm (prime time for SBS documentaries). This report provides a brief summary of the research process and tabulates in a written form, some of the conclusions which this researcher has come to. To understand the basis for these conclusions, a reader is referred to the above videotape, to be broadcast as noted above and available in multiple copies in CRC Libraries.
- 3.0 Timing and Process of actual research vis a vis original plan. As detailed by the progress reports, the time frame and research outcomes for this project differed somewhat from the original application. It was initially envisaged that the research would be completed during the course of 1994, with a script ready for submission to broadcasters - and an associated 'show reel' - the main research outcomes.

In practice, the funded research went on over a longer period from mid 1994 until the end of 1996. Because Griffith University acquired a broadcast quality non linear editing facility, it was possible to use the money to achieve much more than I originally intended. The CRC monies enabled me to complete the longitudinal research and to complete the video up until 'fine cut' stage. Monies from a sale to SBS have subsequently enabled me to complete the documentary sound post production, including specially commissioned music.

- 4.0 Research Conclusions. These will be developed further in a 'Trends and Issues' paper that I have arranged to write for Adam Graycar



- the timing for this has not yet been determined but I would envisage this being completed by the end of 1997.

- The Alternatives to Violence programme certainly does not constitute an 'answer' to a set of complex negative behaviours that accounted for the imprisonment of the cohort of workshop participants. This is not however, something that the organisation claims to offer nor a criteria by which any known rehabilitation programme could be fairly judged a success.

- The Alternatives to Violence programme clearly functions effectively to increase a sense of empathy and connection between workshop participants. Over a period of years, as multiple workshops were held in Moreton Correctional Centre with a population of considerable stability, this has had some positive effects on the overall atmosphere of the correctional centre. This conclusion was endorsed by inmates, custodial staff and the programmes manager. This effect was possibly increased by the fact that a number of custodial and programmes staff had also done the workshops. Even though these workshops were run separately, several people noted the sense of 'common ground' that this created in a way that is unusual in correctional centre culture.

- As an organisation almost totally dependent upon volunteer labour, the quality of the five Alternatives to Violence programme workshops that I closely observed in the course of this research varied according to the commitment of the community volunteers and the number of stresses going on elsewhere in their personal and professional lives. This became particularly evident in the third workshop of the main series that I filmed where significant tensions had arisen in the facilitation group prior to the workshop beginning and there had not been the time to resolve these adequately before the workshops began. This conflict spilled over into the workshop itself and had an effect on its quality.

- It is also true however that the 'volunteer', 'community outreach' nature of the the AVP programme was one of the most positive aspects of the workshops for many inmate participants. One participant - Tom - for instance in summing up his opinion of the programme said:

For me, a major element that has helped me is these people. They've shown me that there are people out there who do care and that there are friendly people out there. And this helps me to break down any beliefs I have of society being against me

Furthermore, the organisation has a number of strategies in place to deal with such conflicts when they arise, and the sophistication of these strategies has increased over the past four years. These include regular debriefing sessions for both inmate and community facilitators after each workshop.

Perhaps the simplest way to embody my conclusions as a whole is to quote from the first person narration at the conclusion of the video:

My journey has convinced me how important it is to try and keep kids outside of a system that's so hard to escape once you're sucked into it.

Change is possible. But even harder than I imagined.

For the people doing programmes it must seem sometimes that they're just holding on. But treading water's better than drowning. And small changes do matter. Because people doing time won't always be inside. We're all in this together.

5.0 Finally, I would like to thank the Criminology Research Council once again for its support for a documentary that may not otherwise have been produced and broadcast and which should bring some of the issues of individual and community responsibility for crime and rehabilitation to a broader audience than would ordinarily be the case in relation to academic research.