

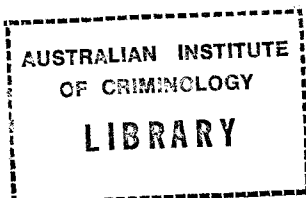
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THE JUVENILE OFFENDER IN VICTORIA

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First Report of a Research Project Financed  
by the Criminology Research Council's Grant  
16 of 1973.



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## Preface

The absence of definitive data relating to juvenile offending in Victoria has resulted in speculation, generalisation and over-statement.

In an attempt to produce solid data which will allow social planning in this field, the Australian Criminology Research Council granted the funds to allow this project to be undertaken.

The following describes the juvenile offender in Victoria based on 1972 information. The references included are by no means exhaustive but were used because they were either local (Australian) or contemporary.

The full value of the data collected will become apparent with the more comprehensive analyses that will follow this Report.

## Acknowledgements

The author is most grateful to:

- the Criminology Research Council for the grant,
- the Magistrates and the Police Prosecutors at the Children's Court for their kindness in providing the records on which this study is based,
- the clerical work-force who completed the laborious coding of these records so diligently, and
- the members of his family who 'rallied to the cause',
- the exhausted typistes at the Criminology Department.

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## THE JUVENILE OFFENDER IN VICTORIA

### Current Knowledge

Serious students of juvenile offending in Victoria have only restricted historical material at their disposal. Meadows ( 41 ) provided the first formal review of juvenile offending in Victoria. While admitting that reported juvenile offences fluctuated greatly between the years 1911 to 1943 Meadows points out that there was definitely an upward trend in juvenile cases appearing before the Children's Court. His work went on to define more accurately the times at which delinquent activity took place and those areas of metropolitan Melbourne which seemed to contribute greatly to the overall phenomenon. In the belief that organised leisure time activities would help stem the trend he had noticed, Meadows also reviewed the areas of recreational reserves, youth clubs and so forth available to young people within those areas.

Mr. Justice Barry as Chairman of the Juvenile Delinquency Advisory Committee set up by the Victorian Government produced a report in 1956 which is still the most authoritative document with respect to juvenile offending in the State. ( 50 ) This Committee was required to investigate "the causes and extent of juvenile delinquency in Victoria, so that the measures, legislative and administrative, which ought to be taken in the interest of the public and of the persons involved may be determined". After almost 20 years many of the recommendations of that Committee have still not been implemented. Consider for example the recommendation that there should be a special police juvenile offender unit, or that recommendation which stated that all school classes should not contain more than 30 pupils. (While there is an encouraging trend in this latter direction, this ideal has yet to become universal.)

Within Barry's report there is a section describing juvenile delinquency which shows once again an increasing trend in the number of offenders detected from 1943 to 1954.

Additionally the inner-suburban delinquency area, the poor recreational facilities, the effect of broken families and alcoholism and the poor educational achievement of the young people involved were pointed out.

The data relating to children's court appearances in 1966 was the subject of some research activity but the analysis of that data, which would have provided a more contemporary data base than Barry's 1956 material, was never comprehensively published. However three papers by Biles ( 2, 3 & 4 ) give a resumé of that 1966 study, and these remain the extent of contemporary data relating to the local situation.

Further information relating to juvenile offenders can be found in less formal publications. Manning's "The Bodgie" (40) gives an academic description with case studies of youths who were members of the Australian bodgie and widgie cult of the late 1950's. Additionally semi-fictional work such as Dick's "A Bunch of Ratbags" (11) gives an impression of a Victorian juvenile delinquent which may accurately depict a large number of that group of persons coming from socially deprived areas such as "Goodway". Terry Cooke in that work, and Kenny McCarthy in Dick's more recent work "Naked Prodigal" (12) both convey an idea of what constitutes a juvenile offender in Victoria and on such descriptions many appear to base their statements. A third source of information about young offenders comes from the popular press. Consider the following description of a typical delinquent as the local press perceives him -

"Johnny is (now) 21. His father was a drunkard who often beat his wife in front of Johnny ...a couple of times he tried to attack his father. Johnny left school ... at 14.

He ran away from home...for 2 weeks and lived in a car with two older mates. Police charged him with being a child in need of care and protection. He spent four months in custody before release to the care of his mother. Since then Johnny has drifted into crime. At 15 stealing from a shop brought 12 months' probation; at 16½, illegal use of a car and stealing from a car earned him 4 months in a Youth Training Centre. At 17 he was sent to a Youth Training Centre for six months for having been unlawfully on premises." (21 )

While the local scene is sparingly documented, the same cannot be said of juvenile delinquency in other places. Places as disparate as Nigeria and Japan for instance have been the subject of recent descriptive papers (45, 65 ). Comparing Victoria with any other place on which delinquency has been well documented is a risky undertaking. However, England is possibly the best comparison as its legal traditions were the basis for local development, notwithstanding the fact that Australian children's courts preceded the British. With this in mind West's "The Young Offender" ( 61) is a fine review of the field. The facts and theories propounded in that book are quite compatible with the local situation.

West points out that the disillusionment of the older generation with respect to the behaviour of their children is by no means a new phenomena. In 1818 adults were bemoaning the behaviour of their young and since that time West points out an increasing number of young people have been apprehended by authorities for anti-social behaviour. While changes in the methods of collecting official statistics explain away some amount of the increase West sees increased efforts by the police discovering more juvenile offenders each year.

Locally Wilson (64 ) believes there is no reliable evidence to indicate that the delinquency rate is rising. Kraus ( 29) has produced figures that would indicate at least in New South Wales the apparent increase is not as grave as it would seem.

#### Official Records of Young Offenders

The problem with any discussion of increasing juvenile offending rates is that the basis for their calculation is official police statistics. The vagaries in collecting crime statistics have been well documented elsewhere. [See for instance Walker ( 60)]. The statistics relating to young offenders are particularly difficult as it is a common belief that all young people at some time indulge in anti-social activity which could bring them to police attention, this feature increasing substantially the 'dark figure' involved. The investigation of the extent of undetected juvenile offending has been the subject of many studies.

For instance, Erickson and Empey (15 ) undertook a most rigorous test of official records by very intensive interviewing of 180 young people consisting of non-offenders, once-only offenders and delinquents both within and without institutions. These 180 people aged between 15 and 17 admitted to 121,471 offences an average of 675 offences per person! Larcenies accounted for 24,199 offences (of which 15,175 involved goods worth less than \$2). There were 23,946 traffic offences and 21,698 related to offences involving the purchase and drinking of alcohol. "More than nine times out of ten - almost ten times out of ten - most offences go undetected and unacted upon". Overall these authors found that "official records seemed more accurate in reflecting an individual's single most serious violation than the pattern of offences, either serious or non-serious, which he most commonly commits".



This low rate of detection quoted above is supported by Gold (20) who found that young people perceive their chances of getting caught in illegal activity as quite low. Indeed more than 80 per cent of Gold's sample said their chances of getting away with an offence were better than 50-50. The older and more serious offenders saw the risk of detection as even lower. In a later work Gold with Williams (63) found that official delinquents were somewhat different from other young people whose behaviour had not been detected. Some differences were noted between these two groups with respect to sex, age, race and socio-economic status. Gold explains away some of this difference by pointing out that younger children and girls by committing fewer offences are less often caught than older children and boys.

The apparent gravity of undetected delinquent behaviour instanced above, is hopefully not typical of the Australian situation. In New South Wales Sutton (59) gave a self-reporting delinquency inventory to over 500 youngsters. 90 per cent of them claimed they would not indulge in illegal activities that were put to them but even so that response gave a higher rate than was expected from official statistics. The same questions administered to 324 Victorian adolescents revealed a slightly higher propensity towards illegal acts. (7)

Notwithstanding the problems raised in the above official statistics remain a solid base for any undertaking such as this.

#### The Victoria Police and the Juvenile Offender

After the apprehension of a juvenile offender the Victoria Police have some discretion in their further dealings with that person. Instead of causing the child to appear before a children's court the police can implement an official warning as set out in their Standing Orders. Order number 311 allows " a responsible police officer ...to lecture... in the presence of a parent or guardian...any juvenile first offender" who may thus be saved "from a life of delinquency by allowing him to escape whatever stigma may come from an appearanc before the Court".

That the detected offender is not formally presented before the court does not mean that his behaviour is of any less concern to society at large. For this reason any discussion of juvenile offending should include those offenders dispatched with in this way.

Too little research has been undertaken into the police warning system in Victoria but a similar system operating in New South Wales has been investigated. Kraus ( 32 ) pursued for five years the criminal careers of 32 juvenile offenders given "court cautions" with 32 matched probationers. With respect to future offending no significant difference was noticed between the two groups.

English police have a wider power of caution which they institute for adult offenders too. Steer ( 58 ) established there were four main reasons for police using cautions. In summary, these were, when the complainant declined to prosecute (as in domestic arguments), where victims were voluntary participants in the offence (carnal knowledge cases), where there was a lack of sufficient evidence to obtain a conviction in a court of law and lastly, where the offenders' circumstances (age, bad health, etc.) prevailed upon them.

The reasons for Victoria Police warning juvenile offenders are probably best placed under the fourth reason above, that of the age of the offender. Indeed the wording of Section 311 shows a genuine concern for the fate of the young person in question.

The Children's Court in Victoria suffers from the difficulty in dealing with two particularly different facets of law-breaking. Clunies-Ross ( 8 ) describes the dilemma of the local children's court's "mixture of law-enforcement and

social welfare functions" resulting in the conflict between the demands of the law and the needs of the child.

This difficulty inherent in the court's dealing with care and protection applications and illegal behaviour is certainly not restricted to Victoria. The American McNulty's "The Right to be Left Alone", ( 39) talks of the irreconcilable ambivalence thrust upon the court. She defines the court's dealing with "minors in need of supervision" as over-reach. She believes "the schools should handle truancy, (and) the family should cope with disobedience". This stand is particularly strongly expressed but is typical of much overseas thinking at the moment.

In some cases the police seem to believe that an appearance before a Magistrate may be sufficiently salutary to ensure that child's non offending in the future. Snyder (56) discovered that most children thought that their being taken to court was quite fair. However, while most of them felt fear there was little shame and no guilt. Whether this American study reflects the local situation at all is a moot point and could only be verified by reference to rates of recidivism.

#### The Data and Its Source

After apprehending a juvenile offender the police are required to complete a standard Victoria Police Form No. 276. This form requires details of the offences, the offender **and** sociological data, as well as providing room for the police concerned to suggest remedial action and to make further comments.

The bravado, cunning or dishonesty of the child in assisting with the completion of this form by answering police questions, may be a problem. However, those three characteristics by no means typify juvenile offenders apprehended by the

Victoria Police. Most young offenders who find themselves being questioned in a police station appear to respond courteously and apparently honestly. That minority to whom reference was made above tend to constitute a group returning time and time again to the attention of the police. To the extent that they continually offend, further data is available from which checks of the sample data were often possible.

Additionally a slip of the police pen, or more probably a misplaced finger on the station typewriter can cause errors whose existence is realised. Despite these problems confidence in the collected data is high.

During the calendar year 1972 at least 8559 cases were presented before the Victorian children's courts. While the actual number of cases may have been even higher, data relating to each of those mentioned above was available for analysis through the co-operation and kindness of the magistrates of the Melbourne Children's Court.

In the same period of time 2290 forms 276 relating to official police warnings were made available from senior police prosecutors at the children's courts.

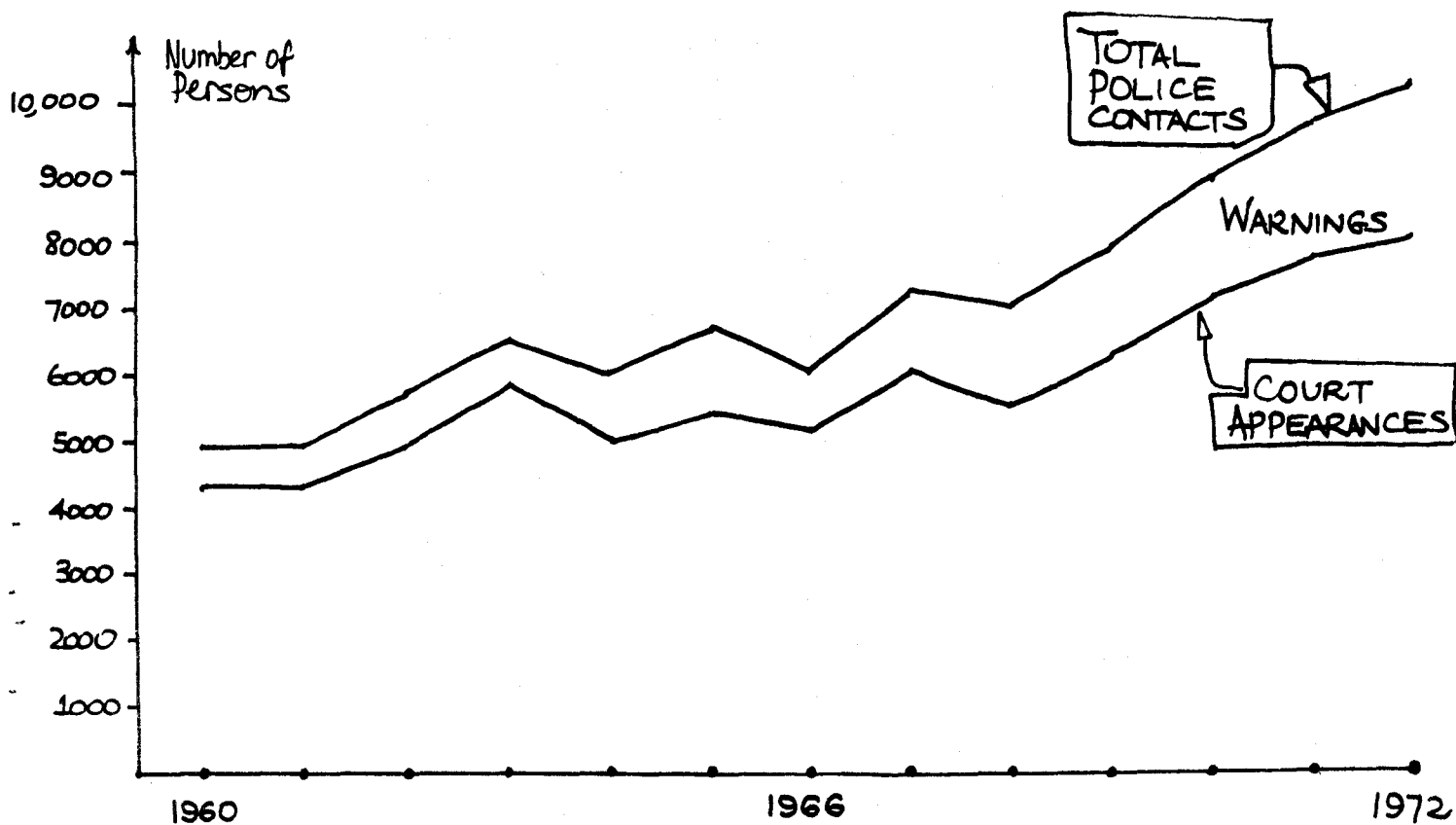
Thus 10,850 cases where juvenile offenders attracted official police contact during 1972, constitute the sample for this study. The actual number of individuals concerned in these cases is obviously less than that figure as some young people attracted police attention several times during the year. This explains in part why the official figure relating to 1972 in Table 1 is only 10,265, since those are distinct offenders as counted by the police.

TABLE 1

## Increase in Police-Juvenile Interaction 1960-1972

Calendar Year	Children's Court Appearances	Official Police Warnings	Total Number of cases receiving Police Attention
1960	4295	650	4945
1961	4352	582	4934
1962	4971	721	5692
1963	5767	735	6502
1964	5085	914	5999
1965	5365	1195	6560
1966	4554	1413	5967
1967	5942	1276	7218
1968	5590	1486	7076
1969	6345	1591	7936
1970	7106	1642	8748
1971	7676	1948	9624
1972	7982	2283	10265

SOURCE: Annual Reports of the Victoria Police Force 1960-1972.



The above table indicates the continuing increasing trend with respect to juvenile offenders coming to the attention of the police. While the number of offenders receiving official police attention has more than doubled over the last 12 years the increase in the use of official warnings has increased at a far greater rate than have court appearances. The reason for there being almost four times as many warnings in 1972 as there were in 1960 is primarily a function of police discretion. Whether the police are using official warnings in order to restrict juvenile misbehaviour in certain areas by using detected offenders as an example to others, or whether juvenile misbehaviour has truly increased is precisely the point about which Wilson is concerned. Until there is a "controlled statistical study to show young people today are peculiarly criminal, violent, irresponsible and immoral" ( 64) he will not be convinced that the apparent increase is other than an artificial statistical one.

McAllister and Mason ( 37) have recently shown that the difference between juvenile delinquents (i.e. offenders) and child-care (protection application) cases is not great. Both are associated with the same sort of socio-economic factors caused by sub-standard housing and so forth. However, the child's appearing before the court on a care and protection application may involve no criminal behaviour on the part of that child but merely be occasioned by his family situation being thought by the police to be unsatisfactory. As many of these protection applications are brought about by factors of family inadequacy rather than specific illegal acts by the child it is necessary to remove them from the larger sample in order to talk of juvenile offenders.

The grounds for protection applications are set out in Section 31 of the Social Welfare Act, 1970, and the following cases were considered to be familial problems rather than behavioural ones and were thus deleted from the larger sample.

<u>Protection Application Grounds</u>	<u>No. of Cases Deleted</u>
Found wandering, abandoned, or sleeping, in any public place (s.31(b))	225
No visible means of support or no settled place of abode (s.31(c))	299
Not provided with sufficient or proper food, nursing, clothing medical aid or lodging or who is ill-treated or exposed (s.31(f))	117
In the care and custody of any person unfit by reason of his conduct or habits or incapable by reason of his health to have the care and custody of the ... young person (s.31(h))	229
Undefined and other cases where the child is under 8 years old and is not covered by the above	23
<u>Total</u>	<u>893</u>

The age of criminal responsibility in Victoria is 8 years to which extent the last group described above were excluded from the sample. All protection applications brought under sections 31(j) and (k) of the Act, the 'likely to lapse into a career of vice or crime' classification, and the 'exposed to moral danger' group, were included in the sample as long as the persons involved were aged eight years or older. While the decision to include these cases as juvenile offences may not meet with universal approval, children appearing in court on either of these grounds, given that they are old enough, are considered to have undoubtedly indulged in some illegal behaviour whether or not that behaviour is the specific cause for their coming to the attention of the police this time.

Sexual promiscuity in young girls is often the major grounds for an exposed to moral danger protection application. Often inherent in the way of life of such girls is the notion that illegal behaviour, however slight, is the norm rather than the exception. (A continuing intensive study of protection applications currently being undertaken in Victoria will hopefully substantiate this statement.)

The resulting sample after the exclusion of the protection applications listed above leaves 9957 cases comprising the juvenile offending sample. The breakdown of the original sample is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Breakdown of Original Sample

Sex	Warnings	Court Appearances		Total
		Offences	Protection Applications	
Female	678	1159	522	2359
Male	1612	6508	371	8491
Total	2290	7667	893	10850

These 9957 cases involving police contact were brought about by 8686 distinct individuals of whom 1730 were female and 6956 were male. Moreover these individuals came from a total of 7914 separate families.

It will be observed from Table 3 that the average number of official police contacts for each offender is 1.15. Even given some delay in police actually presenting an offender before the court, six separate appearances before the children's court in 12 months is indicative of consistent misbehaviour. That only 3 persons reached this level of activity is not wholly consoling since 12 per cent of the



individuals showed some continuing illegal activity which caused them to return at least once to police attention within the twelve-month period. The salutary effect of official police attention would appear to be slight for these people. Moreover this small number of persons were responsible for 23 per cent of all the cases under consideration.

TABLE 3

Frequency of Official Police Contacts made  
during 1972

Number of official police contacts	Number of Persons	Total Number of Contacts
1	7669	7669
2	819	1638
3	156	468
4	31	124
5	8	40
6	3	18
Total	8686	9957
<b>AVERAGE NUMBER OF CONTACTS PER PERSON = 1.15</b>		

### Offenders' Personal Details

The distribution of the sample with respect to age and sex is documented on Table 4. An inspection of that table reveals that around 80 per cent of all the individuals involved were male. This figure merely reinforces the long-known feature of juvenile delinquency - that it is predominantly a male pursuit. This table also shows the ages of the persons concerned and it will be noted that while just on 24 per cent of the individuals were in their 16th year the average age, overall and for each sex separately, is 14.2 years. This figure is remarkably unchanged from previous years and adds no weight to the oft-heard belief that juvenile offenders are getting progressively younger.

The school leaving age in Victoria is 15 and juvenile offending can be regarded as a last fling before departing from the school environment. McKissack (38) has shown that the risk of involvement in delinquency drops remarkably after leaving school for any individual. The marked decline of risk appears to be most pronounced for minor low expertise offences like shoplifting. It is McKissack's contention that raising the school leaving age would probably produce more delinquency.

Somewhat in contradiction of this belief the 16 years age group in this sample is the largest group. While the girls alone peak at the age of 15, one boy in every five responsible for offending cases appearing before the court in 1972 was aged 16.

That boys are more precocious than girls when it comes to offending has been well established. A report of a recent French study notes this and further says that "what girls are doing from ten to thirteen, boys were doing from seven to ten". (43) The analysis of offences with respect to sex for this sample is expected to prove a similar result for the local offenders.

It will also be noted that the average number of police contacts rises as offenders get older. The lower figures for 17 and 18 year olds are caused by their moving out of the children's court jurisdiction. Their involvement can also be seen to be comparatively low by their average police contact figure of 1.00 or a little over. It is the 15 year olds whose average contact is 1.18 who are the worst in this regard.

TABLE 4

Age\* of Juvenile Offenders by Sex,  
Showing Average Number of Police Contacts  
During the Year

Age in Whole Years	Sex				Total		Average Number of Police Contacts for each Offender
	Male		Female		Number of Persons	Number of Police Contacts	
	Number of Persons	Number of Police Contacts	Number of Persons	Number of Police Contacts			
8	80	87	5	5	85	92	1.08
9	123	142	11	11	134	153	1.14
10	209	231	33	34	242	265	1.10
11	308	348	49	50	357	398	1.11
12	505	577	146	152	651	729	1.12
13	866	1037	286	306	1152	1343	1.17
14	1218	1416	385	409	1603	1825	1.14
15	1433	1728	409	440	1842	2168	1.18
16	1712	2025	350	374	2062	2399	1.16
17	492	519	54	54	546	573	1.05
18	10	10	2	2	12	12	1.00
Total	6956	8120	1730	1837	8686	9957	1.15
Average Age			14.24		14.19		14.23
Average Number of Police Contacts			1.17		1.06		1.15

\* Age of individual offenders taken at their last police contact during 1972.

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While the incidence of serious crime among migrants has previously been found to be appreciably lower than in the community generally ( 18), juvenile offending is slightly different. The cultural difficulties which have been found to occur in migrant families where children are growing up adopting an Australian ethic which conflicts with their parents', is good reason for establishing the distribution of birthplaces for this sample. Table 5 sets out the relevant information.

This birthplace-distribution is much as would be expected with Greek, Italian and Yugoslavian families being well represented. As far as seriousness goes it is interesting to note that the Egyptians in the sample, despite their small number, were far more persistent in their illegal behaviour as is evidenced by their average contact rate of 1.42. The high contact rate for the United Kingdom is surprising - this can best be seen by reference to Table 6 which condenses the information relating to birthplaces.

TABLE 5Birthplace of Juvenile Offenders

Birthplace	Number of persons	Number of Police Contacts	Average number of Police Contacts per Person
Victoria	6499	7442	1.15
Elsewhere in Australia	612	716	1.17
New Zealand & The Pacific	38	43	1.13
England	372	440	1.18
Scotland	85	102	1.20
Wales & Northern Ireland	23	28	1.22
Malta	23	27	1.17
Germany	41	49	1.20
Greece	97	116	1.20
Italy	149	177	1.19
Holland	39	45	1.15
Yugoslavia	122	140	1.15
Other European Countries	84	101	1.20
Turkey	21	22	1.05
Other Asian Countries	56	61	1.09
Egypt	19	27	1.42
Other African Countries	23	24	1.04
America	17	20	1.18
Unspecified	366	377	1.03
Total	8686	9957	1.15

TABLE 6Consolidation of Birthplace of Juvenile  
Offenders

Birthplace	Number of Persons	Number of Police Contacts	Average number of Police Contacts per Persons
Australia & The Pacific	7149	8201	1.15
United Kingdom	480	570	1.19
European Countries	555	655	1.18
African and Asian Countries	119	134	1.13
Others and Unspecified	383	397	1.04
Total	8686	9957	1.15

Offenders' Families

Disturbed family relationships have been found to be closely associated with the incidence of juvenile offending. A local Government Inquiry (49) ten years ago made the following statement about a sample of inmates at Youth Training Centres.

"In many cases one parent was absent from the family home. Even where both parents resided in the home it was usual to find some disturbing influence ranging from hostility between the delinquent and one of his parents or siblings, to parental indifference creating a feeling of rejection in the mind of the delinquent."

7 West (62) has recently concluded that a child's likelihood of becoming delinquent is considerably increased if both parental supervision and parental behaviour are poor. By parental behaviour, West means "a global impression of family conflict and generally unsatisfactory attitude and discipline." In West's opinion this finding shows that parents' behaviour has an enormous impact on the child's possible offending, over and above "the influence of external social pressures". X

X A small study in America compared the parents of a sample of delinquents and a control group with respect to some specific social factors (36). These included parental relationship, fathers' work record, and parents' histories of mental illness and criminality. It was only on these last two factors that the delinquents' parents were found to be significantly different. This finding because of the limited nature of the study does not detract from the earlier findings noted, but simply shows that the delinquent's family may have previous external signs of social problems.

A recent study comparing delinquent and non-delinquent girls undertaken by Riege (52) found that "non-delinquent girls show somewhat more satisfaction with the affective roles of both parents than do delinquents, although adolescent girls in general tend to report fathers' roles as less satisfactory than mothers". These few contemporary references to the family-delinquent situation are not meant by any means to cover the field but are included as recent and interesting developments.

The normal living situation for each of the cases in the sample is set out in Table 7. It will be observed that only 70 per cent of the sample were living with both natural parents. The high average contact rate for institutional inmates is as expected, but the high rate for one parent families is of some concern.

TABLE 7Normal Living Situation of Juvenile Offenders

Normal Living Situation	Number of Persons	Number of Police Contacts	Average Number of Police Contacts per Person
Living with both natural parents	6261	7068	1.13
Living with one natural parent and another*	346	414	1.20
Living with only one natural parent	1488	1757	1.18
Living with other relatives or foster parents	206	240	1.17
Living with other persons in flats, etc.	95	112	1.18
Living in an institution	152	206	1.36
Living in a hostel or boarding house	91	106	1.16
No fixed place of abode or not known	47	54	1.15
Total	8686	9957	1.15

\* Includes both remarriages and temporary de-facto relationships.



The problem of the risk of children of separated parents coming to the attention of the police has recently received some attention locally. Robinson and Williams (53) have come to the conclusion that "children whose parents are separated because of marital conflict are in danger of developing long-term anti-social behaviour and this is more likely to be the case". Those authors claim that the problems are aggravated if the parents were at loggerheads for some time before separation, where the separation is accompanied by trauma, resentment or a legal battle over the children, or where after separation one of the parents shows their hostility to the other in front of the children.

West (62) agrees in most part with the vulnerability of the single parent children but does not think it of great importance. His attitude towards child-rearing is that family planning is more urgent consideration because the size of 'delinquent families' are so much more larger than the average. This feature is apparent from Table 8.

This table also shows the place in the family of the delinquent child such that if he is the eldest he is placed first etc. Biles (3) has previously shown that 'middle children' in the sample of 1966 Childrens Court appearances were over-represented in that they occurred more often than one would expect to occur by chance. Ogden and Horne (44) have recently found similar results for a sample of inmates from Turana Youth Training Centre in Victoria. In each of these studies the average family size of individuals in the samples was significantly higher than the average family size in the community. In the first study this figure was 4.6, in the second 5.8, and in this study 4.5 children. The average Victorian family has 2.5 children.

TABLE 8

BIRTH ORDER DISTRIBUTION OF JUVENILE OFFENDERS

<u>Number of Children in Family</u>	<u>Place in Family</u>																<u>Not known</u>	<u>Total</u>	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16+			
1	287																	-	287
2	586	670																1	1257
3	578	623	576															1	1778
4	393	503	402	372														-	1670
5	197	287	336	237	189													2	1248
6	106	160	207	178	144	110												1	906
7	39	59	104	119	75	78	75											1	550
8	27	37	49	75	68	48	46	41										-	391
9	10	14	34	39	41	32	23	22	9									-	224
10	4	9	13	14	15	18	22	12	12	13								-	132
11	2	1	6	8	7	7	8	9	8	10	5							-	71
12	-	2	4	1	7	8	9	6	5	4	2	3						-	51
13	-	-	2	1	7	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1					-	22
14	-	-	-	1	2	3	3	-	3	1	1	1	1	1				-	17
15	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	2	1	-			-	8
16+	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	4		1	8
<u>Not Known</u>																		66	66
																			<u>Total = 8686</u>

22

22

These local results are made even more interesting by the fact that recent British work does not find that position in the family is a significant factor. West ( 62 ) states that " it was the actual number of siblings that mattered, not whether they were older or younger, male or female. Being led astray by older brothers did not seem to be the reason why boys from large families became delinquent. More likely it was the inability of the overburdened mother to give adequate attention to each child that was the root cause of the delinquency".

In addition Ostiapuk, Morrison and Porteous ( 46 ) analysed a sample of boys in an Assessment Centre in a similar way. The 384 boys were balanced for family size such that there were roughly equal numbers of boys from each sized family. To this extent the sample was contrived. The results of this study state that there was "no evidence that position within the family predisposed some children to delinquent acts"

Notwithstanding these overseas findings tests of statistical significance were made on the juvenile offending sample in the manner formulated by Biles. The results of these calculations appears in Table 9 below. It will be seen that families of from four to nine children were far more likely to produce offenders from their middle ranks. This is in accord with the local work mentioned earlier but still conflicts with the British work. The reason for this latter conflict is not easy to explain - the best one can do is to suggest that the British samples were too small, or too select to portray the situation there accurately.

TABLE 9

SIGNIFICANCE OF TENDENCY FOR PLACE IN FAMILY  
NOT TO BE EQUALLY REPRESENTED  
FOR DIFFERENT FAMILY SIZES IN THE  
JUVENILE OFFENDER SAMPLE

Family Size	Chi-squared value	Significance level p
1.	-	-
2.	5.62	.025
3.	2.39	NS
4.	24.48	.001
5.	62.04	.001
6.	51.06	.001
7.	54.26	.001
8.	35.58	.001
9.	48.09	.001
10.	10.00	NS

Table 10 describes the various occupations of the parents of the juvenile offenders. Over half of the mothers of these children are apparently occupied with home duties, leaving a large number of mothers in working positions most of which are of an unskilled nature. Fathers of the offenders are primarily involved in non-professional jobs but an inspection of the table will reveal that less than 20 per cent are occupied in jobs requiring no skill. The largest single group of offenders have fathers who are semi-skilled and mothers who are at home. Less than one half of a per cent of the youths concerned have parents both of whom can be described as being professionally employed.

TABLE 10

Occupation of Parents of Juvenile Offenders

Fathers' Occupation	Mothers' Occupation										Total (% of sample)
	Dead	Retired	Unskilled	Semi-skilled	Skilled	Clerical	Sales	Professional	Home Duties	Not Known	
Dead	22	49	53	21	4	22	13	11	219	20	434 (5.0)
Retired	6	38	32	8	1	4	3	5	146	8	251 (2.9)
Unskilled	30	17	391	67	4	19	47	13	777	68	1433 (16.5)
Semi-skilled	41	16	299	187	19	85	76	32	1270	53	2078 (23.9)
Skilled	50	8	346	115	32	140	91	49	1178	69	2078 (23.9)
Clerical	14	-	69	10	10	71	39	21	354	20	608 (7.0)
Sales	4	2	53	11	1	37	80	18	255	13	474 (5.5)
Professional	7	-	23	13	6	31	13	41	213	7	354 (4.1)
Unemployed	5	2	25	2	-	4	1	1	43	5	88 (1.0)
Not Known	15	68	147	30	8	38	22	12	377	171	888 (10.2)
Total (% of Sample)	194 (2.2)	200 (2.3)	1438 (16.6)	464 (5.3)	85 (1.0)	451 (5.2)	385 (4.4)	203 (2.3)	4832 (55.6)	434 (5.0)	8686 (100.0)

It was possible to ascertain from the police-completed form families in which there was obvious conflict between parents. Unless this conflict was described by police in terms of 'domestics' to which they had been called as arbitrators, or unless mention was made of overt family disruption such as one of the parents deserting the rest of the family for some period of time, a family was considered to have exhibited no sign of discord. With this rather rigid definition over 20 per cent of the families of offenders were classed as discordant as shown in Table 11.

TABLE 11

Evidence of Family Discord

Evidence of family discord	Number of Persons	Number of Police Contacts	Average number of Police Contacts per Person
Yes	1847	2192	1.19
No	6839	7765	1.14
Total	8686	9957	1.15

Offenders' Areas of Residence

The ecological approach to delinquency was pioneered by Shaw and McKay ( 55 ) thirty years ago ,but still continues to produce viable and valuable data for social planners and law enforcement agencies. Recent elaborative work has been undertaken by Fiselier (17) who compared the offender's home area with the area of his offence, and Edwards ( 14 ) who examines differences between delinquency rates by sex in Newcastle,England. Three years ago the juvenile offender situation in Metropolitan Melbourne was ecologically analysed by Challenger ( 6 ). This current sample allows contemporary and more sophisticated results to be calculated for that area. Table 12 below, allows a comparison to be made with these earlier results by listing those 'postcode areas' which amassed the greatest numbers of raw Court Appearances in each of three years. Warnings for 1972 are also given as a contrast.

TABLE 12

Postcode Areas with most  
Children's Court Appearances

Postcode Areas with  
most Warnings

Rank	Y E A R			Y E A R
	1966 (3757)	1969 (5065)	1972 (8559)	1972 (2291)
1	Reservoir (82)	Broadmeadows (152)	Reservoir (214)	Frankston (47)
2	Preston (79)	Reservoir (111)	Broadmeadows (191)	Box Hill (38)
3	Heidelberg West (72)	Preston (109)	Preston (172)	Broadmeadows (35)
4	Glenroy (71)	Glenroy (109)	Heidelberg West (138)	Preston (32)
5	Richmond (70)	Richmond (91)	St. Kilda (129)	Glenroy (29)
6	Broadmeadows (61)	Coburg (84)	Sunshine (121)	Mentone (27)
7	Sunshine (55)	Heidelberg West (78)	Frankston (117)	Niddrie (26)
8	St. Albans (52)	St. Kilda (76)	Richmond (104)	Heidelberg West (26)
9	Frankston (46)	Braybrook (62)	Flemington (98)	Richmond (23)
10	Braybrook (45)	Sunshine (61)	Dandenong (92)	Sunshine (23)

Figures in brackets relate to the numbers of cases involved

It will be observed that some areas of Metropolitan Melbourne appear without fail in each of the years listed, they covering a six year span. Six of the 1972 group-Reservoir, Broadmeadows, Preston, West Heidelberg, Sunshine and Richmond - occur on the lists for the other two years. The phenomenon of particular areas maintaining high delinquency levels over the passage of time has been found to occur in many other studies.

Five of these areas also occur on the 1972 Warning list consolidating their positions as delinquency-prone areas, but none of them can do better than third on that list. Frankston, which has previously been included on the Court list, takes first place, while a long-established area Box Hill is something of a surprise in that it has not previously been noted in this context. Similarly surprisingly included on the Warning list are the areas of Mentone and Niddrie. None of these last three areas has been subject to any notable development by the State Housing Commission. Every other area mentioned has this fact in common.

This point should not be misconstrued as a causal statement. The Housing Commission's charter requires it to house that section of the community who are most vulnerable to family instability through difficult circumstances and restricted means. That delinquency in such families is more likely is a well established fact, for which reason no substance can be attributed to a statement which blames the Housing Commission for encouraging or inculcating juvenile offending.

In this study the delinquency rate is defined as the number of juvenile offender cases receiving official police contact per 1,000 juvenile population. The difficulty of getting population figures for the small postcode areas causes the rates to be calculated for Local Government Areas whose populations are known. Fifty-five such areas comprise the area referred to in this work as Metropolitan Melbourne, within which 72% (7150 of 9957) of the juvenile offenders are resident. The constituent Municipalities of this greater area are set out in Table 13 .



The delinquency rates calculated in this study and listed in Table 13 cannot be directly compared with the previous rates calculated for Melbourne , 6.0 in 1966 and 7.9 in 1969, for two major reasons. Firstly, the inclusion of all warnings in the juvenile offending sample this time causes a massive increase of over 100% in the number of cases since 1969 with a consequent large increase in the rate. Secondly, some additional increase in the rates calculated here is caused by using the more accurate population-at-risk comprising those between the ages of 8 - 17 inclusive. (Eighteen year olds were included in calculation of the previous rates). Bearing in mind these facts, the total delinquency rate for Metropolitan Melbourne in 1972 was 15.9 young people per thousand. ( For purposes of comparison the rate calculated as in the earlier studies would be 12.4 per thousand. This rate is about three-quarters of the formal rate calculated but still represents an increase of some size over the previous figures.)

This total rate may obscure any differences between rates for each of the sexes and, as has already been noted female juvenile delinquency is quite different from male juvenile delinquency. A calculation of separate rates for each of the sexes gives a female rate of 6.0 and a male rate of 25.2 for metropolitan Melbourne in 1972. Over the whole State the female rate was 5.7 and the male rate 23.9 .

Published delinquency rates for New South Wales are correspondingly 3.9 and 18.9 (10). However direct comparison of the two States' rates would be hasty as the New South Welsh calculate their rate on a more restricted sample than that which has been used here. For instance, the Road Traffic offences committed by Victorian juveniles are included in Childrens Court appearances here. They are excluded from New South Welsh statistics with respect to delinquency rates. As there are a large number of such offences the delinquency rate in that State is necessarily a lot less than Victoria's. This is simply another illustration of the non-uniformity of criminal statistics within Australia. It is suggested that the apparent difference in delinquency rates between the two States would be insignificant if a common data base were used for their calculation.

One difference between these two States that is interesting concerns the use of warnings by the police. The Victoria Police used warnings roughly three times as often as their counterparts in New South Wales. Even given slight differences in the warning systems in each place, Victorian offenders appear more likely to avoid the embarrassment of a court conviction being recorded against them.

The figures in parentheses behind each rate in Table 13 correspond to the rank of each Area, where the highest delinquency rate is ranked first and the lowest ranked fifty-fifth. Examination of these ranks for the total delinquency rate shows that the worst seven areas (that is, those ranked first to seventh) surround the geographical centre of Melbourne. This parallels Shaw and McKay's original work which discovered roughly concentric areas of decreasing delinquency rates from the city centre.

In this local study, the ninth rated Shire of Flinders is situated over 30 miles from the city centre. In fact the Shire includes an expanding industrial area on Westernport Bay and popular holiday resorts across the Peninsula. This occurrence ends any similarity with Shaw and McKay's concentric zone theory. (See map, p.33)

Flinders Shire only achieves its very high ranking by virtue of being the worst area with respect to female delinquency. In turn this high female rate was brought about by only a moderate number of cases but these coming from a very small female juvenile population. This emphasizes the fact that female delinquency is worthy of attention its occurrence not being at all well correlated with male delinquency.

TABLE 13 \*

Delinquency Rates for Metropolitan Melbourne

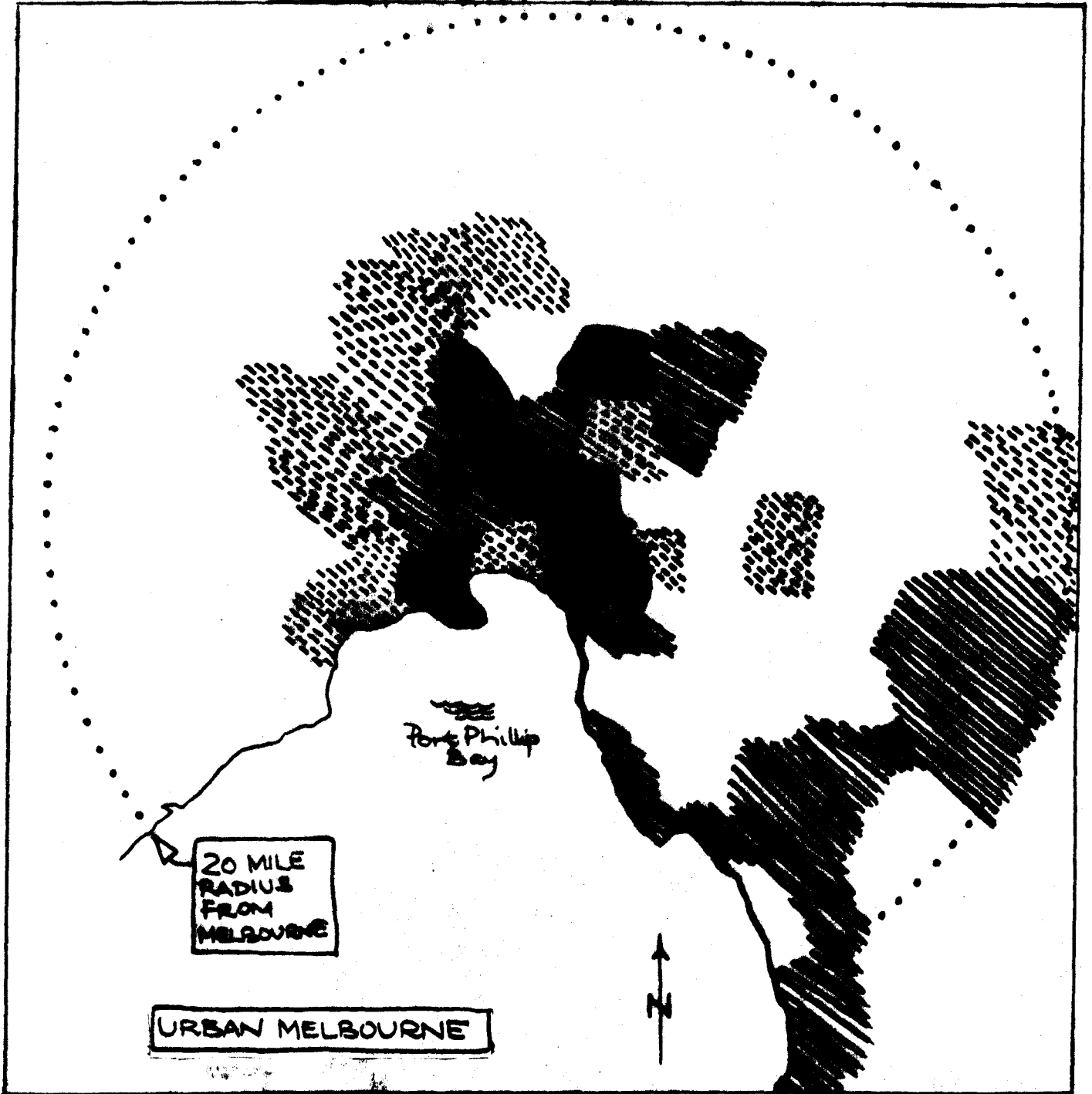
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA	DELINQUENCY RATE/1000		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Altona	24.9 ( 23)	8.0 ( 16)	16.8 (=21)
Berwick	23.5 ( 28)	8.3 ( 14)	16.1 ( 25)
Box Hill	27.2 ( 20)	2.8 (=48)	15.2 ( 27)
Brighton	14.0 ( 49)	3.0 (=45)	8.3 ( 50)
Broadmeadows	26.3 ( 21)	5.9 ( 31)	16.3 ( 23)
Brunswick	29.6 ( 15)	8.9 (=12)	19.4 ( 14)
Bulla	17.0 ( 43)	3.1 ( 44)	11.2 (=40)
Camberwell	18.1 ( 40)	2.9 ( 47)	10.5 ( 43)
Caulfield	24.5 ( 26)	9.1 ( 11)	17.1 ( 20)
Chelsea	20.8 ( 33)	3.0 (=45)	12.2 (=34)
Coburg	22.2 ( 31)	5.2 ( 36)	13.8 ( 31)
Collingwood	60.2 ( 1)	10.2 ( 7)	35.0 ( 1)
Cranbourne	16.2 ( 46)	0.6 ( 55)	8.8 ( 49)
Croydon	13.5 ( 50)	6.6 (=24)	10.3 (=44)
Dandenong	19.6 ( 37)	4.2 (=38)	12.2 (=34)
Diamond Valley	14.4 ( 47)	6.0 (=29)	10.3 (=44)
Doncaster & Templestowe	13.0 ( 51)	2.8 (=48)	8.1 ( 52)
Eltham	20.4 ( 36)	6.5 ( 26)	13.6 (=32)
Essendon	38.1 ( 9)	7.3 (=19)	22.8 ( 11)
Fitzroy	49.9 ( 3)	10.1 ( 8)	30.5 ( 3)
Flinders	30.3 ( 13)	17.2 ( 1)	23.6 ( 10)
Footscray	30.6 ( 12)	6.6 (=24)	18.9 ( 15)
Frankston	27.9 ( 17)	8.1 ( 15)	18.2 ( 17)
Hastings	7.2 ( 54)	2.0 (=51)	4.4 ( 55)
Hawthorn	22.6 ( 30)	5.7 (=32)	14.6 ( 30)
Healesville	11.2 ( 52)	1.6 (=53)	6.3 (=53)
Heidelberg	31.7 ( 11)	7.6 ( 18)	20.0 ( 12)

\* This table amends some figures produced in the original printing of the report. →

TABLE 13(CONTINUED)

L.G.A.	MALE RATE	FEMALE RATE	TOTAL RATE
Keilor	21.9 ( 32)	7.1 ( 21)	14.7 ( 29)
Kew	10.2 ( 53)	6.0 (=29)	8.2 ( 51)
Knox	30.2 ( 14)	5.3 (=34)	18.4 ( 16)
Lilydale	24.7 ( 24)	4.7 ( 37)	15.0 ( 28)
Malvern	16.7 ( 44)	5.7 (=32)	11.2 (=40)
Melbourne	51.0 ( 2)	11.1 ( 5)	32.2 ( 2)
Melton	20.7 (=34)	2.0 (=51)	11.3 ( 39)
Moorabbin	20.7 (=34)	3.3 ( 42)	12.2 (=34)
Mordialloc	28.2 ( 16)	9.9 ( 9)	19.6 ( 13)
Mornington	5.9 ( 55)	6.8 ( 22)	6.3 (=53)
Northcote	24.6 ( 25)	7.7 ( 17)	16.2 ( 24)
Nunawading	16.3 ( 45)	2.6 ( 50)	9.6 ( 47)
Oakleigh	22.9 ( 29)	3.6 ( 40)	13.6 (=32)
Port Melbourne	27.7 ( 18)	6.3 (=27)	16.8 (=21)
Prahran	46.1 ( 4)	10.9 ( 6)	28.1 ( 6)
Preston	39.0 ( 8)	7.3 (=19)	23.7 ( 9)
Richmond	44.9 (= 6)	9.8 ( 10)	27.4 ( 7)
Ringwood	14.2 ( 48)	3.5 ( 41)	8.9 ( 48)
St. Kilda	45.5 ( 5)	13.6 ( 3)	29.8 ( 4)
Sandringham	25.8 ( 22)	8.9 (=12)	17.7 ( 18)
Sherbrooke	18.6 ( 39)	1.6 (=53)	10.2 ( 46)
South Melbourne	37.3 ( 10)	15.4 ( 2)	26.7 ( 8)
Springvale	27.6 ( 19)	6.7 ( 23)	17.5 ( 19)
Sunshine	24.3 ( 27)	5.3 (=34)	15.3 ( 26)
Waverley	19.4 ( 38)	3.2 ( 43)	11.5 ( 38)
Werribee	17.4 ( 42)	4.2 (=38)	11.0 ( 42)
Whittlesea	17.8 ( 41)	6.3 (=27)	12.2 (=34)
Williamstown	44.9 (= 6)	12.4 ( 4)	29.6 ( 5)
METROPOLITAN AVERAGE	25.2	6.0	15.9

This map plots the delinquency rates listed on Table 13.



KEY TO DELINQUENCY RATES



Country areas have their own particular problems with respect to delinquency. Table 14 sets out delinquency rates for Victorian country centres with the greatest apparent juvenile offending.

TABLE 14

Delinquency Rates for Some Country Areas

Local Government Area	Number of Police Contacts	Male Rate /1000	Female Rate /1000	Total Rate /1000
Bellarine	65	28.1	4.7	16.6
Corio	164	27.1	4.6	16.4
Geelong	40	19.4	7.6	13.6
South Barwon	41	12.3	1.8	7.2
Daylesford & Glenlyon	36	80.5	11.7	44.3
Ararat*	34	22.6	4.1	13.5
Ballarat*	180	24.7	8.1	16.6
Colac	35	21.9	13.6	17.9
Warrnambool*	84	25.5	5.1	15.2
Horsham	45	25.7	12.0	18.9
Mildura*	60	14.8	3.8	9.3
Swan Hill*	48	15.0	4.4	10.0
Bendigo	161	38.9	15.2	27.1
Eaglehawk	39	57.7	10.9	34.7
Echuca	70	82.2	10.2	45.6
Shepparton*	87	24.6	5.8	15.4
Benalla*	37	19.4	9.1	14.2
Wangaratta*	86	40.2	4.5	23.2
Wodonga	45	26.0	6.7	16.5
Bairnsdale*	46	28.5	6.2	17.6
Moe	68	33.5	3.3	18.5
Morwell	97	33.4	2.8	18.6
Sale	41	33.3	0.9	17.9
Traralgon	79	42.2	4.5	24.2
Upper Yarra	39	70.3	20.1	46.4

\* Includes both the City/Town, and Shire of the same name.

Running away from home and its attendant minor offences, is prevalent in the country. A country policewoman explains that in her experience "kids feel they have nothing to do and that they're missing out on the good life in the cities" ( 22 ). Kraus (33) examined urban-rural patterns of delinquency and found that boys tended to become delinquent at an earlier age in the country.

There are three country areas whose delinquency rates are so high as to merit further comment. These areas are Daylesford, Echuca and Upper Yarra.

Their high rates can be explained by their low juvenile populations and the attitude of the local police in dealing with the juvenile misbehaviour problem. In two of these areas the percentage of police contacts effected through warnings were very high (33% and 40%), indicating that the police were using this method as a way of disciplining their local youth. In the third area the warning rate was incredibly low - around 6%, and from an inspection of the cases involved it is easy to see that the local police were adopting a very tough line. A number of boys were presented before the Court for drinking in the vicinity of a dance-hall together. Another group were similarly treated for receiving some of the gains of another boy's larceny. One youth was apprehended for disposing of his fish and chip paper by dropping it in the street - his previous behaviour had resulted in a close watch being kept on him. While such acts may have been formally overlooked by some country policemen, and probably would not be detected in the city, the police in this area chose to apprehend the perpetrators concerned. This of course inflates the rates markedly, and the somewhat bizarre situation outlined in Table 14 results.

It is safe to say that in terms of community safety, none of the three areas isolated above has anywhere near the level of delinquent activity that is suggested by their artificially high rates.

The policing practice varies within country areas by too great an amount to allow valid comparison between rates. Additionally small juvenile populations aggravate the situation by inflating further the official rates calculated.

Returning to Metropolitan Melbourne, it is the inclusion of official police warnings that produce the rates above which are more accurate with respect to juvenile offending than any previously calculated. Within any particular area a higher percentage of warnings to court appearances could indicate a softer approach by the police involved, or a lesser level of juvenile misbehaviour. Similarly a greater percentage of court appearances could indicate less tolerance or a hard line being taken by the local police. Indeed it has been claimed that the police discretion in this matter is greatly a function of socio-economic area. Table 15 provides information relating to the relative use of warnings in those areas most divergent from the average.

No firm conclusion with respect to the use of warnings within Victoria can be made from the table. While Port Melbourne could be called socially deprived and does have a high delinquency rate, its low percentage of warnings is consistent with a hard-line police approach. However, Lilydale, Melton and Chelsea are not sociologically comparable with those suburbs mentioned but still receive few warnings. Similarly those suburbs whose warning rate is high, while tending to be middle and upper class, are not homogeneous enough to rate any conclusive statement with respect to the warning practice.



TABLE 15RELATIVE USAGE OF OFFICIAL WARNINGS

<u>Local Government Area</u>	<u>% of Warnings in All official Police Contacts in Metropolitan Melbourne</u>
Mornington	53
Mordialloc	42
Flinders	41
Kew	37
Keilor	37
.	.
.	.
.	.
Average	26
.	.
.	.
.	.
Lilydale	11
Port Melbourne	10
Melton	9
Chelsea	3

Offenders' Employment and Education

The employment type of each juvenile offender was available on the police form used - the distribution of the sample in this regard appears in Table 16. The ages of the offenders would indicate that the vast proportion of them would have still been at school and this is obviously the case. That

10 per cent of the individuals concerned were unemployed immediately prior to their offence is a cause for some concern. Even considering the difficulty in young school-leavers finding jobs this figure is alarming. Of those who were working over half were occupied in unskilled conditions. The duration of their employment in those positions is unknown but by their very nature (labourers, process-workers, bowser attendants, etc.), and by virtue of past experience, one is tempted to suggest that those jobs were of a transitory nature.

TABLE 16

Employment Type for the Juvenile Offenders

Employment Type	Number of Persons	Number of Police Contacts	Average number of Police Contacts per Person
Student	5481	6137	1.12
Student with part-time job after school	683	764	1.12
Unskilled	977	1189	1.22
Semi-skilled	466	529	1.14
Skilled	8	9	1.13
Clerical	53	60	1.13
Sales	176	194	1.10
Unemployed	825	1057	1.28
Not known	17	18	1.06
Total	8686	9957	1.15

A young man unemployed may well turn to illegal acts to acquire those material needs he thinks are necessary for him to maintain his role in society. McKissack (38) asserts that "out-of-school delinquency rates for the unemployed ...are likely to be at least as high as the in-school rate". This perhaps is an understatement of the Victorian position as the unemployed group here average 1.28 police contacts which is far greater than the student's 1.12.

Seventy per cent of the offenders were currently students at the time of their offence. About 10 per cent of them had some part-time job - selling newspapers, stocking super-market shelves and the like - though this figure may well be an understatement of the situation. The student group is a most important one in as much as the role of the school with respect to delinquency is a hotly disputed topic.

Power, ~~Bern~~ and Morris (48) sorted some 20,000 schools into nine categories according to their varying ability to help their pupils. They found a wide range of delinquency rates between those schools for which they can offer no obvious explanation. Farrington (16) found simply that "differences among the delinquency rates in schools are primarily due to differences among the boys entering them".

Much else has been written about schools and delinquency and a great deal of it is summarised by the following. "The less able and less conforming boys are denigrated by the school, and stereotyped as toughs and troublemakers, and come to accept these labels for themselves and find they can only achieve status and group approval by associating with other social rejects in vandalism and other delinquent acts". (35) The labelling problem mentioned in the above loses some weight through West's recent conclusion that teacher's ratings of bad and troublesome boys in the classroom at 8 or 9 years of age - that is before stereotyping of labelling can have occurred - is one the best predictors of future delinquency (62) The student status of the offenders is given below in Table 17.

TABLE 17Student Status of the Juvenile Offender

Student Status	Number of Persons	% of Sample
Primary level student	1026	11.8
Secondary level student	5118	58.9
Tertiary level student	2	-
Unknown level student	18	0.2
Non-student	2505	28.9
Status not known	17	0.2
Total	8686	100.0

The transition from primary school to secondary school is a traumatic one for many children. In many instances the new secondary student finds there is no longer one teacher with whom he has greatest contact and with whom he could possibly discuss his problems. Additionally the work-load in a secondary school is heavier than he is used to and aspirations to achieve university status or some higher education are high amongst many of his peers. Kelly and Pink (27) have found that students not interested in continuing their education to the tertiary level are more prone to "youth rebellion and delinquency". Secondary students in this sample are analysed in Table 18 by their type of school and educational level.

TABLE 18

Distribution of Current Secondary Student  
Juvenile Offenders by type of School and  
Educational Level

Type of School	Form						Not known	Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
'Special' school	18	16	19	2	-	-	10	65
State High school	427	616	677	446	183	9	13	2371
State tech. school/ college	395	661	714	331	74	3	7	2185
Roman catholic secondary school	47	73	101	82	26	7	1	337
Private secondary school	16	19	39	39	41	5	1	160
Total (% of Sample)	903 (17.6)	1385 (27.1)	1550 (30.3)	900 (17.6)	324 (6.3)	24 (0.5)	32 (0.6)	5118 (100.0)

It will be noted that the third form is the level from which most offenders come. It is well-established in teaching practice that form 3 is the most troublesome, so this finding is no surprise. The largest single group in the student sub-group are the third formers at Technical School. This raises the question of relative offending rates between high and technical schools which has received attention previously. Table 19 provides the relevant information by listing for each police contact, the type of school last, or currently attended by the youth involved in that police contact.

TABLE 19

Distribution of Police Contacts by  
Relevant School Type

Type of School	Number of Police Contacts	%	1966 Percentages*
Primary	1168	11.7	15.5
High	3814	38.3	29.4
Technical	4036	40.5	44.3
Special	154	1.6	0.9
Other	785	7.9	9.9
Total	9957	100.0	100.0

\* From Biles ( 4 )

From this table it can be seen that past and present technical school students form the largest group. While high schools account for considerably more offending than six years ago and come fairly close to the technical schools, a consideration of enrolment figures soon restores technical schools to their position as contributing a disproportionate number of offenders. Twice as many children in Forms 1 to 4 were at high schools in 1972. (There were 136,834 enrolments at those schools, and only 57,706 at technical schools.)

The resultant delinquency rates are 17.3 per 1000 for high schools, and 37.9 per 1000 for technical schools. The reasons for technical school students being over twice as likely to come to police attention as their high school counterparts are complex. Some light may be shed on the situation by further analysis of the data, any comment now would be premature.

Persistent truancy is closely connected with offending. In addition to providing opportunity and time for offending, truancy is a symptom of severe social difficulty. A youth who finds school meaningless and impossible to cope with, who cannot relate with teachers and his fellow pupils, and whose friends also hold these beliefs, will almost certainly be an offender. Table 20 records the truancy records of the sample. The policeman's response to the question "was truancy a contributing factor", on the Form 276, provides the data for that Table. Obviously an offender could be a truant and not be isolated as such on the Table, so the situation could be understated here.

Given this, the 22% truancy rate highlights a grave problem. The high contact rate for the truant sub-group shows their persistence in anti-social behaviour.

TABLE 20

Truancy Records of the Juvenile Offenders

Evidence of Truancy	Number of Persons	Number of Police Contacts	Average Number of Contacts
Yes	1829	2316	1.27
No	6857	7641	1.11
Total	8686	9957	1.15

The Offences

The official police contacts which are under consideration result in the young person being charged with at least one offence. In practice 70% of the police contacts resulted in the person being charged with only one type of offence. In the remainder of the cases, multiple charges were made. For example, the charges of illegal use of a motor car and unlicensed driving, were very often preferred. This police contact thus involves two different offences.

On the other hand, a lad charged with say, 12 counts of housebreaking is charged with that offence only, for which reason he is entered on Table 21 as a one-offence case. That table gives the distribution of all police contacts with respect to the number of offences pertinent to every police contact. Overall 13,785 offences were listed for the sample.

TABLE 21

Number of Offences Pertinent  
to each Police Contact

Number of Pertinent Offences	Number of Persons (% of sample)	Total Number of Offences Listed
1	7122 (71.5)	7122
2	1842 (18.5)	3684
3	694 (7.0)	2082
Over 3	299 (3.0)	897
Total	9957 (100.0)	13785



The pertinent listed offences are grouped into offence-types in Table 22. These types are ranked in order of seriousness as in the Victoria Police Major Crime Index.

Each police contact was sorted into an offence type according to the most serious offence listed for that police contact. This distribution is also given in Table 22. It will be used for later analysis of types of offenders.

It will be observed that road traffic offences are frequently listed by police, usually as a second or third offence. With the exception of this offence type the distribution of listed offences by type is very similar to the distribution of police contacts by offence type.

TABLE 22

Listed Offences and Police Contacts  
by Type

Offence type	Number of Listed Offences (% of total)	Number of Police Contacts (% of total)
Assault	447 (3.2)	328 (3.3)
Robbery	46 (0.3)	41 (0.4)
Sex	315 (2.3)	226 (2.2)
Breaking	2760 (20.0)	2357 (23.7)
Larceny	3589 (26.0)	3092 (31.1)
Motor Vehicle	1594 (11.6)	1134 (11.4)
Motor Traffic Offences	1678 (12.2)	489 (4.9)
Protection Applications	1096 (8.0)	995 (10.0)
Other	2260 (16.4)	1295 (13.0)
Total	13785 (100.0)	9957 (100.0)

The distribution of the offences listed is similar to the breakdown of juvenile offences that are available for other parts of Australia and indeed for most other countries. Larceny cases are far and above the most popular form of juvenile misbehaviour. It is interesting to examine the composition of each of the major groups listed above.

Assault      N = 447

Composition:

Assault police	21
Assault causing grievous bodily harm/malicious wounding	65
Unlawful Assault	214
Assault by kicking	56
Assault with knife or weapon	66
Assault and Robbery	13
Assault with intent	12

Assaults constituting 3 per cent of the total offences would not represent the high level of violence by delinquents that has been suggested by the popular press. However, press outrage can in turn cause the policing of physical assaults to be more stringently undertaken with corresponding rises in official figures for those offences. Cohen (9) has pointed out the effect the press can have in matters of this sort.

A local Governmental Inquiry into Assaults (51) reported that there was a "high incidence of excessive drinking amongst the young offenders". This drinking constitutes an early abuse of alcohol which is an even worse social problem as many of those involved appear not to have even acquired the legal drinking age.

Robbery N = 46

Composition:	Robbery in company	23
	Robbery under arms or with weapons	14
	Robbery with violence or wounding	9

Many of the offences listed under this major heading of Robbery are not the bank hold-ups with which one usually associates the words. Rather they involve menacing behaviour on the part of the youth directed towards a small shopkeeper or a pedestrian. This is of course no reason for society to be any less concerned about these young persons' activities but simply points out that their gravity is less than would be thought from their group title.

Sexual Offences N = 315

Composition:	Carnal Knowledge	91
	Rape or attempted rape	11
	Indecent assault on a female	93
	Wilful exposure	53
	Indecent phone calls	17
	Miscellaneous	4
	Buggery and gross indecent	33
	Indecent assault on a male	13

It will be observed that about one-third of these offences were of the carnal knowledge type where the young girl with whom sexual alliance has taken place may indeed be a consenting party to that act. The social pressures on young persons brought about by the current exaggeration of sexual matters through more permissive publishing and franker television programmes can undoubtedly explain at least some of this figure.

Breaking and Entering      N = 2760

Composition:	Factory breaking	111
	Garage breaking	120
	House breaking	1209
	Office breaking	160
	School breaking	238
	Shop breaking	416
	Store breaking	313
	Pavillion breaking	78
	Kiosk breaking	32
	Other and unspecified	83

House breaking is the largest single group within this major heading. Senior Victoria policemen while encouraging house owners to take all reasonable precautions against theft have nevertheless admitted that the only sure way to prevent a house breaker's access is to turn one's home into a fortress. Juvenile house breakers appear, generally speaking, not to be the most particular with respect to the houses into which they break. Their modus operandi is most often knocking on the front door and passing on if someone answers. The frequency with which juvenile house breakers are caught compared with their adult counterparts who are more precise is quite high. The relative ineptitude with which young offenders often break in to premises is in line with Gold's assertion that delinquency is more an impromptu activity than a planned one (20). Often the break-in seems merely by way of a game to the extent that malicious damage may be effected to the premises so entered and goods may not be removed. This is possibly more true for school breaking and pavillion breaking than it is for commercial premises breaking where valuable goods can fairly easily be removed.

Larceny N = 3589

Composition:	Shoplifting	1220
	Larceny of bicycles	306
	Larceny from dwellings	155
	Larceny from motor cars	233
	Larceny as a servant	69
	Larceny of sheep, pigs horses, cattle, birds	37
	Miscellaneous (larceny of boats, postal articles by finding, pick-pocketing from clotheslines, churches factories, garages, phone booths, kiosks, etc.)	97
	Undefined larceny	1472

Spittles (57) believes that the "essential function of stealing ... is that it gives the thief both identity and status". He says this in opposition to the often heard reason for a youth's stealing that he was simply bored. This Spittles claims is only a rationalization and stealing is only indirectly connected with alleviating boredom. Loners or outsiders in an attempt to improve their reputation or position may initially steal for this reason but may eventually develop a liking for the material results of stealing. Jackson (26) lists various reasons for children yielding to the temptation to steal. He believes that a lot of the problem stems from the lack of teaching morality and says that the "only education that many children gain in this area is when they are caught ...cheating, lying or stealing ... by somebody in authority".

One of the ways in which this stealing is best represented is through shoplifting which accounts for about one-third of all the larcenies detected. This large figure occurs despite the fact that "shoplifting still remains an offence that tends to be reported to the police only when the offender is caught in the act". (42) Shoplifting in Victoria has been the subject of recent work and over half the males so

offending were found to be under 19 and over half the goods that were stolen from shops were worth less than \$5.<sup>(5)</sup> Shop-lifting appears to be more often the subject of a warning than a court appearance.

Larceny of bicycles is the next largest offence within this group. The extent of this offence is often under-estimated. After recently arresting a gang of five juveniles who were stealing bicycles to swap and sell the parts after repainting the frames, a local Senior Police Officer bemoaned the fact that the community simply did not realise the gravity and frequency of the offence. ( 1 ).

Motor Vehicle N = 1594

Composition:	Stealing car (previously illegal use)	1379
	Stealing motorcycle	85
	Tamper with motor vehicle	100
	Stealing/illegal use other vehicles (bikes, boats, etc.)	30

The Victorian Governmental Inquiry into Car Stealing ( 49 ) though now ten years old, provides a good description of offenders in this group. Some further research has been undertaken in this field but no results have yet been published,

Joy-riding still constitutes the bulk of the offences listed above. This pursuit can result in serious damage to the vehicle used, obvious inconvenience to the owner and possible danger to other road users. A novel twist has recently been publicised by the police. This involves vehicles being reported stolen, and later investigation proving they were taken by the owner's children ( 23 ). Stealing the family car is just as serious as its being stolen by an unknown thief and some offences listed above may have come about in this way. The lure of the motor car felt by some young people that they must have 'wheels', fostered and encouraged by manufacturers' advertising, undoubtedly explains a large number of the above offences.

Driving offences            N = 1678

Composition:	Unlicenced driving	985
	Unregistered vehicle	75
	Unregistered motorcycle	279
	General traffic breaches	339

Most of the driving offences involved young people driving, mostly stolen vehicles, without being licenced to drive at all. The offence pair illegal use of motor car and unlicenced driving is the most common combination in the sample. Presumably this second mentioned charge is preferred so that the youngster concerned realises the seriousness of driving whilst unlicenced and will thus appreciate and treasure his driving licence when he is old enough to acquire one. The number of other traffic breaches is not great although it must be borne in mind that none of the young people involved should have been on the road at all. The cavalier attitude of many young people towards the traffic code, which is represented here, has been discussed by Klein (28). He suggests that "adolescents constitute a deviant population in almost every industrial society ... (and) not only can they be expected to drive in a deviant fashion, but their deviant driving may in fact conform closely to the norms and values of their own (deviant) group".

Protection Applications            N = 1096

Composition:	"exposed to moral danger"	512
	"likely to lapse"	471
	Other unspecified	113

It was pointed out earlier that only some of the protection applications actually presented before the Court in 1972 were included in this sample of juvenile offenders. These listed above comprise that sample for whom it is thought juvenile misbehaviour is a problem.

Other Offences N = 2260

Composition:	Embezzlement and false pretences	32
	Forging and uttering	36
	Imposition	15
	Vandalism and wilful damage	494
	Receiving	295
	Unlawfully on premises	210
	Offences involving fire-arms (carrying under 18 years, discharging, etc.)	228
	Indecent language or behaviour	118
	Offensive behaviour	130
	Arson	75
	Liquor offences (drunk and disorderly, drinking under age or near a dance hall)	148
	Escape legal custody	66
	Malicious damage	71
	Hinder police	46
	Unlawful possession	37
	Carry offensive weapon	32
	Loiter with intent	30
	Throw missile to endanger others	30
	Possess house breaking implements	28
	False fire alarm	23
	Resist arrest	23
	Possess drugs	16
	Conspiracy	16
	Leave glass on roadway	10
	Accessory after the fact	7
	Cruelty to animals	8
	Other miscellaneous	36



The miscellaneous offences listed above are such a varied collection that it is very hard to comment about them. However, three particular groups within that list are worthy of mention. Gibbens (19) has no doubt that vandalism is common behaviour. He points out that a large number of known vandals are quite young and that one of the most important types of vandalism is through the medium of arson. From time to time this community gets agrieved at the extent of vandalism - pride in one's community and an education with respect to property are the only ways to achieve any significant change in the occurrence of that offence which is fairly high in this sample.

Offences involving liquor are a cause for concern as it must be remembered that the group we are discussing have an average age of a little over 14. Girls and boys alike were involved in the 61 counts of drunk and disorderly behaviour, the 55 cases of drinking liquor under-age and the 31 cases involving drinking liquor near a dance hall. The blatant practice of hoteliers providing evening and week-end entertainment specifically aimed at people under the drinking age is undoubtedly responsible for many of these offences. Additionally the manufacturers of alcoholic beverages cannot deny their part in encouraging young people to indulge in a habit whose effects are wreaked on the roads every weekend.

Offences involving fire-arms are the third group of some interest. Possession of a pea-rifle is regarded by many parents as a sign of their son growing up. However in a suburban area the use he can get from such a 'toy' is restricted to slaying birds and causing property damage. The law with respect to fire-arms would appear not to be understood by many parents judging from the fairly substantial number of cases of this sort coming to the attention of the police - and it is only when a neighbour complains that these offences are detected.

Almost 70 per cent of the cases attracting police attention involved greater than one person. The concept of gangs of young offenders is a popular one and this figure substantiates it. Gold's theory that delinquent behaviour occurs in an impromptu fashion, which was mentioned earlier, is consistent with this situation. He found that even in self reported offences only one-quarter of those were committed alone. (20) Kreuger (34) thinks that young persons who comprise groups of offenders often "experience tensions and failures of all sorts, at home, at school and at work" as a result of which they accumulate real frustration which can so often lead to at least brawls and vandalism. Dunphy (13) has investigated the dynamics of Australian groups of young people and is sympathetic with the above. The distribution of co-offenders involved in each of the police contacts appears in Table 23.

TABLE 23

Number of co-offenders involved in  
each police contact.

Number of co-offenders	Number of police contacts (% of sample)
0	3370 (33.8)
1	3082 (31.0)
2	1902 (19.1)
3	966 (9.7)
4	337 (3.4)
5	186 (1.9)
6	83 (0.8)
7 and over	31 (0.3)
Total	9957 (100.0)

Disposal of the Cases

The primary disposition for each police contact is listed on Table 24 where the differences in treating male and female offenders is particularly noticeable because of the distribution of warnings. Only 20 per cent of males were warned whereas the corresponding figure for females is 37 per cent. This indicates a distinct tendency for young women caught offending to be more discretely dealt with. Youth Training Centre sentences account for only 5 per cent of the sample and it is fair to say that those young people receiving such a disposition are persistent or very serious offenders. Fines and bonds are fairly lightly used. Dismissal of the charge under Section 28 (1) (a) of the Children's Court Act, 1958, also account for very few of the cases. The Social Welfare Department receives the guardianship of under 10 per cent of all offenders. Over half of all cases are dealt with either by adjournment or probation.

The Children's Court Magistrate will adjourn the case most usually for 12 months, when he feels the offender is unlikely to re-commit an offence at least within that period of time. The offender before the Court is usually the subject of a homily to the effect that his return will put him in a very grave position. The effect of such a disposition will hopefully be able to be at least partly evaluated by further analysis of this data.

Twenty eight per cent of this sample were placed on probation by the court. Effectively this disposition can be seen as the last chance for the offender before being sentenced to a term in a Youth Training Centre. It is hoped that the offender placed on probation will benefit from the supervision of his probation officer. In Victoria most supervision is undertaken by honorary probation officers who have a professional contact to whom they can turn for help and advice.

Kraus ( 30 ) has found that childrens courts in New South Wales fix the length of probation terms by primary reference to the offender's age, rather than his prior record of offending which would seem more appropriate. Additionally great differences are observable in the lengths of terms fixed by particular courts ,reflecting the philosophy of the sentencing personnel at those courts. There is a tendency for the court to hear nothing further about the offender placed on probation unless he returns charged with breach of probation, or later charged with more offences. That is , even though the probationer might stay out of trouble for the period of his probation, he may not have benefitted in any way from that experience, although the court may presume his probation to have been 'successful'.

The court could then receive more feedback from the probation system which might help that system to operate more successfully. As another example, it has been found that probation breakdown is more likely in the first few months of the probation term ( 24 ). A short probation term is then highly unlikely to result in any major change of attitude on the part of the offender.

This break-down can occur simply through the probation officer and his probationer not getting together. Parkinson discusses a typical case where the probationer had "made no demands whatsoever of his supervising officer. On the irregular occasions he'd reported he'd considerably confined his brief conversations to good humoured irrelevances and there'd been no troublesome reference to 'problems'." (47) This is not mentioned as typical of the local situation but in many instances, an untrained but very well meaning honorary probation officer finds himself trying to supervise a manipulative and cunning young offender. Horejsi (25) has found that most parents, at least in his study, perceive honorary probation officers as very helpful and "capable of bringing about desirable changes in the probationer's behaviour and attitudes". Obviously these parents would be even more pleased if the supervising officer for their child had received some training in that undertaking.

TABLE 24

Primary Disposition of Juvenile Offences  
by Sex of Offender

Disposition	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Warning	1612 (19.9)	678 (36.9)	2290 (23.0)
Youth Training Centre Sentence	456 (5.6)	4 (0.9)	460 (4.6)
Committal or Return to the Social Welfare Dept.	663 (8.2)	213 (11.6)	876 (8.8)
Probation	2275 (28.0)	532 (29.0)	2807 (28.2)
Fine	809 (10.0)	25 (1.4)	834 (8.4)
Bond	43 (0.5)	3 (0.2)	46 (0.5)
Adjournment	2017 (24.8)	341 (18.6)	235 (23.7)
Dismissed or withdrawn	245 (3.0)	41 (2.2)	286 (2.9)
Total	8120 (100.0)	1837 (100.0)	9957 (100.0)

NOTE: Figures in brackets are percentages within columns.

The court is charged with disposing of cases brought before it with the "welfare of the child" being its paramount consideration. It would appear that magistrates do give offenders ample opportunity to 'mend their ways' and cease re-offending. Instances of offenders being given several chances on probation before being incarcerated are not rare. Even given this apparent kindness on the part of the court, it does tend to reflect the changing values of society as Kraus (31) has recently pointed out. Overseas, Scarpitti and Stephenson (54) have found over a three-year period that while certain types of offenders always received certain types of dispositions overall the court appears to make effective dispositions.

The previous court appearances or warnings for each of the individual offenders in this sample is presented in Table 25. Seventy per cent of the young persons concerned had not previously come to the notice of the police.

Thirty per cent of the young persons apprehended by the Police in 1972, had previously found themselves in that position. Of that number over half had been in trouble with the law more than once before. Over thirteen hundred young people were receiving attention from the police for at least the third time. Either previous police contacts resulted in ineffective measures, or else the youth concerned simply does not care about being apprehended and is content to continue offending. Each of these contingencies is cause for concern on the community's part.

Hopefully the foregoing material will assist the community in formulating new schemes which may eventually reduce this apparently continuing contempt for the law. New programmes, adequately planned, may help society and some of these more wayward youths become closer in the future.

TABLE 25

Records of Previous Police Contacts  
for Juvenile Offenders

Year of First Police Contact	Number of previous police contacts					Total (% of Sample)
	1	2	3	4	5+	
No previous police contact						6070 (69.9)
1972	459	75	18	3	1	556 (6.4)
1971	467	180	67	27	16	757 (8.7)
1970	189	150	93	45	42	519 (6.0)
1969	98	83	68	35	52	336 (3.9)
1968	44	38	46	29	31	188 (2.2)
1967	38	21	13	14	38	124 (1.4)
1966	14	15	11	9	19	68 (0.8)
1965	7	11	5	2	15	40 (0.5)
1964	-	1	1	1	10	13 (0.1)
1963 or before	7	2		1	5	15 (0.2)
Total (% of Sample)	1323 (15.2)	576 (6.6)	322 (3.7)	166 (1.9)	229 (2.6)	8686 (100.0)

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