Project DARE began when Chief Gates from the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) approached the Superintendent of Schools for the Los Angeles Unified School District, Dr Harry Handler, in January 1983, to enlist support for a cooperative effort to combat drug and alcohol use.

As a result of the ever-growing problem, Chief Gates suggested that a new approach, focusing on prevention and designed to build trust between the community and law enforcement agencies was needed. Dr Handler agreed and a task force comprising police officers, education specialists and health specialists was appointed.

Thus Project DARE was developed as a specific education program designed to be taught to children by trained police officers, in a structured education program.

The project spread rapidly throughout California and is now servicing some 1,200 cities in 46 States of the USA. It is also being taught in New Zealand, Samoa, Canada, US Defence Schools worldwide, and the Northern Territory of Australia.

DARE In The Northern Territory (NT)

Training courses open to all police forces are conducted periodically in Los Angeles. In November 1987, Senior constable Scott Mitchell of the Northern Territory Police Force received the DARE training at the Los Angeles Police Department. This was made possible through the joint funding of the Commonwealth Government and the NT Health Department under the auspices of the Ministerial Council of Drug Strategy.

The scheme, which has the catch phrase, 'DARE to Say No' is a primary prevention program aimed at children who have yet to have their first drug experience. Its goal is to reduce the incidence of drug abuse by children through presentation of a prevention curriculum by specially selected and trained uniformed police officers.

The DARE lessons focus on four major areas:

- providing accurate information about alcohol and drugs;
- teaching students decision making skills;
- showing them how to resist adverse peer pressure.
- giving them ideas for alternatives to drug use.

An earlier version of this paper was published in the NPRU Review, vol. 2, no. 2, 1986.
In this project the definition of 'drugs' includes alcohol and tobacco. The DARE instructors employ a variety of activity-oriented techniques to involve students in group discussions, a healthy exchange of ideas and feelings, and role-playing exercises.

A joint police and Education Departmental committee was subsequently formed to examine the possibility of implementing DARE in the Northern Territory. A Health Department representative is now also on the committee. This committee decided to trial DARE at two Darwin Primary Schools and this was conducted during the second semester of the school year in 1988.

The school community response at the two schools was very encouraging indeed. This resulted in the decision to expand the trial to two additional schools in the first semester of 1989, and again, excellent results were obtained.

In view of this, the program has been offered to all primary schools in towns where the school based constables are located. Initially, the offer is limited to two primary schools per constable. In addition, it is also planned to extend the program to remote areas, particularly where petrol sniffing and alcohol abuse is a problem. To assist this end, a constable was recently appointed to service the coastal Aboriginal centres.

A DARE Instructors' Training Course was recently conducted in Darwin involving twenty students in the course. Most of these were NT school based constables and two NSW Police members from their Police and Citizens Youth Club organisation.

Due to the need to ensure that the DARE program is specifically relevant to the Northern Territory, and to satisfy the Education Department's requirements, a Subject Area Committee for Drug Education was formed by the Education Department and included police representation. It is intended that DARE will supplement and reinforce the existing Health and Drug program of the Education Department. Some minor modifications mainly for 'localising' purposes to the original program have occurred.

The program is broken up into three separate sections; they are kindergarten to grade 4; grades 5, 6 and 7 (primary school); grades 8, 9 and 10 (secondary school) is optional. The simple theme running through the whole program is 'DARE to Say No'. The program is set out to involve the classroom teachers themselves in the program, as the support of teachers and education staff is necessary to optimise the results.

Despite the obvious enthusiasm by all involved with Project DARE in Darwin, a professional independent appraisal of the pilot program is essential and this is currently being conducted. This will not only assist us to fine tune and modify the program to enable maximum benefit, but it will also provide an independent appreciation of its real value.

DARE is directly addressing the drug problem, that is drug abuse by children. The vital aspect is having specially trained uniformed police officers teaching drug resistance to children. This has had more impact than any other method so far.

**School Based Community Policing (SBCP)—An Update Report**

School based community policing is a unique scheme which originated in the Northern Territory and has achieved a high level of acceptance within the school communities. It has also gained wide public and government support and attracted considerable interest in all states of Australia. The scheme has since commenced in Western Australia in 1987, and New South Wales in 1988, but was later withdrawn there following the change of government.

The principles of the scheme and one of its subordinate programs, DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), also contributed significantly to the Victorian Police's development of the Police in Schools program in 1988.
The purpose of SBCP is to provide children with a better appreciation of law and order issues and the police generally. It also provides a very effective communication line between police and young people.

The scheme commenced in Darwin in 1984 with a pilot constable located at Casuarina High School. The scheme attained full servicing of all twenty secondary schools by sixteen constables in 1988. Each constable also has a responsibility to the neighbouring primary and preschools.

Because of the special nature of this role, there was some initial difficulty in obtaining the right constable. However, with the progress of the scheme, a better understanding of the role by other members has developed and there has been a slow but steady increase in the number of suitable applicants.

Although the role of the constable in schools is continuing to develop, the original job profile is basically unchanged. A substantial amount of time is spent on student counselling, and through this, much has been achieved in meeting the basic objectives of the scheme. In addition the DARE scheme has now been included and this will involve a substantial amount of time in primary schools.

There have also been a number of more serious matters brought directly to the constables by children and undoubtedly many of these matters would not have been reported otherwise. These incidents include sexual assaults, common assaults, prostitution and illicit drug dealings, where schoolchildren were victims.

As the scheme progressed, some useful spin-offs involving the constables have developed. Some of these are summarised as follows:

- Supervision of young offenders who have been directed to attend school whilst on police and court bail, or as a probation condition. This includes unemployed children of all ages who do not normally attend school.
- Operating a diversion program during school holidays involving young offenders referred by the juvenile courts.
- Specialised assistance to ‘socially at risk’ children, including Junior Police Rangers and Police and Citizens Youth Club activities. Blue Light discos with appropriate follow-up action.
- Assist recruit and in-service training in effective communication skills with juveniles.
- Conducting special juvenile patrols on selected nights to determine entertainment and behavioural trends. Liquor outlets and dubious business premises are also examined.
- Service of summons by SBCP constables upon children in their homes, thus providing a direct contact with the parents of offending kids.

The constables are also involved with various local youth programs, including after-school activities such as sporting and social occasions, Blue Light discos, Police and Citizens Youth Clubs, and school holiday programs.

The scheme also has a Sergeant coordinator whose main function is to ensure that the basic concept of the scheme is maintained and applied consistently throughout the Northern Territory. The role also involves the coordination of SBCP activities as it applies to other sections and branches. Fortnightly conferences are conducted and representatives from the relevant sections attend.

One area of concern is a lack of appreciation by some operational members of the value of the scheme. This problem can arise through an insufficient knowledge of the role and achievements of the school constables, and is largely overcome by greater on-the-job interaction between the operational members and the school constables. This should involve all the members of a patrol district and can easily be performed through the medium of some item of interest to the kids, such as a police vehicle or motorcycle.

The importance of this interaction cannot be overstressed as it is essential that all members have a full appreciation of the school constable's role and that he is seen by all to be an obvious part of a district patrol team. The main benefit is that both the
children and the police members are able to see each other in a more positive light than normal.

Since the commencement of the scheme the children are now receiving a far more balanced view of law and order and a much broader appreciation of the police role, particularly the positive aspects of it. In this context it needs to be understood that children often have very strange, and at times, weird understandings of the police role. This is invariably due to the nonsense that other people convey to them, including some parents and other children. This is not just a police concept of the issue, but one which has been frequently stated by school executive staff who see our scheme as an excellent way to solve this problem.

Children who become involved in juvenile crime invariably come from home environments with irresponsible parents, single parents or no parents. The school constable scheme has been able to assist a great number of these kids, many of whom respond well to any constructive adult interest in them.

**Junior Police Rangers—An Update Report**

In June 1985 the scheme was launched with the recruitment of thirty-six children at school Year 8 level. A year later a further thirty-six children were enlisted and twenty-four were recruited in 1987.

Since their recruitment these children have been trained by using the resources of the police, fire service, emergency services and the Police and Citizens Youth Club in a number of skills including:

- Conservation of flora and fauna
- First Aid
- Bush craft and orienteering
- Survival techniques
- Boat handling and principles of navigation
- Water safety, swimming
- Abseiling
- Communication with peers, including public speaking
- Communications/radio procedures
- Safe handling of firearms
- Self-development
- Leadership
- Fire safety (home and rural)

The purpose of the scheme is to use the Junior Police Rangers (JPRs) as a nucleus for involving safety and other skills not normally taught in the schools.

Considerable progress has been achieved, with the first two groups having successfully completed their training. In addition the JPRs have also had good interaction with many other young people in the community, including some skills training.

This aspect has mainly included disadvantaged children and is becoming more important as the scheme progresses. As our major concern is for the well-being of juveniles, and the high incidence of juvenile crime, it is most important that this scheme is able to identify and assist appropriate young people.

With the completion of their skills training, the JPRs are able to play a more important role. With the assistance of some corporate sponsorship, particularly from WESTPAC, many children have been assisted by the scheme.

These children were identified by the school based constables as people who would benefit mostly from the scheme. By involving the school constables a much
broader interest in disadvantaged children is being achieved. Further, the school communities, particularly the constables, are well situated to provide essential follow-up.

More recently, the JPRs have been given a valuable fifteen hectares of land on the Arnhem Highway near Kakadu National Park. The land is idyllic with an adjoining lake for canoeing, swimming and life-saving exercises, hilly escarpment for climbing, abseiling and other relevant training. It is also located within one of the best flora and fauna regions of Australia.

The unit is currently negotiating with potential corporate sponsors for the establishment of basic facilities to enable accommodation for some 100 children. This will greatly facilitate the JPRs' involvement with other youth, particularly socially 'at risk' children.

**Blue Light Discos in the Northern Territory—An Update Report**

Blue Light discos first commenced in Victoria in 1976 and in the Northern Territory in 1981.

Over time, the discos have been continually improved and expanded to every major centre in the Northern Territory. There are currently nine in full-time operation with Humpty Doo now the oldest, and the new-look Darwin disco which attracts an average attendance of 800 young people per month. Other more recently established branches have commenced at Katherine and Jabiru.

A more recent innovation has been the introduction of Junior Blue Light discos which cater for the younger children and these are proving to be extremely successful.

There have already been over 10,000 attendances by young people to our Northern Territory discos this year, and this of course highlights the popularity of the discos and demonstrates the great value that functions of this kind have to the community. In many cases our discos are the only social occasion where a suitable environment exists in which parents can be confident that their children are well supervised.

In addition, many of our discos have also been able to provide some financial assistance to local needs young people and groups. This of course is an extension of the Blue Light discos' objective of caring for young people.

This very successful situation is largely due to the great efforts of police, service clubs, other volunteers, sponsors and the local media. Through these efforts we have a very viable pro-active function which reflects considerable credit to the police force and all the people involved.

The Blue Light disco scheme is part of our community policing program and apart from providing an attractive entertainment for children, it also provides an important interaction between youth, police and the community.

More recently it has proved to be a useful venue for some of the school based constables to provide a positive social involvement in the local community. It is also a good revenue basis for providing other recreational facilities and assistance for youth.