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MISSING PERSONS

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NCJRS

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FOREWORD

The problem of missing persons, especially missing children, is an important social issue. Increased public awareness and knowledge of the problem is vital if improved services are to be achieved.

Missing Persons serves this purpose well. Not only does it provide a wide range of useful information to readers but it also identifies areas requiring further effort. As the report makes only too clear, improvement is dependent to a considerable extent upon the production of increased knowledge of the missing persons phenomenon. I sincerely hope one of the benefits achieved by Missing Persons will be further research on the subject. Indeed, that is one of the study's basic aims.

A great deal of public discussion will be necessary before many of the reforms necessary to ameliorate the trauma occasioned by persons leaving their normal haunts, either voluntarily or involuntarily, are achieved. This publication should help inform such debate but there is, further, a need for people to become involved and committed to appropriate reform. Organisations such as Parents of Missing Children provide ideal vehicles for the formulation and promotion of new ideas and I urge readers to become involved in their own communities.

Jill Rietmeyer
President
Parents of Missing Children
Victoria

March 1988

PREFACE

The broad philosophy underpinning this study has two interrelated strands: firstly, it is apparent from both media publicity and individual/group initiatives associated with the problem that large numbers of persons are deemed missing (however defined) each year throughout the English-speaking world; and secondly, considerable personal anguish is encountered by not only many of those persons deemed missing but by their parents, guardians, friends, etc. In short, the social problems posed by missing persons is one of some substance.

Most public interest in the subject in Australia to date has focused on particular cases and police performance in relation thereto, eg. the Truro murders in South Australia and the Sharron Phillips case in Queensland or, associated matters such as the Masses held for missing persons in Perth and Townsville churches during November 1983. Certainly, associated matters such as sexual exploitation of runaway youth and accommodation for homeless youth are now starting to emerge as areas of public concern; but even so, the problem is still not generally perceived by the public in its wider context.

In particular, public concern with cognate issues such as the sorts of people who are reported and recorded as missing, circumstances defining missing person status and numbers of persons recorded as missing, is low in all jurisdictions. This is despite the fact that approximately two per cent of all public calls for police service relate to missing persons in the widest sense of the term.

It is the opinion of the authors that the subject of missing persons has the potential to become a high profile public policy issue in the future. This premise, combined with the fact that relatively little is publicly known on the topic as a whole, led to the view that a broad based description of the field would

be a welcome contribution to public knowledge. Therefore, this study is deliberately broad in its application rather than focusing on just one or two facets. The authors are hopeful that this publication will indirectly contribute to improvements in the missing persons scene and will precipitate further research concentrating on specific aspects. In line with these considerations, the broad approach adopted by the authors is variously descriptive and, where appropriate, prescriptive.

Reference is specifically made in the Executive Summary to the exploratory nature of this publication. As a consequence, no firm recommendations are made. Rather selected matters are identified as warranting further consideration in a more highly focused context. This tentativeness makes costing estimates pointless at this stage. It is for this reason economic considerations are deliberately not explored in the following pages. The publication's prescriptive element stems mostly from a concern for parents of missing children and consists largely of advice concerning suitable actions, likely emotional impacts and helpful attitudes. Chapters Eight and Nine are most relevant in this regard. Thus, this publication has two quite separate primary audiences: those who are interested in the nature and quantity of the missing persons phenomena; and, parents/guardians who are provided with reasonable advice covering a range of circumstances.

As the title page makes clear, this publication brings together between one set of covers the disparate products of a number of persons. Paul Wilson and Paul Wyles are responsible for the case studies; that is, Part I. Bruce Swanton is primarily responsible for Parts II, III and IV, with the exception of Chapter Six which was researched and written by Robyn Lincoln. Paul Wyles contributed passim to Part III as well as compiling Chapter Ten. Lavinia Hill coordinated and word processed the entire manuscript in addition to compiling Chapter Eleven.

Draft copies of this report were provided to all police and major welfare agencies as well as to many other interested parties for comment, correction and criticism. Despite the availability of such support and assistance, responsibility for the final product rests entirely with the principal authors, in respect of those parts written by them.

Data for Chapters Three and Four were kindly provided by the various police agencies and/or culled from their annual reports. Data so obtained were not double checked by the authors against agency records for accuracy. More detailed quantitative data concerning, for example, age, periods for which persons were missing and categories of missing person, eg. lost, runaway or abducted, are regrettably excluded either because they were too difficult to extract from paper files or the information has not been recorded.

The prime purposes of this study are to:

- * record and present a wide variety of data relevant to missing persons;
- * contribute to public knowledge and awareness on the subject and cognate matters;
- * encourage research;
- * present a number of case studies illustrating the complexity of missing person events and their emotional impacts;
- * identify relevant issues of public policy concerns.

Even though the researchers' intention was to cast a wide net there were, nevertheless, problems in deciding when to limit different avenues of inquiry, eg. exploitation of runaway juveniles and accommodation of homeless youth, matters both mentioned above. As a result, some arbitrary decisions were made

which, regrettably, will not please all readers. A majority of persons recorded as missing in all jurisdictions are juveniles and, indeed, most material available in the field pertains to juveniles. Thus, there is an inevitable bias to juveniles (as opposed to adults) in the text.

The researchers acknowledge their indebtedness to Dr Peter Redpath's book Help Me! My Child is Missing and to various of the excellent pamphlets and monographs produced by the United States National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Assistance provided by Jill Rietmeyer of Parents of Missing Children (POMC) and Christine Vincent of YMCA, two people who have personally contributed greatly to the missing children cause, is greatly appreciated.

Police agencies are the prime movers in the missing persons field and their contribution to this undertaking has been substantial, especially as evidenced by Chapters Three and Four.

Cooperation provided by the following persons is particularly appreciated: New South Wales - Assistant Commissioner Ron Wark, Sergeant Peter Bird; Vern Dalton, of the Department of Family and Community Services; Victoria - Assistant Commissioner Bill Robertson, Senior Sergeants Nick Ward and John Fraser; Queensland - Assistant Commissioner Jack Donoghue, Sergeant Lesleigh Jackson, Sergeant P.J. Wendt; Western Australia - Commander T.W. Clews; South Australia - Superintendent Bob Potts, Sergeant H.B. Dawes; Tasmania - Detective Inspector Ken O'Garey, Inspector B. Stepley and, S. Castles of the Department of Community Welfare; Northern Territory - Assistant Commissioner W.L. Goedegebuure; Australian Capital Territory - Bruce Morgan, Chief Superintendent Phil Baer, Station Sergeant S.L. Vincent; Kath Dowling of Greyhound and Trish Rigas of Polaroid Australia; United States of America - Michelle Spring, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
AND
MATTERS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

Missing Persons collects, collates and presents a range of information relevant to missing persons. In addition to this, it will encourage more focused research on specific facets of the problem.

The concept of missing persons is currently confused and there is a fundamental need for agencies, such as police, to refine their operational categories to improve measurement of the problem.

Procedures adopted by the various police agencies in pursuit of their missing persons responsibilities are described in this publication. Points of particular importance are identified as: vulnerability criteria; case accountability; and review. A wide variety of administrative and operational responses were noted, but the critical factor remains the human element. Even the best designed procedures are of little use if they are not competently implemented and operatives made accountable.

Quantification of the various missing person populations is difficult for a number of reasons. Major problems encountered include the inability of police databases to provide breakdowns other than by age and gender and, numbers of individuals reported as opposed to numbers of reports. However, distinctions are possible between persons missing from home (MFH) and persons missing from selected institutions (MFI). Additionally, there is the question of non-reported runaways and throwaways.

For the twelve month period 1985 (1986 in respect of Victoria) a total of 23,783 missing person reports were recorded throughout Australia. Of that number 12,903 reports were in respect of males and 10,880 were in respect of females. A total of 17,829 reports concerned persons missing from home, while 5,954

concerned persons missing from institutions. Juveniles accounted for 16,624 reports and adults 7,067. It is recognised, though, that a considerable but unquantified number of runaway juveniles are not reported to police as missing. Thus, actual figures are somewhat greater.

Resolution rates were high, with an aggregate 98.92 per cent clear up rate being claimed overall. At the end of the twelve month period a total of 257 missing person reports remained unresolved. A majority of these outstanding cases occurred in the three eastern States.

A great deal can be done to reduce numbers of persons reported missing each year. For example, protective behaviours - self esteem and safety training - are already being taught to juveniles by selected police officers, welfare workers and teachers, in most jurisdictions. The work of Victoria Police in this respect is especially worthy of praise. Much remains to be done, though. Unfortunately, the lack of detailed missing person statistics precludes opportunities for tailoring preventive programs for targeted categories at the present time.

Parents can do much to: make family life so satisfying that their offspring will be disinclined to leave home; and take measures, such as preparing information kits in respect of each of their children, to assist police in the event that their child leaves home either voluntarily or involuntarily. Parents and next of kin of missing persons are understandably distressed by their experience but can nevertheless do much to help themselves, including calling on others who can assist them. Advice is provided on these matters in Chapters Eight and Ten together with a directory of relevant support agencies in each State/Territory (Chapter Ten).

The investigation of missing persons cases can be critical to their outcome. Selected considerations affecting both police and

and other missing person investigators are discussed, including thoroughness in locating and interviewing witnesses, keeping complainants advised of events and lead development.

As mentioned previously, a majority of missing persons are juveniles. Juveniles place direct demands on police resources and a proportion actively engage in crime which further adds to police responsibility. Chapter Six is devoted to runaway juveniles, their motivations and their anti-social activities while at large.

A number of related issues are very briefly discussed from a public policy perspective. As Missing Persons is exploratory in nature, raising more questions than it answers, it is inappropriate to formulate firm recommendations. Rather, the study presents a number of matters worthy of further consideration by interested parties. They include:

- * Developing detailed classifications of missing persons types, especially with regard to runaway and throwaway juveniles, to underpin the development of remedial/preventive strategies in mainland States.
- * Establishing missing persons support and information centres in mainland States to provide a focus for reference, support and information to missing persons, friends and parents of the missing and others.
- * Reviewing criminal statistics compilations with regard to their capacity to measure criminal behaviours relative to missing persons.
- * Mandating policies that missing persons reports accepted by police be actioned instantly (some agencies do have such a policy).
- * Revising existing rules (informal as well as formal) that

reporters of missing persons must attend police stations in favour of police attending reporters, where appropriate.

- * Encouraging research concerning long-term missing persons with a view to determining more clearly the constitution of that population.
- * Consideration being given by State and local governments, as well as social groups and organisations, to declaring missing persons/missing children's days/weeks to focus public attention on the issue.
- * Mandating the option of reporting missing persons to police by telephone.
- * Mandating the checking of all juvenile residents by youth accommodation managers with police missing persons units.
- * Mandating the interviewing of all located runaway children by police and/or social workers to establishing: the suitability of their home environments should they wish to return to same; any crimes committed upon the runaways during their absence; any crimes committed by them; and their health including exposure to sexually transmitted diseases.
- * Reviewing, and modifying where necessary, laws concerning the managing, staffing, hygiene and quality of youth accommodation.
- * Encouraging the efforts of governments and social welfare authorities aimed at improving the quality of family life.
- * Mandating periodic review by police of outstanding cases (some agencies already have such a policy).

PART I
THE HUMAN COST

CHAPTER ONE

THOSE WHO GO MISSING

Introduction

Too often accounts of missing persons - runaways, abductions or murders - have tended to be sensationalised, often exaggerated and sometimes plainly false. The studies that follow present the experiences of people involved in five different missing persons cases. Although they represent very different cases, they highlight common (and some very individual) reactions by parents and families, police, the media and the public.

The case studies give some insight into experiences that are dealt with in the chapters that follow and present a distressing picture of the sadness, anger, frustration and dashed hopes of people who have had loved ones go missing. This picture is a valuable illustration of parental feelings, reactions and means of coping with the events which engulfed their lives when their child disappeared. Coupled with the examination of police procedures (Chapter Three) they also provide an analysis of the ways investigations were handled and thus form a basis for enhancing procedures and policies to cope with the problem of missing persons.

There is a clear need for raised awareness in the community and government in respect of missing persons. These case studies in conjunction with the remainder of this publication make some contribution to the much needed social examination and discussion of this problem.

Megan Mulquiney

At noon on Saturday 28 July 1984 seventeen-year-old Megan Mulquiney, a part-time shop assistant, finished work at 'Big W', Woden Plaza, in Canberra's southern suburbs. She has never been seen since. The case has baffled police and left Megan's family confused, saddened and angry.

It was at 2.00 pm that afternoon that Megan's mother, Mrs Dorothy Mulquiney, realised there was something wrong. 'I knew something wasn't right - I don't know why ... I waited until 4.00 [pm] and then rang Woden police'. Mrs Mulquiney explained the situation to the police. She recalls the police attempted to calm her by reassuring her that girls of seventeen, 'do these sorts of things'. Mrs Mulquiney says the police told her that teenagers run away all the time and there was no point in launching a big search immediately. She remembers thinking 'but Megan wouldn't do this; she always told me where she was going'. They asked her to ring back after 6.00 pm if Megan had not returned.

At 6.05 pm, with no sign of Megan, Mrs Mulquiney, now convinced something dreadfully wrong had happened to her usually punctual and responsible daughter, phoned the police again. She convinced them that her case was genuine. She said 'I know my daughter, you don't'. The police acted and within twenty-four hours had launched an investigation.

By Monday over thirty detectives from the Australian Federal Police were involved in the case attempting to trace Megan's movements from the time she finished work. The area around Woden Plaza and the foreshores of Lake Burley Griffin were searched; police conducted a door knock in Mawson, the suburb where the Mulquiney's live. The local media were quick to seize on the urgency of the situation and covered the case with detailed stories in the months that followed. Sightings were numerous, but unfortunately none of them checked out.

Megan Louise Mulquiney was born on 3 November 1966. Her mother describes her as '... a happy quiet and gentle little girl ... she never hurt me or anyone'. At seventeen, she was an attractive young woman with dark brown, shoulder-length hair and brown eyes. Her friends describe her as happy-go-lucky and friendly. Like many of her school friends attending Year Eleven at Narrabundah College, Megan had a part-time job working Friday nights and Saturday mornings. In her spare time she loved to ice skate and watch ice hockey matches at the nearby Phillip Ice Skating Centre. She was a good conscientious student who enjoyed school and wanted to be a school teacher. Her home life was happy. Her parents had separated several years previously but she still saw her father and was planning to celebrate his birthday dinner on the night of her disappearance. She was close to her younger sister, Karen, who shared her love of ice skating, and to her younger brother, Michael. Megan was happy with her life. She experienced the types of problems most teenagers do but was seen by family and friends as being stable and content. There were no conceivable reasons for her to run away.

Detective Senior Constable David Baker, who headed the investigations, believed from the start that she did not fit the pattern of a teenage runaway. Police and the Mulquineys are now almost certain that Megan is dead.

A big question remains: how could a teenage girl disappear in one of the busiest shopping centres in Canberra without anyone seeing her? If she was abducted, surely someone would have seen her being forced into a car. Despite investigations by police, her family, private investigators, and a \$30,000 reward for information about her disappearance, no trace has been found.

For the Mulquineys the days, weeks, months and years following Megan's disappearance have been hell. Mrs Mulquiney recalls:

In the first few weeks I felt I wasn't really here - I wasn't with it - we didn't have a day

of peace. There were always people here. The phone didn't stop ringing ... We were in a state of limbo not knowing if she was alive or dead.

Mrs Mulquiney has vivid memories of the crank phone calls, the sightseers, the clairvoyants and spiritualists who haunted her home:

People would climb trees to look inside the house. Others would stare from cars in the street. Mental patients approached me saying they knew where Megan was. I visited their houses and was often in danger of my own life ... I had to know, to follow every lead. I dug up paddocks where people claimed Megan was ... I had to do it for my own peace of mind.

Private investigators also approached the family offering to help find Megan. Mrs Mulquiney's experiences with private investigators have not been pleasant. Presently she is undergoing court proceedings against a Canberra Private Investigator who is seeking \$5000 expenses for his part in the investigation. Her advice to anyone deciding whether to hire a private investigator is 'don't bother, they are not worth the heartache'.

Over and over again the Mulquineys followed leads that led nowhere. For twelve months Mrs Mulquiney didn't work, she searched the mountains and hills around Canberra, paddocks, lakes, shopping centres, clubs and taverns. She put up posters of Megan all over Canberra, she gave numerous press interviews, she sought help from local and federal government MPs, she organised a petition for increased police numbers in searching for missing persons and, in a desperate attempt to find Megan, she followed every lead no matter how insignificant. She had become a mother obsessed. A mother who would do everything she

for missing persons and she followed every lead no matter how insignificant in a desperate attempt to find Megan. She had become a mother obsessed. A mother who would do everything she could to find her daughter. Despite her attempts nothing has been found.

For the Mulquineys not knowing whether Megan is dead or alive causes them pain and distress. Mrs Mulquiney believes that until they find Megan there will always be doubt in her mind. 'We relive her disappearance with every sighting and every article about her ... It would be the happiest moment of my life if they found Megan alive.'

The Mulquineys have learnt a lot through their experiences: they have learnt not to get hopeful with every new lead or sighting; they have learnt the police often need much convincing and encouragement in order to act (this is sometimes as a result of low staffing numbers); and they have learnt that society contains callous people ready to make money out of others' vulnerability in times of distress and grief. They also now know that there are good people who are prepared to help with kind words and gestures: some offered to help search; some phoned with messages of sympathy. The Mulquineys' church helped the family adjust to their new circumstances by placing a plaque in Megan's memory at the Church.

Sadly, Megan Mulquiney remains a missing person and the mystery and distress surrounding her disappearance continues.

Sharron Phillips

Her friends described her as vivacious, friendly and outgoing. It was true, Sharron Phillips, a twenty-year-old Queenslander, had everything going for her - a job, a boyfriend, good friends and a caring and supportive family - then on the night of Thursday 8 May 1986 she disappeared and has not been seen since.

The events of that fateful night up until her disappearance appear as follows:

At 5.00 pm on Thursday 8 May 1986, Sharron and her girlfriend Samantha Dalzell finished work and went late-night shopping. By 8.45 pm they were back at Sharron's flat in Archerfield having a cup of coffee and making phone calls to friends. They then went to Redbank Plains where Samantha lived. At 10.45 pm Sharron left Samantha's flat. They were never to see each other again.

At 11.00 pm Sharron's car ran out of petrol on Ipswich Road near the Wacol Migrant Hostel. She left the car and walked to the army barracks opposite in an attempt to use their phone. Permission was refused. Sharron then walked back along the road to a phone box at Station Road where she phoned her boyfriend Martin Balazs, explained her predicament and asked him to come and pick her up. Martin's confusion over Sharron's directions and a flat tyre meant that it took considerable time before he reached Station Road.

At 12.03 am Sharron phoned Martin's flat again to find out what was taking him so long. His flat-mate told Sharron that Martin had already left to look for her. This was the last phone call Sharron Phillips made.

Martin checked the area on arrival. He found Sharron's locked but unattended car. He made inquiries at several service stations along the road but to no avail. Eventually, believing

that Sharron had found some other transport home, he returned to his flat about 2.00 am.

What happened during that night remains a mystery but the most likely scenario is that Sharron was forced into a car, abducted and later killed.

The saga that began with Sharron's disappearance captured the sympathy and hope of people in Queensland and throughout Australia. It is a story of a family frustrated by the initial investigation by the Oxley CIB, a family who took it upon themselves to search for their missing loved one, who were to learn that their best method in getting government action was to use the media, and who continue to live in hope that one day they will find out what happened on that May night in 1986.

The first few days, which are crucial in any police investigation, were full of misunderstanding by the police and frustration on the part of the Phillips family. Mrs Phillips recalls:

My husband and sons found her (Sharron's) car locked at Wacol on the Friday morning (9 May 1986), after her work phoned us and said she hadn't arrived ... We were very worried so we rang the Oxley Police to report her missing and to tell them where her car was ... No police went to look at her car or search the area. It wasn't until the Saturday that the CIB started to investigate after her boyfriend told us she had rung him for help one night.

During their initial contact with Police, Mr Phillips recalls that officers told him to move the car from the roadway '... even if it has to be towed away' they said. This instruction from police later led to confusion about the search area. According to Mrs Phillips the police began their investigation on Saturday

but did not search the area where Mr Phillips had found the car until the following Tuesday and Wednesday. It was a week after Sharron's disappearance, before her shoes and purse were found not far from where her car ran out of petrol. It had rained over the weekend of 10/11 May 1986 and the Phillips believe this made it impossible to obtain fingerprints from the items recovered. In the first week of the investigation, chief investigation officer Detective Sergeant Ken Foreman of the Oxley CIB was widely reported in the Brisbane press as saying:

... it could be mid-week before the results of tests of fingerprints taken from Miss Phillips' personal items are known ... the tests are (made) more difficult because the purse, shoes and credit cards were wet when they were found.

Mrs Phillips believes that had police acted quickly this would never have happened, good leads could have been established and the investigation would have had some direction. She believes police should never have told them to move the car. 'It should have been searched along with the area where it was found.' The family were concerned that the swamp area around Wacol Army Barracks, close to where Sharron disappeared, had not been searched. The police told Mr Phillips they had not searched the area because they were not given permission. 'It was funny because Vilma Ward (a consumer affairs lobbyist) got permission straight away from the army', Mr Phillips said.

Detective Senior Sergeant Dallow, who now leads the inquiry into Sharron's disappearance, has defended police action in the initial stages of the investigation:

From the beginning of this investigation thorough searches were made of all areas surrounding Sharron's vehicle, the telephone boxes and all areas in the vicinity. These

searches made by a large contingent of personnel from the nearby Academy included the Migrant Hostel, Aboriginal Hostel, swamp land at the back of the Wacol Army Camp and all other locations nominated by informants, clairvoyants or any other person able to help.

Mrs Phillips argues forcibly that the police did not investigate the disappearance of Sharron quickly and thoroughly from the time the matter was first reported to them.

A major gap in the police investigation was discovered when journalist Ken Blanche of the Courier Mail retraced Sharron's movements the night she disappeared. Mr Blanche recalls:

... she made two phone calls to her boyfriend's number. They (the police) were convinced she'd made them from an all-night roadhouse at Gales which is over 2 km from where her car broke down ... In fact they told me that's where the lead to the disappearance would come from ... I went out there and had a look and formed the opinion that she might have made the telephone call from a phone box at Wacol Railway Station which is quite close to where her car broke down. And subsequently this proved to be the case.

Blanche believes the police investigation was a muddle from the start. The Phillips realised this and began their own inquiries and searches. The police became very defensive, increasing the family's difficulty. Blanche says the Phillips acted commendably in a difficult situation by approaching people travelling along Ipswich Road in an attempt to find some clue to Sharron's

disappearance. The police threatened the family with arrest if they did not move on, according to Mr Blanche.

Queensland Police Assistant Commissioner Donoghue defends police action on the issue:

The facts are that Ipswich Road is a major arterial, and it was considered by police that the actions of the Phillips' family on Ipswich Road constituted a danger to themselves and traffic on the road.

However, according to Mrs Phillips, the family were given permission by Detective Sergeant Ken Foreman of Oxley CIB to be where they were. They were Mrs Phillips said, standing on the side of the road by a pedestrian crossing handing out pamphlets. It was a controlled four-ways with overhead lighting and in no way were they impeding traffic. The family stated that they had offered to pay for a police officer to be with them but were told that it was not necessary.

The Phillips worked hard in a desperate attempt to find a clue which would help them discover what had happened to Sharron. They issued posters and pamphlets along the roadside, and in major shopping centres in and around Brisbane. They also appeared on national television appealing for help in their search. The offers of help were encouraging; Ipswich City Council arranged a photograph and description of Sharron to be sent out with 24,000 rate notices in the area; the international company 3M offered two roadside billboards to display photos of Sharron on Ipswich Road and at Brisbane's Central Railway Station; the video distributor CEL and the Australian Federal Police prepared a community service announcement appealing for help in locating Sharron to precede one of its newly released movies; the Department of Ethnic Affairs printed posters of Sharron in four languages for distribution in the Ipswich area;

and an Ipswich businessman put up a reward for \$10,000 for information leading to the conviction of Sharron's abductor(s).

Some police clearly realised the important assistance the Phillips family were giving to police inquiries. Detective Senior Sergeant Bob Dallow comments:

Sharron's parents are to be fully commended for their assistance to police during this investigation and the manner in which they have 100 per cent committed themselves to the self-appointed task of finding their sibling.

Despite this the Queensland Cabinet did not post a reward. The Daily Sun Editorial of 11 October 1986 condemned this lack of action on the reward issue:

Despite constant pleas from Sharron's family and overwhelming evidence of foul play, the State Government has refused to offer any reward for help that could find Sharron or her killer (11 October 1986).

The paper went on to make a comparison between Sharron's case and the investigation into the theft in Victoria of the Picasso painting Weeping Woman. In that case the Victorian Government offered a reward of \$50,000 in just over a week. Mrs Phillips felt the injustice of living in Queensland when, in New South Wales, the government announced a \$50,000 reward for information about the disappearance of eight year old John Purtell, an Albury schoolboy, only three days after his disappearance. Mr Blanche believes that the Oxley CIB had been shown to be stupid and incompetent by the media and, because of this, they resisted advising the Queensland Government to post a reward for Sharron.

The pressure continued to mount, until Mr Hayden, then Minister for Foreign Affairs and Member for Oxley, went to see the

Phillips at their home in July 1986. Mr Hayden then called Prime Minister Hawke who in turn phoned the Phillips. 'Mr Hawke told me the lack of help we had been getting from the police in Queensland was disgusting and he was sorry it was happening', Mr Phillips said. Mr and Mrs Phillips also presented a letter to the State Governor in an attempt to convince the Government to issue a reward.

Finally, three months after Sharron's disappearance, the Queensland Cabinet issued a \$50,000 reward. The announcement came less than a week after the Deputy Premier and Police Minister, Mr Bill Gunn, repeated his earlier statement that there would be no reward. Mrs Phillips was quoted as saying:

It was only last week when they said we would not embarrass them into offering a reward, and today they offer \$50,000 - it seems like we may have embarrassed them.

Assistant Commissioner Donoghue believes that the reward issue was handled correctly:

... standard procedures were followed, and when the Commissioner of Police recommended the posting of a reward, Cabinet immediately approved.

Unfortunately, despite the reward and the new information which the public supplied, Sharron remains missing. Whether such information may have made a difference in the outcome of the inquiry if the reward had been posted earlier in the investigations will never be answered.

Clearly, the delay in the searching may have had important bearings on the direction and final outcome of the investigations. Mrs Phillips reiterates this point:

It seems to us everything and everyone was too late to help Sharron or find her. We believe the delay in searching for people who go missing, in the way that our daughter did, only helps the criminals, not the victims, the police or the families.

Sharron Phillips, despite the mammoth efforts by her family, remains a missing person - presumed dead.

Alice Baker*

Alice Baker was just thirteen when she began a relationship with a twenty-eight year old man who lived across the road from her family's home. Shortly after turning fourteen both she and the man disappeared.

In the ensuing months, the Baker family experienced a range of emotions from hate and confusion to hope and happiness. Such feelings are not easily forgotten. They changed this family's life, their relationships with others and led to action which achieved three things: they found their daughter, they formed a group for parents of missing children; and they made police aware of confusing procedures and delays in investigating reports of missing persons (this has recently resulted in improved police action in the area).

Alice's story is quite unlike that of most young people who go missing throughout Australia each year. It began when she started frequent visits to her male friend who lived over the road. Mrs Baker remembers both she and her husband felt something was not quite right as Alice had become withdrawn and quiet about what she was doing, and she was not communicating with them as she used to. The Bakers have three children older than Alice and were aware of the problems experienced in early puberty when teenagers undergo major emotional, psychological and physical changes. Mrs Baker says:

It's very difficult with a teenager because some of the things happening in their lives at that time are quite natural ... it is very hard as a family to discern whether you should be anxious or whether you should just ride through it.

* pseudonym.

It is a major dilemma for all parents of teenagers to distinguish between 'normal' development and a situation which may be dangerous, or threatening, to an individual and their family.

Suspecting something was wrong with Alice, the Bakers searched for the cause of their daughter's withdrawal from the family. One avenue explored was her school. Teachers had noticed some change in the girl but it was ascribed to normal adolescent development. Eventually inquiries centred on the twenty-eight year old man Alice had been visiting regularly. When they discovered Alice was involved in a sexual relationship with the man they forbade her seeing him again and reported their discovery to Community Policing officers. Officers interviewed Alice without resolving the problem. The parents felt their daughter was at moral risk but police advised that nothing could be done, according to Mrs Baker. Mrs Baker also approached a senior police doctor but without success. Frustrated and desperate, the Bakers sought family counselling. However, not long after this Alice and the man both went missing.

Mrs Baker discovered Alice's disappearance an hour after she left for school. She went into Alice's room and found some clothes and a clock radio missing. She phoned the school and after they told her Alice was not in class, Mrs Baker phoned the police to report her daughter missing.

Mrs Baker recalls the family's feelings in the weeks and months after Alice went missing. Shock and disbelief were predominant. They were so stunned they cannot now recall the first three days of Alice's absence. The family functioned as if in an emotional fog. Some things had to be done, though:

We searched her room thoroughly to find out what was missing ... It's very hard because as the months went on we didn't know whether to clean it up or not, or whether to throw

away things ... It's not like when a child has died. When a child dies you have to do something. People have to finalise things. There was no finality about this. You really didn't know what to do. It was disarming ... Some people talked to us as though Alice was present; but she wasn't present. Others never mentioned her name as though she had never existed. There was an empty room; an empty chair at the table; an emptiness in our hearts and in our minds; an emptiness in our whole being.

The doubt and guilt that comes with the uncertainty of the situation was also present. A mass of questions emerged from this uncertainty. Mrs Baker remembers:

I wondered was she really dead and we hadn't let ourselves admit it. What was that guy over the road like? Yes, he did have a petty criminal record. Yes, he was a tattooist by trade. Yes, he was into Scientology. Who was he? What had he done with my daughter? Was he caring for her? Was he using her? Was he sexually abusing her? Was he using her for any sort of gain? Was he prostituting her so he could make money?

I didn't know and I was terrified. At this point I would have preferred her dead.

The Bakers' confusion was complete when police did not appear to accept their complaint. Their daughter had been abducted but police placed an onus of proof on them which they could not satisfy.

Gradually the reality of the situation hit the family; if they wanted to find Alice they would have to act. It is unfortunate that their story is another involving slow and confusing action on the part of the police.

Mrs Baker says:

We had real problems with the police. They didn't know whether to list her (Alice) as a missing person or an abduction and so the file floated between the specialist policing squad, the CIB and the local police. That's three separate locations. It became very confusing.

Mrs Baker says the family urged the police to trace the taxi which collected Alice and the man from his house. Eight weeks after their disappearance the police investigated this lead which proved vital to the investigation. The taxi had taken the couple to the airport. The police failed, according to Mrs Baker, to show the cab driver her daughter's photograph. Nine months later, the driver could not identify Alice as one of his passengers.

Checking domestic flights that day the family guessed that Alice and her companion had taken a plane to Coolangatta or Brisbane. At that point, some five months after Alice's departure, the police officer handling the case had not contacted the Bakers even once. So, Mrs Baker and her son went in search of the missing pair.

Before leaving their home town, the Bakers photocopied hundreds of descriptions of Alice for distribution to police stations along the east coast. Mrs Baker remembers staying at youth hostels, caravan parks and convents and searching pinball parlours, pubs, discos, and anywhere they thought they might find

Alice. She recalls vividly feeling good about doing something at last and the initial excitement of sightings: 'You have great expectations, you get close, you get fearful, you get hopeful and then there was the terrible letdown'. She says the family came to a point where they put little faith in any sightings except those where a possible witness believed they had actually talked to Alice.

The search of Queensland and other east coast cities proved useless. On their return home the Bakers decided to search Adelaide. Although their search of Adelaide was unproductive the family did gain new advice from South Australia Police who urged the family to speak to their own police again and stress that they (the family) believed Alice had been abducted. While in South Australia, the Bakers visited Mr and Mrs Mykyta (see later section of this Chapter, 'The Truro Victims'). These parents of a murdered daughter helped provide the Bakers with the commitment to carry on. Mrs Baker comments:

Our story at that point was so like theirs as far as police indifference.

I went back and looked up the Sexual Offences Act, which placed no onus of proof on a complainant, and went to the police and asked them to trace two cheques which had been cashed in New Zealand. The police would not.

So we sat down and wrote our eighteen page complaint to our Commissioner of Police and we documented everything ... We also sent our complaints to the Ombudsman ... Then all of a sudden, eight months after Alice went missing, police wanted to get a statement for the first time.

Police requested a statement from the family but the Bakers felt they should first consult a solicitor because, eight months before when they had offered the police a statement, they had not wanted one. Mrs Baker said:

Whilst in the solicitor's office my son phoned and said, 'Mum, she's been found ...' We were jumping around hugging each other. We were overcome.

Alice had been found in New Zealand.

A week prior to Alice being found, the Bakers had written to family members overseas telling them that Alice was dead. A memorial Mass was arranged for her birthday. The family felt a strong emotional need for such a rite. In fact, Alice was located on the very day the Mass was to be held. After leaving the solicitor's office, the Bakers went to the priest's house to be overwhelmed by friends and relatives in what turned out to be a celebration and thanksgiving. 'It was such a joyful occasion', remarks Mrs Baker.

Mrs Baker remembers that by the time they arrived home from the solicitor's office there was a large crowd of friends and family there. They sent a big bunch of flowers to Alice at the Girls Home at which she had been placed while International Social Services and police worked to have her returned to Australia.

Three weeks after this news the family went to the airport to meet her. Mrs Baker recalls: 'It was a very emotionally-charged situation ... From the airport came a person we didn't know - she was so grown up ...' This day began the long journey of readjustment for the family, especially Alice. No one could pretend that Alice was left unscarred by her experience. The psychological assessment reveals some important points in the case. Mrs Baker says the report tells of a situation existing

between Alice and her companion similar to many child abuse cases. Mrs Baker alleges that Alice was 'virtually abducted by use of coercion'; emotional blackmail and promise in which the man would say things like 'I'll shoot myself if you don't do what I say'.

After Alice's return the Bakers became involved with a support and advisory group endorsed by the State Police. It is ironic that Mrs Baker now has a good relationship with police of whom she was so critical during the investigation of Alice's case. She has even lectured at the Police Academy on Missing Persons. Several years ago Sir Kenneth Newman, formerly of Scotland Yard sent her a message. She remembers well his words and in a sense they have been her guiding force. He said '... more public awareness is needed in the area of missing and runaway children'. It is only with such public awareness that the governments of Australia can respond appropriately to the problem with policies, programs and police procedures which reduce the rate of missing children like Alice Baker.

A disquieting footnote to this case involves Alice's abductor. He was arrested and charged with child stealing. Pleading guilty, he was placed on a three year good behaviour bond. Mrs Baker wryly comments: '[He] was only inconvenienced by attending court for one morning. Our family, and especially Alice, have been affected for LIFE'.

Tony Jones

On 3 November 1982 Tony Jones a twenty-year-old Perth youth hitchhiking around Australia phoned his family from Townsville to wish his sister a happy birthday and to assure his mother he was making his way home for Christmas. This was the last time they were to hear from Tony. Soon after this he disappeared without trace.

Tony was from a family of eight children. He was an adventurous young man who seemed to have everything going for him. Yet in May 1982 he decided to leave his job, his family and his girlfriend to travel Australia. His brother Brian describes Tony in his book Searching for Tony:

Tony was a fine looking lad; he was tall and lean with brown, shoulder-length hair and a dark-gingery beard which framed a winsome smile. Good-natured, affable, and easy-going, he was regarded as a 'great bloke' amongst his friends, and endeared as the 'kid brother' of the family. Sky diving, gold prospecting, and roo shooting had failed to satisfy his thirst for adventure, so just before his twentieth birthday he announced his intention to embark upon a working holiday around Australia
(p. 4).

Tony began his trip with a couple of friends and in three weeks they had been to Adelaide, Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney. All this time Tony kept in regular contact with his family. Tony and his friends had difficulty finding work in Sydney so they caught the train to Brisbane hoping the Commonwealth Games which were on at the time would provide them with jobs. However jobs were scarce in Brisbane too and after a few weeks on the dole Tony's friends decided to leave for their Perth homes. Tony liked

Brisbane and stayed hoping he would find work. He soon began a job at the Brisbane Show and later in a canning factory.

Whilst in Brisbane Tony's brother Tim arrived. He was planning to ride his bike across Australia to Perth. Their brother Brian recalls:

... Tony, in his nostalgia, decided to accompany Tim home, though not on a bicycle. Tony was less physically endowed than Tim and opted for a more leisurely form of transport: hitchhiking. Since neither of the boys had seen the northern regions of Australia they agreed to come home across the top. ...

News of their homecoming filled the rest of the family with excitement though Mother was somewhat apprehensive about their mode of transport. My parents were delighted at the prospect of having everyone home for Christmas (p. 7).

Before leaving, Tim and Tony arranged to keep in contact by regularly telephoning their sister in Sydney or their parents in Perth.

They began the first leg of their journey north travelling their separate ways and meeting up at Airlie Beach. They stayed a few days and then continued to Townsville where they stayed in a caravan with their new friends from Airlie Beach. They then decided to go to Mt Isa but Tony wanted to see Cairns and so he went north while Tim rode west. Tony planned to make his way from Cairns to Mt Isa (via Townsville) where he would meet his brother. The last call the family in Perth received from Tony was on 3 November when he was in Townsville after his return from Cairns. He told the family he hoped to be in Mount Isa the next day to meet Tim, and he promised to give Tim \$150 which had been placed in his bank account by his parents.

But Tony did not arrive in Mt Isa the next day. In fact, a week later there was still no sign of him.

The family became quite concerned. On 11 November, a day of special importance to Tony and the Jones family, when there was still no word, they reported Tony missing. They were advised to contact the Townsville police but were told by them that Tim should file the report, in person, in Mt Isa. Mrs Jones rang the Mt Isa police later to confirm Tim's report, only to find that Tim's report had not been taken seriously. Tim was summoned back to the police station to give further details.

The next day the family felt some relief when told that Tony had been sighted by a policeman at Julia Creek, an area between Townsville and Mt Isa. This later proved to be a case of mistaken identity.

Further investigations by the family on 12 November increased their fears:

... the facts spoke for themselves: since November 3 all contact with Tony had ceased; there were no phone calls to Natalie [Tony's girlfriend], no phone calls home (not even on November 11), he had drawn no money from the bank (in spite of his habit of drawing small amounts each day), and, although low on funds, he had failed to apply for his latest dole cheque (p. 18).

That night the Jones were eager to fly from Perth to Townsville to conduct their own search but were advised to give the police twenty-four hours to find Tony before doing so. The next day, distraught by the apparent inactivity of the police, Mrs Jones, Brian and Mark flew to Townsville; they were later joined by Tim who had been waiting for Tony in Mt Isa.

The family felt some relief when told by Mt Isa police that Tony had been sighted at Julia Creek, by a truck driver. But as the days passed and Tony still had not arrived at Mt Isa they became sceptical of that sighting and many others which followed the media coverage of the family's search.

The police were confident that Tony would turn up even if the family were not. One Townsville policeman said to Mrs Jones:

I must tell you, we get hundreds of reports like this each year. They are mostly runaway teenagers and they nearly always turn up after a few days. If it is only eleven or twelve days since you last heard from Tony then, to be honest, that doesn't really give us much cause for alarm. If he were a girl it would be a different story, but boys will be boys ... (p. 23).

Although police may not consciously be condescending, often their initial attitude with parents who report a missing son or daughter appears blase, non-committal and unsupportive.

The Jones went to work to publicise Tony's disappearance. They contacted Townsville's local daily newspaper The Townsville Daily Bulletin and managed a front page story. Then Brian arranged to be interviewed by Townsville radio station 4AY and later by the ABC which broadcasts throughout Queensland.

Mrs Jones went to the Telecom office in the hope that they could trace Tony's last call to Perth on 3 November. The call was made collect so she believed it would be easier to trace. She was angry and frustrated when she was shunted from one section to the next and was finally told it was very difficult to trace calls and it would probably take three weeks. Mrs Jones said 'I can't wait three weeks. That could make all the difference between

finding him dead or alive'. An hour later, sitting in the police inspectors office, Telecom phoned to say the call had been made at 8.50 pm from a phone in Bower Road, Rosslea. This information gave the family a point on which to focus the investigation.

The family asked the police to conduct a door-to-door inquiry in the vicinity of the phone booth but when they declined the Jones began their own doorknock campaign. From these inquiries they found one person who had seen Tony hitchhiking towards Mt Isa on the night of 3 November. The family, however, were frustrated by the apparent inability of the police to act.

Police continued making inquiries and kept in contact with the family. Leads were followed but the most frustrating part for the Jones was the waiting. Police continually told them: 'All that's left to do now is to wait'.

A mass of questions were raised as the Jones continued their investigations: what became of Tony's rifle? what happened in Cairns, a notorious drug centre? was the fight he got involved in with a bouncer in Townsville a clue to his disappearance? As the investigation continued it appeared there were no leads. Tony had simply vanished.

After their fruitless search in Townsville Brian 'appealed to Tony's "killers" to reveal the whereabouts of his body in order that we could give him a Christian burial' (p. 48). The family then returned home to Perth.

Back home the family continued to get conflicting reports from the media and the police. There were several alleged sightings which later proved to be cases of mistaken identity. Police were quoted as saying they believed Tony was murdered, but later they said they hoped he 'would walk into his parents home for Christmas'.

The Jones believed their ordeal was over when Townsville Police received a letter which said:

I believe body of A.J. Jones buried in or near Fullarton River bed within 100 yds southside Flinders Highway. LOCHIEL (p. 62).

The river bed was searched but there was no trace of Tony. The family tried to make sense of this, especially the signatory, Lochiel, a 17th century Scottish Highland noble who allegedly killed his enemies by biting their necks. Mr Jones published a reply to Lochiel urging him/her to come forward with more information but, in spite of a \$5,000 reward, nothing was forthcoming.

Six months after Tony's disappearance the Queensland Government posted a \$20,000 reward for information leading to the apprehension of his suspected murderers, but again no leads were unearthed.

As time passed the Jones gave up hope of finding Tony alive. Despite not having a body they held a funeral service which helped them cope with their loss. Brian says:

Some people would object, of course, as they have done over the years, and say, 'How can you give up hope?'. Actually, it has been easier to cope with a 'dead' brother than a missing one. By believing he was dead (which was a logical conclusion) we were spared much of the emotional conflict between grieving and hoping. We were free to grieve his loss without constantly expecting him to walk in the door. We were also spared the self-reproaches that the families of runaway children often experience ... it seemed more compassionate and realistic to think that Tony was dead; ... (p. 77).

In many ways the Jones were fortunate that they could make a final step in grief to some resolution of their loss. The disappearance of Tony was hard on the family but being unable to find any trace of him, or the circumstances of his disappearance, made the family understandably distressed. For families of missing persons the painful memories recur: no chance to say goodbye, things left unsaid and undone. Tony Jones' disappearance was made more difficult for his family by the distances involved, the fact the family had not seen him for twelve months, the lack of communication and the slow response of the police, the numerous false sightings and leads, and the crank callers.

The Truro Victims

'Truro' is a word that rouses anger, fear and painful memories for many people. It warns of the dangers of the outside world to the innocent and even today it raises a mass of questions, the foremost being, how could seven girls be murdered and remain missing for over two years?

In the summer of 1976-77 seven young women disappeared from Adelaide streets under similar circumstances. The remains of Veronica Knight, one of the seven women, were found by a man mushrooming in a swamp paddock near Truro on 25 April 1978. It was nearly a year later, on Easter Sunday 1979, that Sylvia Pittman's remains were discovered in the same paddock. At the time police launched a full-scale investigation, including a search of the area. All seven women's bodies were found over two years after they were reported missing.

James William Miller a forty year old labourer stood trial for the murder of the seven women on 12 February 1980. He was found guilty on six counts. In his book Don't Call Me Killer, Miller tells how he and Christopher Robin Worrell picked up young women in Adelaide and offered them lifts. The women were usually taken out of the city to deserted paddocks where they were raped and strangled by Worrell and then dumped in shallow graves by the two men. Worrell was on parole for assault and attempted rape when he murdered the seven women. Miller recalls:

Chris was twenty-two when we buried the first girl. That was on the night before Christmas Eve, 1976. He was twenty-three when he died just eight weeks later on February 19, 1977 (Miller was thirty-seven at the time). By then seven girls were dead.

Worrell was killed in a car accident less than a week after Deborah Lamb, the last of the victims, was murdered. Why it took so long to find the victims is an all too common reflection of

the attitudes of police and the wider community to people who go missing.

So who were these girls and why was police investigation and an arrest so long in coming?

Veronica Knight was last seen alive in Rundle Mall, the central shopping mall in Adelaide, on the evening of 23 December 1976. Veronica, an eighteen year old unemployed woman was boarding a bus for home when she remembered she had left a parcel at a photo booth in the mall. Captain D. Reed of Sutherland Lodge, the Salvation Army hostel where Veronica lived, reported her missing when she had not returned by 1.00 am. Friends described Veronica as: '... reasonably good looking ... outgoing, a part of the hostel family and a regular church goer'. She was also regarded as partly backward or retarded which friends attributed to her having spent most of her life in institutions (The Advertiser, 12 May 1979). Veronica was the first victim of a killer who tied up, raped, then strangled his victims before dumping them in the empty wastelands north of Adelaide.

Sylvia Pittman was his second victim. Sixteen year old Sylvia was a shop assistant who had ambitions to be a model. She was a slim, fair-haired, attractive girl who enjoyed going to discos. She had disappeared once before which made her parents question whether she may have run away again. Mr Pittman says:

Margarathe and I had given her more freedom since her first disappearance ... Deep down I knew she hadn't run away, because she had promised me she wouldn't do it again. Also, Sylvia was placed in a women's detention centre in Melbourne the last time and this really frightened her (The Advertiser, 12 May 1979).

Sylvia's skeleton was found by shooters on Easter Sunday 1979.

On 26 April 1979, a year after Veronica Knight's remains were found, police discovered two more bodies, Connie Iordanides and Vicki Howell. Their remains were found along the dirt track that led into the paddock where Veronica and Sylvia had also been found.

Iordanides was known to her friends as Connie Jordan - an Anglicised version of her Greek surname. Her father had told police that his slim, tall, brown eyed and unemployed 16 year old daughter had once before run away from home (The National Times, 20 October 1979).

Connie disappeared after she told her parents she was going to meet her boyfriend to go to the drive-in together.

Vicki Howell, the twenty-six year old mother of three went missing on 9 February 1977. Friends describe Vicki as being insecure and having an inferiority complex which grew from being placed in several foster care homes as a child. She had divorced her husband in 1977 and was living with a man called Harry Steel at Kurralta Park.

Vicki had left her flat when she believed she had overheard Harry and his brother talking about her one night. She had told them she was going out to the clothes line. Vicki was reported missing by Harry's sister Mrs Gloria Frith several days after she disappeared.

Julie Mykyta was last seen alive in King William Street in the centre of Adelaide. She had left the Majestic Hotel where she had spent some time with a friend and waited alone to catch a bus. She was a pretty, bright sixteen year old student who had an open and trusting relationship with her parents. In her book It's A Long Way to Truro, Anne-Marie Mykyta, Julie's mother,

tells of the anguish and self doubt she and her family experienced after Julie's disappearance:

... she was a sensible girl - everyone said so: 'How mature she is, how intelligent, how well she relates to people, how sensible ...' How I hate that word now; but it is true, she was sensible and thoughtful most of the time and she could be trusted. Maybe the rest of the world was unworthy of my trust, but she was not ... I fought the impulse to keep them (Julie and her sister Tania) locked away from harm, because I felt that in the long run the greater harm was in making them afraid of life. I still believe that, but oh, it is a bitter draught to swallow.

Mrs Mykyta recalls the pain of finding out things about her daughter she did not know in letters Julie had written to her sister Tania.

Every child has a secret life, and every parent knows it, even if he or she does not admit it. I had always looked with a rather amused pity on those mothers who said, 'Oh, but my daughter tells me everything; we're more like sisters, really'. Yet I would have said that I knew most of what was going on in my daughters' lives. Now the letters from Tania confirmed that I had been blind.

Mrs Mykyta found out that Julie had taken rides with strangers before that fateful night when she was to accept a lift from her killer.

The day after Julie's remains were found the police uncovered fifteen-year-old Tania Kenny.

Tania successfully completed Year 10 at St Peter's Girls School, Stonyfell, in 1976 and friends say she was bright enough to score good grades without devoting herself to study. She was a tall girl of striking beauty - one friend describes her as 'looking like a film star'.

Like many people of her age Tania clashed with her parents - according to friends she wanted more freedom than her normally strict parents would allow (The Advertiser, 12 May 1979).

Tania disappeared after attending a New Year's Eve Party at Chiton Rocks Surf Lifesaving Club against her parents wishes. She was last seen catching a bus back to Adelaide on 2 January 1977.

Deborah Lamb was twenty years old and unemployed when she disappeared after leaving Wridson Gardens Caravan Park, where she lived, for a night in the city. Her family describe her as a loner who was generous but naive. She was also described by friends as a little backwards. On 29 May 1979 James William Miller led police to Port Gawler and the grave of the last victim, Deborah Lamb.

The body was lying on its right side almost in a sitting position with its legs bent at the knees.

The hands and feet were bound with thin nylon rope. The pantihose was stretched tightly at least six times around the jaw.

'She could not move a muscle', one policeman said. ... Under the skeleton police found a small yellow plastic badge showing two kissing children with a heart. It bore the words

'God's only law is love' (The Advertiser, 30 May 1979).

Seven girls had disappeared in seven weeks. Four of them had disappeared in the space of a week and yet it took two years before the South Australia Police realised a link between the disappearances and launched a fullscale investigation. Was the delay in investigating a result of police attitudes to the victims when they were initially reported missing? Three of the women were unemployed, two of these were described as backwards. Another two had histories of running away. Another was divorced and felt isolated and insecure.

In her book Anne-Marie Mykyta describes her disbelief and disappointment at an editorial in The Advertiser which judged the victims and found them partly guilty of their eventual fate.

... girls who walk the streets at night, and are free with their favours, though they have the perfect right to do so, must realise that they are walking into mortal danger ...

It was wrong for the paper to suggest that these women were 'free with their favours' when the only evidence they had was Miller's, who was convicted of six of the seven murders. The victims were clearly vulnerable being females alone and on foot but in no way could they be judged responsible for their own disappearances and deaths.

Soon after Julie's disappearance, Anne-Marie Mykyta recalls her conversation with a policeman, when she reported Julie missing:

... 'Girls of that age are running off all the time. She'll be back when the novelty wears off'. But she wouldn't do this. 'If I had a dollar for every mother who's said that, I could retire from the police force ... They

get picked up in Victoria mostly, disturbing the peace or something like that; and the police there check out the missing persons file. You'll just have to wait'.

Not very comforting words for a mother sick with worry that something dreadful had happened to her daughter. The Advertiser reported in May 1979 that police believed Julie, Sylvia and Veronica had run away despite these girls' families and friends believing to the contrary. Families of missing persons, if they want action, often have to continually justify to the police, the press and the community that the missing person has not simply run away. In many cases, the police assume the person has run away until it is proven that there may be evidence of foul play.

Clearly there were problems with the police investigation from the start. After the first body was found, nearly a year elapsed before the second body was discovered close to the first.

... it is strange that the search for Veronica Knight's bones spread over an area about 600 metres in diameter, did not reveal the bodies of (Vicki) Howell and (Connie) Iordanides just 100 metres west across swamp road ... It is even stranger that the area was not fully searched in mid-1978 when the disappearances of Knight, Kenny, Mykyta, Iordanides and Pittman were first linked ... When (Sylvia Pittman's) remains were found within a kilometre of Veronica Knight's police did not hesitate to state the obvious and connect the cases (The Advertiser, 12 May 1979).

The police saw the major obstacle in the investigation as the two years of lost time and the public indifference to the murders. The fact that the women were found away from Adelaide, and the murders had occurred two years previously, meant that there was a

subdued reaction from the public. This reaction did not help police investigations. An early investigation may have resulted in a much faster resolution to the case.

For the family and friends of the murdered women their nightmare dragged on for nearly four years; from the time the women went missing through the desperation of trying to find their loved ones, the feelings of helplessness and fading hope; then the discovery of one body after the next, the funerals and finally the widely reported court case.

In an open letter to teenage girls of Adelaide, Mrs Mykyta wrote:

... I have had the advantage ... of talking to police officers and reporters. And I know now that girls are dragged forcibly from the streets almost every night.

Or they are enticed into cars, and later left hurt and frightened, raped maybe - maybe even dead. This is not something unfortunate that happened two years ago; this is something that could happen tonight, tomorrow - to you.

Every time you go out alone at night you are at risk.

Every time you get into a stranger's car you put your life in his hands.

I don't want you to be hurt, or frightened for one moment. Every time I hear of a girl raped or injured, my daughter dies in my heart again.

For the families of the Truro victims they re-live the disappearances with every newspaper article of a missing person, every court case of a rapist, every sighting of some woman walking the streets alone at night and every birthday and family celebration that passes without their loved ones.

Hopefully lessons have been learnt from Truro, but two questions never to be answered continue to haunt families of the victims and South Australian authorities:

Would a thorough investigation of Veronica Knight's disappearance in December 1976 have prevented the subsequent six murders?

How many more girls would have been murdered had Christopher Worrell not died in February 1977?

Conclusion

To be of value the case studies presented here should be analysed in terms of commonalities. Although the cases are different, both in respect to the circumstances of the disappearances and the outcomes of the investigations, clearly there are experiences in each case which are similar and need our attention.

Foremost on the list of common experiences was that of parents having to convince police their case was genuine. Police obviously receive many missing persons inquiries (detailed statistical breakdowns of the numbers of missing persons reported to police are presented in Chapter Four). There is little doubt that a large number of reports are no cause for alarm. That is, a person may have been absent for any number of reasons over a period of time, reported missing by family or friends and turned up a day or two later. Some police therefore have adopted an attitude of 'wait and see'. This attitude however, as illustrated by the case studies, has meant that genuine reports suffer delays in investigation as a result. Such delays, shown in the Phillips and Baker cases, hinder progress in investigations and often mean the difference between a quick successful resolution and a drawn out investigation which causes the families of missing persons extreme distress. Chapter Nine expands on some of these issues and discusses what to do if a child goes missing and importantly, convincing authorities.

In all the cases discussed, the first few hours and days after the disappearance were crucial to investigations. Chapter Three examines police reporting and investigation procedures in each State. The studies showed, however, that some of the police procedures on missing persons are not clearly defined or pursued at the local level. In the Baker and Phillips cases the files floated from one police section to another making contact with officers working on the cases difficult, confusing and frustrating for the families.

For families coming to terms with the disappearance of a loved one the often unsupportive attitudes of police authorities and sometimes irresponsible media reporting contribute to the already distressing situation.

Judgmental attitudes, as we saw in the Truro cases, can also cause families much distress. In those cases the authorities had judged the young women as 'runaways' and to an extent 'throwaways' from society. The questions raised in the Truro case have implications for the recommendation of a much closer analysis and linking of missing persons cases to avoid any recurrence of similar horrific serial killings.

Further distress is added to the families and friends of missing persons, as shown in the Mulquiney case, by the crank phone callers and sightseers who often accompany media attention of a particular case. The Mulquiney's also experienced problems with clairvoyants, spiritualists and private investigators who approached them claiming to have information about Megan's disappearance - for a price. Chapter Seven explores these and other volunteer, private and support agencies and includes advice to families dealing with them.

Feelings of loss and grief were also common in all cases. In the Mulquiney, Jones and Phillips cases the loss was made more difficult because of the lack of resolution. There is no telling whether these missing persons are alive or dead. These three families dealt with their grief in very different ways and further discussion on this subject has been included in Chapter Nine.

Families and friends of missing persons experienced heartbreak when sightings turned out to be cases of mistaken identity. Hopes are often raised by media reports only to be dashed by police.

These case studies and the chapters that follow form the basis for further research on policies and procedures related to missing persons. The human insights these case studies provide should always be closely linked to policy and police procedural changes. These studies were not just written for families of missing persons, they have an educative and preventative function as well. They have hopefully enlightened readers to the problems missing persons, their families and friends face and together with the chapters that follow provide clues, advice, lessons as to preventing persons going missing and preventing, or at least easing, the problems experienced by families of missing persons.

PART II
MEASURING AND TACKLING THE PROBLEM

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPT OF MISSING PERSONS

This Chapter discusses concepts of missing persons and attempts a core definition. It offers a cause oriented classification of missing persons and considers some of the difficulties associated with missing person status and associated data collation.

Definition

The term 'missing person' means different things to different people. In a publication dedicated to the subject, such as this, readers should be aware of the range of meanings associated with the term.

In its widest possible sense the expression 'missing persons' includes categories such as:

- * lost persons
- * disappeared persons
- * persons who have been abducted, whether by family members or strangers
- * persons with whom contact has been broken over the years, such as emigrated friends or adopted children
- * decamped persons, such as debt jumpers, runaway children or spouse deserters
- * absconders from institutions
- * persons whose location is required to be known in order for someone else to perform certain actions, such as repossess goods, serve process, or inform them of an inheritance.

As can be seen from this list, a wide variety of circumstances,

some of which have little if anything in common, can cluster under the missing persons label.

For the purposes of this discussion the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary is accepted as definitive. It defines 'missing' as: (1) not present, (2) not found, (3) absent, and (4) gone. Common to these statuses is the fact that only a third party can bestow them. A person is by definition where he/she is. In relation to oneself, one is always present. It takes someone else to declare one as absent from some other place, most probably because they had a reasonable expectation of one being there. US legislation has noted the requirement of a third party in its definition of 'missing children' in the **Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act 1984** (s.403), as 'any individual less than 18 years of age whose whereabouts are unknown to such individual's legal custodian'. This definition appears to 'lost' children within its ambit but, qualifying clauses in fact exclude such a possibility.

Police agencies each have their own criteria as to which missing person reports are classifiable as such. It is a matter for each agency to decide how wide or how narrowly to cast its missing persons net in a practical sense. There is a need, however, to establish a general concept of missing persons regardless of police administrative and other constraints. The authors offer their own definition in an attempt to establish core elements of missing person status:

A missing person is one who is absent voluntarily or, by virtue of abduction or altered state of consciousness, from his/her normal haunts in breach of the reasonable expectations and/or responsibilities of another and whose location is either not known to that other person or who is illegally detained and, who is not the subject of a lawful commitment order.

This definition is regrettably complex but such complexity is unavoidable.

In addition to being absent from one's normal haunts, one's location has to be unknown to a third party. Thus, if a deserted spouse knows where his/her erstwhile spouse is, that erstwhile spouse is not definable as missing. For practical purposes, many police departments include absconders from various institutions within their definition of missing person. Absconders are explicitly omitted from the core definition above because of the artificiality of their situation; however, due note is paid in later chapters to absconders. The distinction between those missing from home (or other dwelling) (MFH) and those missing from an institution (MFI) is fundamental to missing persons data collation.

Another point fundamental to missing persons data collation concerns those who are missing but whose absence is better considered under a different status once the circumstances are known, eg. a person who has been murdered but their body not found. Thus, initially, they would be classified as 'missing' but, when found, need to be reclassified as a crime victim. Such classifications have clear implications for missing persons totals.

Probably, the most significant exclusion from the core definition is that of lost persons. Often at the outset it is unclear whether an absent person is lost, decamped or a crime victim. Only subsequently is the true situation established (although in a few cases explanations never come to light). In one sense, this consideration is a purely abstract one and of no practical purpose. But, in terms of meaning as well as missing persons figures, the point is important. As mentioned earlier, from a subject's perspective their being lost is quite a different proposition from their being missing. From remedial and preventive perspectives, too, the distinction is important. Thus, although police treat lost persons operationally as missing

their being lost is quite a different proposition from their being missing. From remedial and preventive perspectives, too, the distinction is important. Thus, although police treat lost persons operationally as missing persons, it is desirable some distinction be made in data collection so that lost cases can be identified and totalled separately. One recognises from a parent or other next of kin's perspective there is little difference, especially as the true status of an absent person may not be known initially.

The single exception to a person's ceasing to be missing once their location is known is that of abduction victims held against their will at a known location. Common sense dictates such persons, though few in number, are realistically classifiable as missing.

The following cause-based classification is helpful in developing an understanding of the sorts of missing person (MFH) circumstances envisaged in the definition offered above.

Involuntary

- * Forcible abduction:
 - . parental, eg. non-custodial abduction;
 - . criminal, eg. kidnapping;
 - . psychotic/neurotic, eg. childless woman stealing a baby;
 - . 'disappeared' persons, eg. persons illegally detained, perhaps murdered, by government or other agents, such as in Argentina.

- * Non-forcible abduction, eg. inducement, persuasion, enticement.

- * Altered state of consciousness:
 - . amnesia;
 - . confusion, drug induced or otherwise;
 - . senility, Alzheimer's disease;

Voluntary

- * Removal of self from unsatisfactory physical/social/economic circumstances:
 - . running away from home by juveniles;
 - . spouse desertion;
 - . debt jumping.

The classification is quite elegant, categories are reasonably exclusive, recognising the fundamental dimensions of voluntariness and involuntariness. Even so, it leaves a broad field for consideration. The classification excludes lost people (of sound mind) and people who are searched for in order to renew social contact; it nevertheless includes senile/confused wanderers and victims of governmental oppression. It corresponds closely to those categories of persons generally regarded as 'missing'.

Questions remain, though. Just when does one become and/or cease to be a missing person? Is a runaway child a missing person from the moment he/she steps outside his/her home for the last time? Or, does a mandatory period need to expire prior to their being decreed missing? One approach with regard to runaway adolescents is to require a minimum of one night's absence. What about a hitchhiker who is murdered and his/her corpse hidden in the bush? Is the corpse a missing person, a crime victim or, perhaps, both? This point is particularly important with regard to missing person data collation. For example, if a rape victim is taken to a lonely spot in order to be assaulted, should an abduction charge be laid against the offender in addition to a rape/sexual assault charge? Often, police do not lay abduction charges in such cases and, yet, in the absence of such charges,

criminal statistics are quite inadequate in recording forcible abductions.

Certainly, no clear time element operates in most cases and points of commencement are sometimes difficult to establish. A spouse deserter can be described as voluntarily missing from the time he/she left the family home or other point of departure. On the other hand, given that the status of being missing is defined by another, it can be argued that they only become operationally missing once their absence is actually noticed. A murdered hitchhiker becomes a crime victim at the moment of abduction or fatal assault. If, however, the unfortunate hitchhiker's absence was noted by a friend or relative who reported them to police as missing, it is difficult to say whether they were missing from the time they became a crime victim or from when their absence was noticed. For most practical purposes such distinctions are of little significance and missing person status becomes irrelevant once the corpse is found. But, as implied above, complications can arise with regard to statistical data which may be used as a measure of the problem.

Many police missing person sections are also assigned the identification of unknown cadavers. For every unknown crime or accident victim manifested by a corpse there is most probably a corresponding missing person report in existence somewhere. Linking the two functions makes sound administrative sense.

Regardless of the conceptual complications associated with the definition of missing persons each police agency in Australia has its own missing persons, data set accumulated according either to a corporate definition of what constitutes a missing person or time honoured practice. These data sets are not highly refined and vary from agency to agency. At best they provide an extremely gross approximation of the volume and nature of the problem in any one jurisdiction over time. Thus, when studying data presented in Chapter Four, readers should bear in mind the flaws associated with the figures. These cautions are expanded upon in the following chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

POLICE ADMINISTRATION OF MISSING PERSON REPORTS

Each police agency has its own missing person criteria and procedures by which it receives and actions missing person reports or complaints. Previously, some police departments operated on a forty-eight hour delay basis. This rule of thumb was predicated on the common experience that many persons reported as missing returned of their own accord within forty-eight hours. By delaying, resources were not expended on reports of little substance. However, in cases in which abductions had occurred, although unknown at the time of reporting to police, forty-eight hours valuable lead time had been lost. In the United States of America pressure from concerned parents and others has obliged police agencies to revise this particular criteria in favour of more objective procedures. Indeed, the well known I-Search regional program started by the Illinois State Police mandates immediate police action including computer file entry. Mandates, of course, mean little if this rule is not complied with. The view that run of the mill missing person reports should not be acted upon for between twenty-four and forty-eight hours remains strong among many police officers, according to evidence available to the authors. Thus, while no police agency in Australia formally prescribes delaying the acceptance of reports, immediate field action does not always follow receipt of reports. The other side of this particular coin is, of course, that many police officers (especially those possessing a specialist role) react with great energy and competence. Some observers feel all police agencies should specify a requirement for immediate action in all accepted cases.

All bureaucracies provide instructions for the guidance of their employees. Police are no exception each agency having its own missing person function. However, rule books are one thing, interpretation of and compliance with their requirements and, the

competence of individual officers having to action those instructions are quite another. Thus, readers need to relate formal provisions and mechanisms outlined here with the human factors touched upon in the case studies in Part I. Formal administrative requirements of each police agency are described below.

Readers should bear in mind that police administration is a dynamic process. Thus, whilst correct at the time of writing, some procedures will vary over time.

New South Wales

New South Wales Police accepts principal responsibility for recording and tracing missing persons within that State. The function is an old one and dates from the agency's beginnings. In the nineteenth century social and public safety services, with the exception of police, were almost unknown. By default and, perhaps, by reason of their wide distribution (especially in urban areas), police assumed responsibility for tracing missing persons. This was common throughout the English-speaking world.

Nineteenth century missing person/lost friend traces assumed a particularly high profile as a police task in colonial New South Wales, as thousands of requests were received from metropolitan countries asking for locations of loved ones who had travelled to new lands, and with whom contact had been lost. Such inquiries were mostly dealt with by general duty officers.

Nowadays, New South Wales Police maintains a Missing Persons Unit (MPU) of five plain clothes officers. The officer in charge is a Sergeant (3/c) and his subordinates are Constables of various grades. The unit is part of the Department's Community Relations Bureau and is located at 134 George Street, Parramatta.

The Missing Persons Unit's principal objectives are defined as:

- * to maintain an adequate central index of persons reported missing, unidentified persons and unidentified bodies;
- * to collate information which is readily available to all police who are engaged in tracing missing persons and identification of unidentified persons and bodies;
- * to maintain high recovery rate of persons who have been reported missing.

Persons reported as missing in New South Wales are initially brought to the notice of local police. Unless the person reported is located within a short space of time, it is the responsibility of an officer receiving such a report to complete a Person of Interest form. Copies of the form are routinely forwarded by local police to: (1) Modus Operandi Unit, (2) local detectives, and (3) Missing Persons Unit.

Reporters of missing persons are not obliged to attend a police station or office in order to make a report. It is generally the responsibility of local police to initiate and implement inquiries in relation to missing persons. In fact, officers receiving reports automatically become the case officers and responsible for all follow-up. Such officers are supervised in such matters by the normal supervisors. In simple cases, general duty officers undertake responsibility for tracing but, if an offence is considered possible, local detectives may become involved. If homicide is suspected, it is probable Homicide Squad personnel would also become involved.

Reports of persons considered at risk are required to be circulated immediately by local police by means of telex. Risk criteria concerning persons reportedly missing from home or other dwelling include:

- * juvenility: person reported missing is aged fifteen years or under;
- * infirmity: person reported missing is aged and/or infirm;

- * moral danger: person reported missing is likely to lapse into a career of vice and/or crime;
- * physical safety: fears held for the safety of the person reported missing;
- * foul play: suspicious circumstances exist.

Persons absconding from selected institutions are notified to the police station nearest the institution in question.

When the Missing Persons Unit receives advice of a missing person, either by telex or a distribution copy of the original Persons of Interest report, the person is immediately recorded in the Missing Persons Index. A member of the unit is then assigned to monitor the case. Liaison is effected with local police initiating the inquiry and, in cases of suspected foul play, with local detectives and/or Homicide Squad. Automatic follow up is undertaken by Missing Persons Unit personnel in respect of reports outstanding over twenty-one days. Fresh information to have emerged within that period is captured in this manner. Unit members also play an active part in inquiries where appropriate, perhaps visiting homes, likely haunts and so on. Such inquiries may be in support of local police inquiries, and Missing Persons Unit members are often required to undertake inquiries in respect of interstate reports in the Sydney metropolitan area as well. In cases in which publicity is considered likely to be of use, liaison will also be established with the media.

Follow-up inquiries are undertaken by unit personnel until either the person reported missing is located or the reporter requests no further police action. Unsuccessful tracing efforts are usually terminated after twenty years.

The Department has no instructions that reporters must be kept briefed on the progress of their inquiry. It is felt that follow-up inquiries by Missing Persons Unit personnel inevitably have the effect of keeping inquirers informed.

Local police are also required to submit a Person of Interest report in respect of unidentified bodies. As pointed out in Chapter Two, most unidentified cadavers are the subject of a missing persons report somewhere. As a central repository for both sets of information the Missing Persons Unit is ideally suited to cadaver identification. Descriptive detail is included in the report together with details of the scene of finding.

Persons coming to the knowledge of police who are either suffering from amnesia or who are so badly injured they cannot be identified, also warrant submission of a Person of Interest report. In addition to descriptive detail, such reports show the Institution to which the subject has been admitted. Such cases are not unusual and this latter information is crucial to effective tracing.

In cases in which a person reported as missing is located, or a person or body is identified, local police stations are required to submit a located Person of Interest report. If a telex report was originally distributed, a second telex is despatched.

New South Wales Police recognises only two classes of missing person:

- * persons reported missing;
- * unidentified bodies and persons.

The Department's missing persons file was computerised in February 1985. In addition to the missing persons index, the Missing Persons Unit maintains files in respect of juveniles aged fifteen years and under, adults, unknown dead and unnamed persons, warrants and absconders.

Many inquiries are received by the Missing Persons Unit from interstate and internationally. In such cases, often inquiries of the 'absent friend' type, Missing Persons Unit officers check various databases, such as the Department's own Warrant Index and

that of the Registrar General's Department. Lost or absent friend inquiries are not included in the Department's missing persons totals, but lost persons are.

Types of missing persons, eg. spouse deserter or amnesiac, are not entered in the missing person database and neither are periods of absence. Some persons are reported as missing more than once in a twelve month reporting period but numbers of missing persons, as opposed to numbers of missing person reports, are not retrievable.

Cases not resolved within three months are notified to other police agencies. Where considered appropriate, cases are circularised interstate prior to the elapsing of three months.

Victoria

Victoria Police accepts principal responsibility for recording and tracing missing persons throughout the State. A Missing Persons Bureau (MPB) is maintained at the Police Complex, 15th Floor, 412 St Kilda Road, South Melbourne. The Bureau is headed by a Senior Sergeant who is assisted by two Sergeants and thirteen public servants.

Major functions of the Bureau include collation of data concerning:

- * persons reported as missing;
- * escapees from police custody or from the custody of Community Services Victoria;
- * escaped prisoners from mental institutions controlled by the Health Department;
- * absconders or persons from mental institutions controlled by the Health Department;
- * unidentified bodies and persons (conscious or unconscious) whose identity and/or address is unknown;

- * persons in custody, ie. maintenance of the central custody register and dealing with public inquiries pertaining to persons in custody (duties related to the custody register account for approximately 50 per cent of the Bureau's resources);
- * overseas students suffering death, serious illness, serious injury or admitted as patients to a psychiatric hospital;
- * locating and notifying next of kin of a person who has died suddenly, or who has become seriously ill or injured.

Escapees are recorded as such while absconders are recorded as missing persons.

The MPB is essentially a recording, collating and coordinating body concerned with persons whose location is either problematic or significant for particular reasons. It is also responsible for arranging publicity where appropriate and, where children are concerned, liaising with welfare agencies. At the time of writing (December 1987), a recommendation that it be assigned an operational role is under consideration. About 40 per cent of the Bureau's resources are allocated to maintaining the central custody register.

Missing persons reports are made in the first instance to local police. Reports are not accepted in cases in which traces are required relative to divorce proceedings or process service. Similarly, reports are not accepted in instances in which it is clear a mature person of sound mind has merely left an undesirable environment. Missing Person Report forms are completed in appropriate cases, major details are required to be promptly telephoned to MPB which, in turn, provides a serial number for the report. MPB also places reported person's names on its missing persons name index. Requests for traces of relatives and friends with whom an inquirer has lost touch are entertained as are reports of lost persons.

Reports are regularly distributed from receiving stations to

District Superintendents, Missing Persons Bureau, City Mortuary, Criminal Investigation Branch, Community Policing Squad (CPS) and police at any location thought relevant to an inquiry. Such distribution is effected within forty-eight hours unless a matter is resolved sooner and CPS officers receive their copies very quickly.

If a child is reported missing or there is suspicion of foul play, either tracing action is commenced immediately or the matter is referred to the Duty Officer for his/her decision as to action to be taken. Criminal Investigation Branch personnel become involved immediately should suspicion of foul play exist. As a general rule, Community Policing Squad members undertake inquiries involving all family and other sensitive contacts. Squad members possess a close knowledge of available welfare and other resources that might be helpful.

District Superintendents are required to check the progress of all missing person inquiries after fourteen days. If inquiries are not successfully concluded within six months they are reviewed by the Criminal Investigation Branch.

Victoria Police is also responsible for coordinating search and rescue operations concerning lost or missing persons. Thus, reports concerning lost, missing, incapacitated or overdue persons are required to be as detailed as possible. Searches are directed by either duty or divisional officers. Their responsibilities include planning, organising, assembling resources, directing and controlling personnel and equipment.

Circulars are prepared in those cases in which early tracing efforts are unsuccessful. Copies of circulars are despatched to all police stations in Victoria as well as interstate agencies.

With regard to receipt of unidentified bodies at mortuaries and hospitals, the Missing Persons Bureau is notified and a Report of Unidentified Body card is completed.

Spouse deserters are not entered in the missing persons database. Some persons are reported as missing more than once in a twelve month reporting period but missing persons frequencies, as opposed to missing person reports, are not retrievable.

Queensland

Queensland Police Department accepts primary responsibility for recording and tracing missing persons in that State. Two public servants sited in the Information Bureau, Police Headquarters, Brisbane, have responsibility for recording and coordinating missing person reports. There is, however, a Missing Persons Section located within the Juvenile Aid Bureau, 43-47 Makerston Street, Brisbane, which undertakes missing person inquiries in the metropolitan area, and monitors major missing persons inquiries elsewhere in the State. It will be appreciated that a majority of metropolitan missing person reports involve juveniles. The Section, comprising four members, is commanded by a Detective Sergeant (2/c). Although placed within the Juvenile Aid Bureau, missing persons personnel also conduct inquiries in respect of suicidally inclined and aged persons when considered appropriate.

Local police are the principal recipients of missing person reports and are responsible for the subsequent tracing process, although Juvenile Aid Bureau members assist in special cases. Police will attend to reporters at their residence should they be unable to call at a police station.

Officers receiving reports of missing persons are required, provided they are satisfied as to their genuineness and that a report in fact falls within the scope of police duties, to submit a report by computer to the missing persons recording section in the Information Bureau without delay. A missing person report form has also to be completed. Most importantly, prompt and diligent efforts must be made to locate subjects.

As soon as the Information Bureau receives initial notification of a missing persons report, details are placed on the computerised missing persons index. The index is accessible to police officers throughout the State.

In cases where persons reported as missing are located within twenty-four hours it is not necessary for local police to forward completed missing person report forms. Otherwise, reports are forwarded to the missing persons recording section within the Information Bureau, to the relevant District Officer and any other police stations which may be relevant for whatever reason.

When immediate physical harm is feared, District Officers and Regional Superintendents are required to be notified promptly. They, in turn, are responsible for making necessary administrative and operational arrangements for the use of specialist services, including Airwing, as appropriate.

Queensland Police Department's broad philosophy concerning missing persons is that every case is potentially of the utmost seriousness and must be treated by officers as such. Better to be quick off the mark in the case of a report that turns out to be unfounded than delay in a case that may turn out to be a tragedy.

Police Instructions are designed to ensure police do not become involved in traces relating to divorce, civil debt and maintenance recovery. However, lost persons are deemed as missing and are treated in the same way as runaways and abductees as are absent friends inquiries should abnormal circumstances be evident. Instructions also emphasise the need for police to maintain regular contact with inquirers where trace/search operations are extended.

Juveniles absconding from institutions are reported to police and details are immediately entered into the computer and missing

persons file. But, if they are located within 24 hours no paper reports are forwarded, the computer file is merely updated.

Members of the Police Department of or above the rank of Senior Sergeant may, subject to certain constraints concerning matrimonial causes under the **Family Law Act 1975** and the consent of an inquirer, request media outlets to publish/broadcast missing person details.

An important preventive element is provided by Juvenile Aid Bureau personnel who are encouraged to approach troubled youths who come to their notice. Problems can be of many kinds: unhappiness at school, violence or sexual molestation at home. Appropriate counselling or other help may well prevent a troubled child running away from home. This point is discussed further under the heading of 'Protective Behaviours' in Chapter Eight. All juvenile runaways and absconders are interviewed by police, where appropriate. Liaison is effected with social workers.

Juvenile Aid officers assigned to missing persons inquiries go into considerable detail in the course of their investigations. Motivations are established with the same rigour as in criminal cases. Doctors, bankers, schoolteachers, friends, employers, etc. are all approached with a view to exploring a missing person's behaviour where it is thought he/she has absented him/herself voluntarily rather than involuntarily. In particular, the homes of missing children are thoroughly searched. The two female officers of the Juvenile Aid Bureau who perform these duties are highly regarded both within and without the State. Complex cases and cases involving crime are normally directed to detectives for investigation. In all cases in which urgency is apparent, inquiries continue throughout the twenty-four hours. The progress of all cases is monitored by Information Bureau personnel and individual cases are reviewed each three months.

Force General Instructions provide that reporters of missing

persons, especially parents, must be informed by police of the progress of searches relevant to them. In longer term inquiries, periodic contact is required to be maintained in order to become aware of any fresh information that may have emerged.

Types of missing persons, eg. spouse deserter or amnesiac, are not entered in the missing persons database and neither are periods of absence. Some persons are reported as missing more than once in a twelve month reporting period but missing person frequencies, as opposed to missing person reports, are not retrievable.

Western Australia

The Police Department of Western Australia is accorded primary responsibility for the recording and tracing of missing persons in that State. The department maintains a Missing Persons Bureau for, among other tasks, coordinating reports and inquiries, although local police play the major role in tracing operations outside the Perth metropolitan area. Within the metropolitan area, reports are accepted by local police in conjunction with Missing Persons Bureau. Should a rapid result not be forthcoming, a case is then taken over entirely by Bureau officers. Cases in which foul play is suspected are dealt with by Criminal Investigation Bureau officers.

The Missing Persons Bureau is located at Police Headquarters, 2 Adelaide Terrace, East Perth. The Bureau comprises one Sergeant and four inquiry Constables.

The primary function of the Missing Persons Bureau is mandated as the receiving and recording of all reports of persons missing within the State. Missing persons are deemed to include State ward absconders, hospital absconders and 'mental' absconders, as well as lost persons. Reports are taken over the telephone by welfare and hospital staff.

The Bureau receives a constant flow of mail from around the world as well as interstate requesting assistance in locating relatives and friends in Western Australia. The Bureau labels such inquiries 'whereabouts inquiries'; they are not included in missing persons statistics.

As mentioned above, staff of the Missing Persons Bureau undertake missing person inquiries in the Perth metropolitan area; however, when overload conditions prevail assistance is sought from relevant suburban police staff, eg. checking addresses where it is thought a missing person may be resident, or searching areas likely to be frequented by them.

Inquiries concerning reports made at country police stations are handled by station staff although such inquiries are closely monitored by Missing Persons Bureau personnel. Periodic inquiry updates are required by the Bureau in those cases in which early resolution is not achieved. When local resources are insufficient assistance is provided by the Bureau.

Generally, persons wishing to report someone as missing are asked to attend their local police station. Police will attend reporters: if the person involved is of tender years, old, senile, infirm; if foul play is suspected; and, if a reporter is unable to travel to a police station. Time of day is also a consideration.

Missing persons reports are not normally accepted in respect of individuals sought in connection with debt, maintenance or divorce proceedings or, missing in another State. However, exceptions are made in respect of persons missing in other States where:

- * a parent of a child under the age of sixteen years reports that child as missing;
- * there is concern for the danger or moral welfare of a child under the age of eighteen years;

- * a report concerns a person who is mentally handicapped;
- * some other exceptional circumstance exists.

The degree of vulnerability associated with a missing person is assumed by officers accepting reports.

There are no instructions mandating frequent police liaison with reporters of missing persons. However, as a matter of practice, contacts are said to be daily and in particular cases, even more frequent.

Officers receiving missing person reports are required to immediately send a telex message to police headquarters. From there the information is broadcast over the police radio network as a general information message. Such messages are also passed to Police Information and Management Services for entry in the computerised missing persons index.

Ground searches are conducted where considered appropriate. Resources utilised vary considerably depending on terrain and other circumstances. Commercial radio and television are resorted to when considered likely to be of help.

Priority is always given to cases where life is thought to be at risk, whether from criminal action or the elements in the case of lost persons. Suicidally inclined persons, frail and senile persons, young children and persons who go missing for no known reason are always considered to be at risk.

A Missing Person Located Form is required to be submitted in all cases when a missing or lost person is located.

Types of missing persons, eg. spouse deserter or amnesiac, are not entered in the missing persons database and neither are periods of absence. Some persons are reported as missing more than once in a twelve month reporting period but missing person

frequencies, as opposed to missing person reports, are not retrievable.

Cases not resolved within three months are notified to other police agencies, if not circularised sooner. Provision is made for the automatic review of all unresolved cases. Reports are frequently checked by the Officer in charge, Criminal Investigation Support Services.

South Australia

In South Australia, the Police Department is accorded principal responsibility for recording and tracing missing persons.

South Australian Police classify missing persons according to one or other of five types: (1) adult male, (2) juvenile male, (3) adult female, (4) juvenile female, and (5) absconders (DCW wards).

All persons under the age of eighteen years are treated as juveniles. Those of eighteen years and over are classified as adults.

A five officer Missing Persons Squad is located at CIB Headquarters, 1 Angas Street, Adelaide. This squad, which comprises two male and two female Constables plus a supervising Sergeant, receives, records, coordinates and disseminates missing persons information throughout the State, as well as conducting inquiries. Officers are operational between 0730 and 2300 hours daily, seven days a week.

Missing person reports are normally made in the first instance at local police stations although telephoned reports are accepted in cases of urgency. Upon receipt of such a report a Missing Person Report form is completed. It is a snap set of three copies. One copy is retained at the station for action by the appropriate patrol sergeant and remaining copies are forwarded by despatch to the Missing Persons Squad.

Reports are not accepted where ulterior motive is suspected, such as divorce or debt collecting. Also, reports are not accepted in cases of mature persons of sound mind absenting themselves from undesirable social environments. However, an initiating station must immediately inform the Missing Persons Squad either by telex or telephone of a report. Details are then placed on the computerised missing person index which is accessible to police officers throughout the State. Regional commanders are required to be advised of missing person reports.

No formal directions for officers performing missing persons inquiries exist concerning the maintenance of contact with parents or guardians. However, departmental officers are of the view that such liaison is invariably undertaken in practice.

A running sheet is initiated by the receiving officer in respect of each missing person report. Sheets are forwarded to the Missing Persons Squad daily. Cases raising particular concern may be referred by Regional Superintendents to the Major Crime Squad for attention. The system is flexible in that both Regional officers and Missing Persons Squad officers undertake tracing inquiries.

Decisions concerning 'all patrol' broadcasts and ground searches flow from operational decisions made in respect of individual cases.

Vulnerability criteria are not prescribed but attention is given to age, mental condition and/or special circumstances obtaining in respect of absentees.

Types of missing persons, eg. spouse deserter or amnesiac, are not entered in the missing persons database and neither are periods of absence. Some persons are reported as missing more than once in a twelve month reporting period but missing person frequencies, as opposed to missing person reports, are not retrievable.

Tasmania

In Tasmania, the Police Department is publicly responsible for recording and tracing missing persons.

Departmental procedures provide that missing person reports not be taken by telephone. Persons wishing to make such reports are required to attend either the Missing Persons Bureau in Hobart or their local police station and present a recent photograph of the person reported upon. However, if a person is not able to attend a police station, a police officer is sent to interview him/her at his/her home. The Missing Persons Bureau is located within the Information Bureau at Police Headquarters, 31 Liverpool Street, Hobart. The Department has no mission statement in respect of the Missing Persons Bureau but the Investigative Procedures Manual briefly refers to its role and function. The Bureau has no field role.

Each report is treated on its merits and no set time is prescribed for receipt and actioning of reports. Due consideration is paid to medical/mental condition of person reported missing, as well as their age, gender and general circumstances.

Officers receiving missing person reports are required to complete a missing person report form. At the same time statements are taken from complainants in which circumstances of cases are recorded. A release form in respect of press publicity is obtained, provided a complainant has the necessary authority to sign such an undertaking.

Such documentation, unless it originated at the Missing Persons Bureau, is then forwarded to the Bureau. Photographs are copied at the Photographic Branch.

Upon receipt of missing person reports the Missing Persons Section commences a running sheet.

Missing person reports are then faxed to all Police Districts. Should mainland inquiries be considered appropriate, details are sent to requisite mainland locations by telex.

Details are radioed to all police cars in the State if considered necessary. When inquiries are undertaken at locations outside the Police District in which a missing persons report originates, the Missing Persons Bureau liaises with relevant Divisional Inspectors. Responsibility for inquiries is passed from shift to shift.

Lists of missing and located persons are compiled each weekday and transmitted to all stations.

When concern for safety exists media publicity is sometimes sought. Media outlets in Tasmania provide such publicity without charge.

The Criminal Investigation Branch is called upon to conduct inquiries should suspicious circumstances exist. Similarly, if a person is lost in the bush or at sea, the Search and Rescue Squad might be called upon to conduct the search. Lost persons are included in missing persons totals, including those lost at sea and assumed to have drowned; but, absent friends are not.

The Missing Persons Bureau is essentially a collating unit and does not conduct inquiries in its own right. However, the Officer in Charge is responsible for liaising with reporters of missing persons until resolution is achieved.

Tasmania Police, like all other police agencies, receives many inquiries in respect of friends and relatives with whom an inquirer has lost touch. As a public service, the Department routinely checks out such inquiries with: (1) Information Bureau records, (2) Transport Department, (3) Hydro Electric Commission records, (4) Electoral Office, and (5) the central name index on the New South Wales police computer.

Where a 'hit' results from such inquiries, the inquirer is usually informed by mail. However, an inquiree's address is not given to an inquirer without the former's consent. Such tracing inquiries are not included in missing person statistics.

No automatic review is made of outstanding cases. However, the officer in charge of the Missing Persons Bureau monitors the status of all inquiries and keeps the officer in charge, Information Bureau, briefed.

The Missing Persons Bureau does not undertake traces in respect of civil process or matrimonial causes under the Family Law Act 1975.

Police attempt to interview all located missing juveniles but this is not always possible as another government agency may also have jurisdiction.

Types of missing persons, eg. spouse deserter or amnesiac, are not entered in the missing person database and neither are periods of absence. It is hoped to computerise missing persons records shortly.

Northern Territory

Northern Territory Police accepts primary responsibility for recording and tracing missing persons in the Territory.

To assist with the administration of missing persons reporting the Northern Territory Police maintains a Missing Persons Section. The Section, comprising one Constable, is subject to the control of the Assistant Commissioner, Crime and Services Command, and is located at the Berrimah Police Centre, Winnellie, Darwin. The Section's objective is to provide an efficient recording and inquiry service for all missing persons inquiries in the Northern Territory.

The Constable in question is responsible for recording, co-ordinating and disseminating, information concerning missing persons throughout the Territory. He/she is also responsible for conducting inquiries concerning missing persons within Number One Division, Northern Command, during office hours.

Copies of all missing persons reports are held in the Information Bureau for the information of members. Selected details are also placed on the police computer which can be accessed by officers at major police stations throughout the Territory.

Generally, the officer in charge of a police station at which a person is reported as missing is responsible for initiating inquiries. In cases in which a report is made at a police station not being that which normally services an inquirer, the officer in charge is responsible for notifying the 'home' station commander. Missing person reports are not accepted where it is considered an inquirer is attempting to locate someone in order to settle a debt, repossess property or to instigate civil court proceedings.

No vulnerability criteria are formally prescribed by the Force, such matters being left to the discretion of reception officers.

Under normal circumstances, police will attend persons wishing to report someone as missing. The Force has no written directions concerning the need for tracing officers to maintain contact with reporters of missing persons but states this is done as a matter of practice to check for additional information.

Unless otherwise directed, an officer receiving a missing person report is responsible for completing a missing person report form in triplicate. The officer is also required to notify his/her member in charge. At the same time, pertinent information is required to be sent by fastest available means to the Missing Persons Section.

Missing person reports likely to affect one or two police districts need to be disseminated in those districts only, in the first instance, by the receiving officer. However, in cases of urgency or fears for safety, the receiving officer is authorised to inform all police stations in the Territory. Missing Persons Section routinely informs all stations of non-urgent cases.

Missing person inquiries not completed within the shift during which they were initiated have to be fully handed over to oncoming staff by the responsible officer, so as to avoid breakdowns in communication.

Missing person inquiry running sheets are forwarded to the Missing Persons Section daily by outstations.

When missing persons are located the Missing Persons Section is required to be notified soonest. The Section then advises all police units of the fact. Locations of found persons are not revealed to inquirers without the consent of the person reported missing, with the exception of juveniles.

There is no mandatory provision requiring that located juveniles be interviewed by police. Neither is there provision for periodic reviews of outstanding cases.

Types of missing persons, eg. spouse deserter or amnesiac, are not entered in the missing persons database and neither are periods of absence. Some persons are reported missing more than once in a twelve month reporting period but missing person frequencies, as opposed to missing person reports, are not retrievable.

Australian Capital Territory

Responsibility for recording and tracing missing persons in the Australian Capital Territory is assigned to the ACT Command of the Australian Federal Police. No mission statement has been

formulated concerning missing persons tracing at the time of writing.

Telephone reports of missing persons are accepted by Police in the ACT. In such circumstances, the Communications Unit is required to despatch a patrol car with a view to immediately instituting inquiries. Attending officers are required to report to Communications Unit if location of a person reported as missing is not promptly effected. If suspicious circumstances are considered to exist the officer in charge of a shift, or the Duty Officer, must be informed.

Missing person reports are completed either by reception officers at inquiry offices or by attending officers, if tasked by radio, as the result of a telephone report direct to the Operations Centre. Under normal circumstances officers submitting Missing Person reports are responsible for follow-up inquiries.

Where fears are held for the safety of a missing person, especially after initial inquiries have been unsuccessful, the Duty Officer may assign a detective officer to the case. It is then that officer's responsibility to ensure submission of follow-up reports.

In all cases a completed missing person report is required to be submitted to the Missing Persons Bureau, which is located at City Police Station, London Circuit, Canberra. The Bureau is part of the ACT Crime Analysis Unit and its role is to coordinate the collation of data on missing persons. Inquiries from the public regarding missing persons are dealt with by local or patrol police. The Bureau's role is solely to coordinate missing persons data collection. When missing persons are located, supplementary missing person reports are submitted to the Missing Persons Bureau.

Police in the ACT are required to keep reporters of missing persons advised of the progress or outcome of inquiries. At the

time of writing this provision is under review in conjunction with the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office.

If persons reported as missing are not located within twenty-one days the Officer in Charge of the Communications Unit shall forward details to all States and the Northern Territory together with as much identification detail as possible.

Types of missing persons, eg. spouse deserters or amnesiacs, are not entered in the missing persons database and neither are periods of absence. Some persons are reported missing more than once in the course of a twelve month reporting period, but missing person frequencies, as opposed to missing persons reports, are not retrievable.

Procedures Generally

Different police agencies organise to meet their functional commitments in a variety of ways. Considerations of agency size, structure, tradition and geography all play their part in determining procedures whether in relation to missing persons or any other issue. Thus, there is no such thing as an ideal set of procedures, although there are doubtless some considerations that should be addressed in all agencies, such as individual accountability for the actioning of missing person reports, periodic review and keeping complainants informed of continuing events. This latter point has resulted in bitter criticism of police on occasion, highlighting the discrepancy that sometimes occurs between official prescriptions and employee implementation.

It seems that, while broad consensus exists among agencies as to who qualify as missing persons, there is some variation as to who are not considered missing persons. This situation does not matter greatly provided procedures clearly define those categories of persons considered to be missing and that data are recorded according to category. In that way, desired

combinations of categories can be compiled as necessary, eg. runaways, lost persons and abducted persons. Computerised databases are highly amenable to such manipulation and it is to be hoped that all police agencies categorise more precisely those types of 'missing' persons they deal with. Similarly, missing person 'histories' can be computerised and utilised for investigations in the event of subsequent absences by the same person.

Another point involves the changing status of missing persons. For example, a person might be reported as lost (a debatable missing person category) and later considered involuntarily absent. The finding of that person's corpse at a yet later date may suggest he/she was a murder victim. Recording systems governing missing persons data collection in most States do not take into account changing status. Such a person could conceivably remain in most agencies' record systems as either 'lost' or a 'crime victim'. Similarly, no provision is made to distinguish between data pertaining to cases in which a person is reported as missing and later found to be a murder victim as opposed to a murdered body found prior to the deceased's absence being reported. There is the question, too, of persons who are abducted, such as a rape victim, to a place where a further crime is committed upon them. Some agencies, particularly Queensland Police, lay abduction charges in addition to the principal charge of rape or whatever - whereas others appear not to. Failure to do so seriously limits the use of crime statistics in assessing the frequency of abduction offences.

It seems desirable, too, that police routinely visit reporters of missing persons and that strict procedures requiring reporters to attend their local police station are inappropriate. A rapid and independent search of home premises by police is a necessary police response to a telephoned report of a missing person.

Some agencies, such as New South Wales and Western Australia, have clearly prescribed criteria with which to assess

vulnerability (the issue of vulnerability criteria is addressed in greater depth at Chapter Five). It seems highly desirable that all agencies have defined procedures/policies concerning vulnerability criteria or, alternatively, adopt an axiomatic assumption of vulnerability in all cases unless clearly demonstrated otherwise. This latter proposition poses problems to police officials faced with limited resources but there have been too many instances of police adopting a wait and see attitude only to be ultimately faced with a tragedy. Police experience conditions officers to adopt a wait and see approach and, mostly, such an approach is justified. But, in the relatively few cases in which the approach turns out to be inappropriate, serious tragedies have occurred. It would be timely for police authorities to heighten the consciousness of patrol and general duty officers concerning this matter, as they have with regard to domestic violence and sexual assaults in recent years. In the US it took a great deal of public protest concerning police attitudes to missing persons reports (and consequential federal legislation) before police agencies generally lifted their collective game. Instant action is now required. It is the authors' fear that if police authorities do not ensure model administrative procedures and their vigorous implementation, by all officers - not just specialist officers - there will eventually be considerable public protest here, too.

Just as importantly, police agencies might properly consider either not pursuing missing person reports in those cases in which no element of risk is assessed or, providing 'limited' inquiry procedures only.

Police authorities claim the great majority of persons reported as missing return home within a short period of time of their own accord. As well runaway juveniles located by police are routinely returned to their parents/guardians. This procedure contains difficulties in that a child may not, for very good reasons, wish to return home if for example, they are victims of parental violence or sexual molestation. Each State has welfare

authorities responsible for young persons. However, there is a universal shortage of non-custodial accommodation in which young people not wishing to return to their families can be housed and provided with a sound program for living and education.

Most police administrative instructions do not make mandatory provision for interviewing all located missing persons. Such interviews could give information of crimes committed by them; in appropriate cases, of crime intelligence; of crimes committed upon the missing person; and the necessity for referral for accommodation, counselling or whatever. Such follow-up is frequently undertaken but not always. Such mandatory follow-up would be very brief in the majority of cases and it seems desirable such a provision should be included in all administrative instructions.

A further point concerning police administration of missing persons concerns the necessity of keeping next of kin (or any relevant party) informed of events. At least one agency formally requires such communication but, even then, the instruction has to be actioned by individual officers. Research shows that not being kept informed is a major cause of public dissatisfaction with police service, regardless of the nature of the call for service. There has been public complaint on this count and it seems that unambiguous instructions on the point might prove beneficial. Victoria Police, in particular, have taken steps to educate people on the topic. Every reporter of a missing person is given a copy of Christine Vincent's excellent pamphlet Teenage Runaways - What Can A Parent Do?.

There exists, too, the issue of accountability in case management. Some agencies appoint a single officer responsible for a missing person case, changing only as a result of shifting locus. Other agencies hand files over from shift to shift, especially during the early stages of an inquiry. Oral evidence available to the authors suggests that parents/next of kin are extremely inconvenienced by files changing hands as they sometimes do not

know who to contact. In addition, routine updating of reporters/complainants by responsible officers reduces even further under such circumstances.

Readers should note that these general comments do not always provide for initiatives already under way or under consideration within particular agencies.

Finally, with regard to form design, it has been suggested that police missing persons report forms have a tear off section containing: (1) name and telephone number of the case officer, (2) telephone number of the Missing Persons Section (or actioning unit), and (3) telephone number of Parents of Missing Children and other support agencies considered relevant.

Summary

Each police agency in Australia accepts principal responsibility for tracing persons reported as missing (however defined) within its jurisdiction. Similarly, each agency has a small missing persons unit. Such units are sometimes exclusively administrative while others provide a combination of administration and field activity. The necessity for coordination, prompt response and follow up is clearly appreciated in all agencies, although their respective capacities vary according to the quality and nature of their communication systems.

The range of categories considered capable of being 'missing' for operational purposes varies considerably. In some jurisdictions, lost persons are treated as missing persons and most agencies entertain limited 'lost friends' type inquiries as a public service. Care is taken in all cases not to undertake inquiries relating to matrimonial causes and process.

Some agencies, ie. New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia, have clearly prescribed risk criteria in respect of missing persons, whereas others appear to adopt a more intuitive

approach. A particular problem existing in this regard is the development of criteria by which reception officers can assess risk probabilities more acutely. Improved criteria are offered for consideration and, so too, is the proposition that onus of risk should be reversed. That is to say, police should accept all reported cases as being at risk unless the contrary is clearly demonstrated. Such a policy would increase demands on already scarce police resources but such an approach seems the only one, always provided it is rigorously implemented, capable of preventing the occasional tragedy resulting from police either disregarding a complaint or not acting promptly.

Classification of missing persons varies considerably between agencies, although none have a functional classification capable of distinguishing various types, such as abductees, spouse deserters and so on. Acute analysis and improved preventive strategies largely depend upon such classifications being developed.

There is also the need to ensure adequate administrative provision is made for direct personal accountability in respect of each missing person inquiry and the conducting of periodic reviews in those cases in which success is not quickly achieved.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MISSING PERSON POPULATION

In this Chapter we attempt to quantify basic characteristics of the missing person populations of the various police jurisdictions throughout Australia, ie. male and female, adult and juvenile.

There is a widespread assumption that 'large' numbers of persons 'go' missing each year. But, how realistic is this view? Indeed, how many people are involved? For many reasons it is impossible to offer precise figures. Firstly, not all missing persons, especially children, are reported to police and other public agencies. Des Sturgess in his 1986 inquiry into sexual offences concerning children in Queensland, noted the fact and recommended the Queensland Criminal Code be amended to make it an offence for a parent or guardian not to report a child in their care as missing. Secondly, many persons reported missing are in fact not missing at all; they may be lost, their location may be wanted for ulterior reasons, they may be primarily a crime victim and so on.

At best we can only aim for approximations. In this Chapter we principally quantify missing persons reports to police agencies in the course of the twelve month period of 1985 (1986 for Victoria), although additional data are included as available in respect of certain States and Territories.

Most 'missing' persons are actually classifiable as missing for short periods of time only but a small percentage remain missing for years. Some persons, for example juveniles and the confused elderly, may be reported missing several times in the same year. More importantly, the gross data presented here provide little indication of numbers involved in the various categories of

missing persons. For these reasons emphasis is placed on description rather than analysis. It would be pointless, for example, to calculate missing persons rates with such data.

Untraced missing persons and abductions are considered very briefly.

The 1985 data set upon which this Chapter is based are shown at Annex A.

New South Wales

Two relevant New South Wales data sets are utilised here. The first, displayed at Table 4.1 below, has been culled from the Police Department's Annual Reports over the decade 1977-86. The second, showing greater detail, contains data for calendar year 1985 and was supplied by the Department. It is displayed at Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.1 shows the number of missing person reports received by police each year from 1977 to 1986 inclusive and the number of cases resolved. The actual numbers of absconders (all of whom were juveniles) are shown only for fiscal years 1984-85 and 1985-86.

Numbers of juveniles are also shown only for these two years, although it is noted juveniles, ie. persons under sixteen years, constituted in excess of 50 per cent of all missing person reports for the entire decade. Data for the last two years suggest juveniles constitute almost 60 per cent of the total missing person record. Absconders may average close to 20 per cent of all missing persons in New South Wales, judged by data for the same two years. A decade resolution figure of 96 per cent is claimed.

One needs to bear in mind when perusing these data that a

majority of juveniles (proportion unknown) is said by police to return voluntarily to their normal haunts regardless of police action while some of the remaining cases require extremely detailed and painstaking inquiry.

Table 4.1

**Missing Persons and Unidentified Dead Reports:
Resolution by Juveniles by Escapees,
New South Wales, 1977-86**

Year	MP reps	MP reps* resolved	(c) as % of (b)	Absconders fr	%	Juveniles fr	%	Un-id dead reps	Un-id* dead resolved	(j) as % of (i)
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	(j)	(k)
1977 [†]	4,974	4,700	95	-	-			88	74	84
1978 [†]	4,385	4,135	94	-	-			38	33	87
1979 [†]	4,092	3,855	94	-	-			64	55	86
1980 [†]	4,240	4,054	96	-	-			59	52	88
1981 ⁺	4,266	4,097	96	-	-			53	45	85
1983 ^o	6,342	6,243	98	-	-			61	55	90
1984 [#]	4,067	3,887	96	-	-			27	26	96
1985 [#]	4,185	4,093	98	879	21	2,295	55	33	27	82
1986 [#]	4,070	3,896	96	732	18	2,562	63	71	67	67
1977- 86	40,621	38,960	96	-	-	-	-	494	434	88

Source: Police Department New South Wales

* Resolutions shown in respect of any single year may include reports initiated in previous years

† Calendar year

+ Six month reporting period

o Eighteen month reporting period

Fiscal year

Missing person (MFH) report numbers appear remarkably consistent over the decade, showing no trend. However, given that the State's population increased some 23 per cent over the decade reviewed, this apparent constancy can rightfully be viewed as a relative decrease in the rate of missing person reports. Unfortunately, we are unable to determine whether the decrease was general or if there were variations among the different missing person categories.

Marked annual variation among unidentified dead reports is apparent, but over the entire decade there is no suggestion of either increase or decrease. Identifications (or resolutions) of cadavers averaged 88 per cent for the ten year period.

Data concerning missing persons and unidentified dead for calendar year 1985 are shown at Table 4.2, classified by age and gender; but, not, unfortunately, by category. There is no reason to assume calendar year 1985 was atypical and is accordingly assumed to be typical.

Table 4.2

**Missing Persons and Unidentified Dead Reports:
Resolution by Age Interval Group by Gender,
New South Wales, Calendar Year 1985**

	Age: 0-10		11-17		18-40		41-65		66+	
	Gender: M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
MP reports	167	40	1,751	1,335	301	234	108	52	83	43
MP resolutions	167	40	1,733	1,329	291	231	105	51	81	43
% Resolved	100	100	99	100	97	99	97	98	98	100
Un-id Dead reps	0	0	2	0	28	22	10	4	1	3
Un-id Dead res	0	0	2	0	21	12	10	4	1	3
% Resolved	-	-	100	-	75	55	100	100	100	100

Source: Police Department New South Wales

It will be seen males comprise a majority of missing persons in all age categories. In fact, males constituted 59 per cent of the total while females amounted to 41 per cent, thereby providing an approximate 6:4 male to female ratio overall.

The age interval group eleven to seventeen years is clearly the largest (comprising 75 per cent of the whole), although it is the shortest in span. A detailed age profile in respect of juveniles during calendar year 1984 is shown at Table 4.3.

These juvenile data are quite informative and are better graphed. The graph (Figure 4.1) shows relatively few male juveniles are reported missing until thirteen years of age, remaining fairly constant for three years and then subsiding dramatically in the sixteenth year. The missing male figure is some 22 per cent greater than the female figure overall, although at fourteen years, females outnumbered males by 10 per cent. The proportion of the various missing person categories included in these data are not known, even though it is assumed a majority were runaways. Even then, though, causations are not apparent, eg. dissatisfaction with parental discipline or problems at school.

Table 4.3

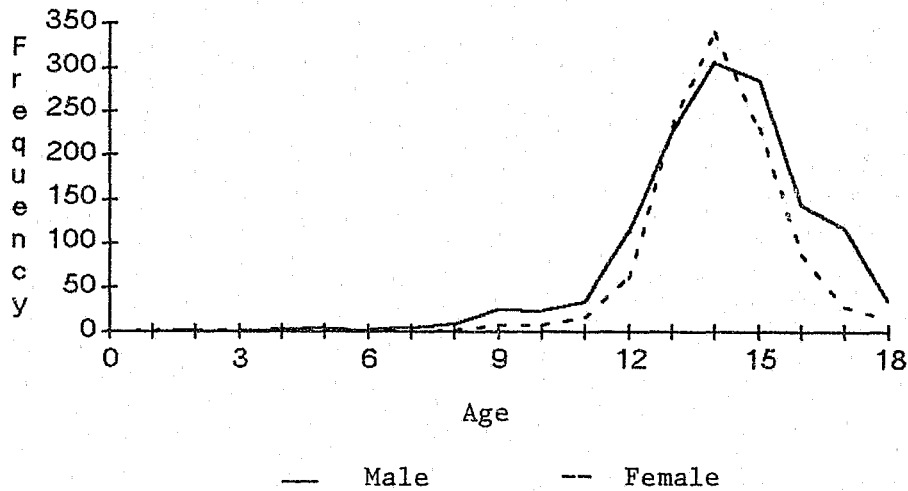
**Missing Juvenile Reports:
Age by Gender,
New South Wales, Calendar Year 1984**

Gender	Age																		Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Male	0	1	0	3	4	3	5	9	25	24	34	113	226	306	287	143	117	36	1,336
Female	2	2	2	0	3	2	0	2	8	8	16	61	233	341	233	88	28	15	1,044
Total	2	3	2	3	7	5	5	11	33	32	50	174	459	647	520	231	145	51	2,380

Source : Police Department New South Wales

Figure 4.1

Missing Juveniles:
Gender by Age,
New South Wales, Calendar Year 1984



The correlation of rising numbers and the onset of puberty is clearly evident in these data. It also seems the earlier increase in numbers among boys, by a year, suggests this slightly greater self confidence at age twelve in coping with a strange and possibly threatening new environment as a runaway.

One hundred and ninety-eight persons reported as missing between 1 January 1980 and 31 March 1988 were not located.

The missing persons record in New South Wales for the calendar year 1985 is summarised as follows:

Persons (non-absconders)	3 235
• males	n/k
• females	n/k
• juveniles	1 918 (75%)
- males	n/k
- females	n/k
• adults	821 (25%)
- males	492 (60%)
- females	329 (40%)

Absconders	879
. males	n/k
. females	n/k
. juveniles	879 (100%)
- males	n/k
- females	n/k
. adults	0
- males	0
- females	0

Victoria

During calendar year 1986, a total of 8,570 persons were reported missing in Victoria. All but a few were located; a 99.8 per cent resolution rate being recorded. These data are shown at Table 4.4. Victoria Police calculate that 71 per cent of juveniles reported missing during 1986 were located within forty-eight hours.

Table 4.4

Missing Persons Reports:
Gender by Age by Type,
Victoria, Calendar Year 1986

Age Group	Adult male	Juve- nile male	Adult female	Juve- nile female	CSV absc- onder male	CSV absc- onder female	Mental male	Mental female	Inter- state	On hand	Total
0-10	-	251	-	96	81	9	-	-	5	18	460
11-17	-	1,570	-	1,966	1,142	649	10	6	46	7	5,396
18-40	494	-	455	-	123	5	358	168	44	22	1,669
41-65	203	-	113	-	-	-	85	47	11	29	488
66 +	278	-	178	-	-	-	42	13	3	43	557
Total	975	1,821	746	2,062	1,346	663	495	234	109	119	8,570

Source: Police Department Victoria

The overall distribution of missing males and females in Victoria was roughly even, with females predominating among juveniles and males predominating among adults, exclusive of absconders. In both the cases of non-absconders and absconders juveniles well and truly outnumbered adults. It is in the eleven to seventeen years age group that most juveniles leave home.

Absconders amounted to just under one-quarter of the total. For both genders, the eleven to seventeen age group is the one in which by far the greatest proportion of persons was reported missing. It is interesting to note the over sixty-sixes recorded higher numbers of missing person reports than the forty-one to sixty-five year age group. Indeed, apart from the zero to ten year age group, forty-one to sixty-five year olds were least likely to be reported as missing.

Table 4.5

**Missing Persons:
Absconders by Non-Absconders,
Victoria, Fiscal Year 1985-86**

Month/ Year	Non- Absconders	Absconders	Total	Season
Jul 85	537	157	694] Winter
Aug 85	535	167	702	
Sep 85	587	168	755] Spring
Oct 85	574	200	774	
Nov 85	603	207	810	
Dec 85	523	128	651] Summer
Jan 86	520	149	669	
Feb 86	503	194	697	
Mar 86	564	204	768] Autumn
Apr 86	563	194	757	
May 86	530	163	693	
Jun 86	585	146	731] Winter
Fiscal year 1985-86	6,624	2,077	8,701	

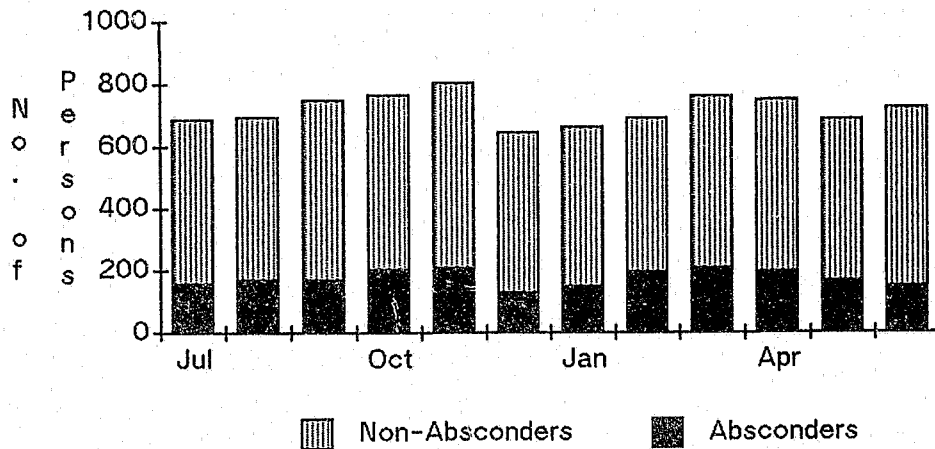
Source: Police Department Victoria

The total of 5,604 non-absconder missing person reports is relatively high and involves a great deal of work for police. A monthly breakdown of missing person reports during fiscal year 1985-86 is shown in Table 4.5 above. No marked seasonal variations for either absconders or non-absconders are evident. These data are shown in histogram form at Figure 4.2.

It is interesting to note that during calendar year 1986, Victoria Police received a total of 8,686 missing person reports, including absconders. Of that number, 70 per cent were aged under eighteen years. Eighty-five per cent were located within three months and eleven persons had not been located within a year.

Figure 4.2

Missing Persons:
Absconders by Non-Absconders by Month,
Victoria, Fiscal Year 1985-86



Source: Police Department Victoria

Police missing persons reports in Victoria for fiscal year 1985-86 are summarised as follows:

Persons (non-absconders)	5,604
. males	2,796 (50%)
. females	2,808 (50%)
. juveniles	3,883 (69%)
- males	1,821 (47%)
- females	2,062 (53%)
. adults	1,721 (31%)
- males	975 (57%)
- females	746 (43%)
 Absconders	 2,966
. males	1,955 (66%)
. females	1,011 (34%)
. juveniles	1,973 (67%)
- males	1,274 (65%)
- females	699 (35%)
. adults	993 (33%)
- males	681 (69%)
- females	312 (31%)

Queensland

Unbroken time series data are not available for Queensland but data shown at Table 4.6 nevertheless provide a substantial picture of missing person reports and their resolution over a nine year period.

For the nine year period (no data were available in respect of fiscal year 1976-77), an annual average of 3,013 missing person reports were accepted by Queensland Police. Some 1,601 (53 per cent) were male and 1,411 (47 per cent) were female. We can be less precise concerning proportions of adult/juvenile and male/female but, based on the evidence of 1983-84/1984-85, we assume that of the missing person reports made to Queensland police,

Table 4.6

Missing Persons Reports:
Resolution by Gender,
Queensland, 1978-86

Year	Total Persons Rep Missg (a)	Total Males Rep Missg (b)	Total Fems Rep Missg (c)	Total Adult Males Rep Missg (d)	Total Adult Fems Rep Missg (e)	Total Juv Males Rep Missg (f)	Total Juv Fems Rep Missg (g)	Total Persons Found (h)	(h) as Percentage of (a) (i)	Total Males Found (j)	(j) as Percentage of (b) (k)	Total Females Found (l)	(k) as Percentage of (c) (m)
1978	3,149	1,604	1,545	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,823	90%	1,398	87%	1 425	92%
1979	2,857	1,561	1,296	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,642	92%	1,432	92%	1 210	93%
1980	3,000	1,664	1,336	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,890	63%	1,036	62%	854	64%
1981	3,130	1,667	1,463	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1982	3,023	1,585	1,438	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,609	86%	1,355	85%	1 254	87%
1983	3,306	1,753	1,553	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3,059	92%	1,581	90%	1 478	95%
1984	3,127	1,674	1,453	603	258	1,071	1,195	2,998	96%	1,602	96%	1 396	96%
1985	2,780	1,460	1,320	491	323	969	997	2,650	95%	1,407	96%	1 243	94%
1986	2,745	1,442	1,303	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,322	85%	1,224	85%	1 098	84%
Total	27,117	14,410	12,707	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

(continued over)

Table 4.6 continued

Total Adult Males Found (n)	(n) as Per-centage of (d) (o)	Total Adult Fems Found (p)	(p) as Per-centage of (e) (q)	Total Juv Males Found (r)	(r) as Per-centage of (f) (s)	Total Juv Fems Found (t)	(c) as Per-centage of (g) (u)	Total Persons Missg 30/6 (v)	Total Males Missg 30/6 (w)	Total Fems Missg 30/6 (x)	Total Adult Males Missg 30/6 (y)	Total Adult Fems Missg 30/6 (z)	Total Juv Males Missg 30/6 (aa)	Total Juv Fems Missg 30/6 (bb)
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	215	129	86	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	598	364	234	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	414	207	207	65	74	142	133
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	414	230	184	99	67	131	117
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	247	172	75	122	44	50	31
562	93%	238	92%	1,040	97%	1,158	97%	129	72	57	41	20	31	37
463	94%	290	90%	944	97%	953	96%	130	53	77	28	33	25	44
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	423	218	205	71	49	147	156
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Queensland Police Department Annual Reports
 Note: Juveniles - persons under 17 years; n/a - data not available

juveniles outnumbered adults by 2.5:1, and that the split between juvenile males and juvenile females was fairly even. These data, displayed as percentages, are displayed in the following matrix:

	Males	Females	%
Adults	18	10	28
Juveniles	35	37	72
Per cent	53	47	100

Although Queensland's population increased by approximately 16 per cent over the period reviewed, there is no evidence to suggest an increase in missing person reports. Subject though they are to annual variation, the reports in aggregate tend to be fairly constant. When this fact is weighed against an increasing population, it is arguable a relative decrease occurred.

Resolutions tended to be erratic, ranging between a low of 63 per cent and a high of 96 per cent. Annual average clear up percentage was of the order of 87 per cent. Resolution rates between adult males and females and, juvenile males and females, appear to be fairly constant.

Numbers of persons missing at 30 June each year for which data are recorded reveal an almost random pattern. Numbers of adults listed as missing in some years exceeded numbers of juveniles. In some years, males recorded as outstanding on the missing person index exceeded females.

A more detailed breakdown is available for calendar year 1985 (see Table 4.7). Five per cent of missing juveniles were aged ten years or under with male numbers almost tripling female

numbers whereas 95 per cent were aged eleven to seventeen years. Unfortunately, no distinction is possible between MFH and MFI reports. Of this latter group, female reports marginally outproportioned males, 52 per cent to 48 per cent.

Table 4.7

Missing Persons Reports:*
Gender by Age, Queensland,
Calendar Year 1985

Age	Adult Male	Juvenile Male	Adult Female	Juvenile Female	Total
0-10	0	58	0	21	79
11-17	0	694	0	766	1,460
18-40	220	0	196	0	416
41-65	76	0	48	0	124
66+	35	0	17	0	52
Total	331	752	261	787	2,131

Source: Police Department Queensland

* Including Juvenile Absconders

Overall, juveniles constituted 72 per cent of all missing person reports, although that rate includes institutional absconders at large for longer than twenty-four hours.

There was little difference in the proportion of male and female reports generally, 51 per cent being male and 49 per cent female. Among males, adult reports rated 30 per cent while juveniles (including absconders) rated 70 per cent. With regard to females, the juvenile rate of 75 per cent exceeded the adult figure of 25 per cent.

In summary, during calendar year 1985, missing male reports slightly exceeded those of females while juvenile female reports

exceeded those of males by the same margin. A 99.8 per cent clean-up rate for the year has been achieved to date.

The Queensland missing person record for fiscal year 1984-85 is summarised as follows:

Persons (incl. juvenile absconders)	2,780
. males	1,460 (53%)
. females	1,320 (47%)
. juveniles	1,966 (71%)
- males	969 (49%)
- females	997 (51%)
. adults	814 (29%)
- males	491 (60%)
- females	323 (40%)

Western Australia

It will be seen at Table 4.8 that the missing person population of Western Australia is considered to include not only those free citizens who for one reason or another either absent themselves or are removed from the normal environment, but also absconders from hospitals (certain categories only), mental health facility absconders as well as absconders from Department of Child Welfare facilities. Although Table 4.8 is incomplete, there is at least an unbroken run of data from 1980 to 1985 inclusive; sufficient to provide a reasonable picture of the ongoing situation.

The gross reported data contained at columns (a), (b) and (c) show no indication of increase. Given the State's population increased by approximately 14 per cent during the period reviewed, a relative overall decline is arguable. An average of 3,304 missing persons was reported annually during the nine year period. The overall division of reports between the sexes is roughly even for the entire period. The composition of these missing persons data, such as the proportions of runaways, abductions or lost persons, is not known.

Table 4.8

Missing Persons Reports:
Gender by Status by Institution,
Western Australia, 1977-85

Year	Total	Total	Total	Total	Adult	Adult	Total	Juv	Juv	Total	Male	Fem	Total	Male	Fem	Total	Male	Fem	Total	Males	Fems
	Persons	Males	Fems	Adults	Males	Fems	Juvs	Males	Fems	Hospi- tal	Hospi- tal	Hospi- tal	Mental	Mental	Mental	DCW	DCW	DCW	Un- traced	Un- traced	Un- traced
	Missg	Missg	Missg	Missg	Missg	Missg	Missg	Missg	Missg	Abscon- ders	Abscon- ders	Abscon- ders	Abscon- ders	Abscon- ders	Abscon- ders	Abscon- ders	Abscon- ders	Abscon- ders	30/6	30/6	30/6
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	(j)	(k)	(l)	(m)	(n)	(o)	(p)	(q)	(r)	(s)	(t)	(u)
1977	4,055	2,128	1,927	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	176	124	52	267	226	41	1,321	535	786	n/a	n/a	n/a
1978	3,882	2,056	1,826	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	193	135	58	244	189	55	1,524	713	811	n/a	n/a	n/a
1979	3,210	1,746	1,464	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	111	79	32	231	173	58	1,151	566	585	64	n/a	n/a
1980	3,083	1,458	1,625	587	364	223	899	303	596	127	91	36	230	160	70	1,240	540	700	70	24	46
1981	3,177	1,582	1,595	731	244	487	794	490	304	147	93	54	315	229	86	1,190	526	664	97	46	51
1982	3,096	1,455	1,641	443	253	190	1,101	467	634	171	113	58	263	192	71	1,118	430	688	95	42	53
1983	3,087	1,516	1,571	485	248	237	1,342	629	713	151	95	56	222	164	58	887	380	507	34	22	12
1984	3,024	1,493	1,531	462	257	205	1,285	585	700	160	107	53	223	144	79	894	400	494	26	18	8
1985	3,105	1,529	1,576	489	286	203	1,400	621	779	183	128	55	232	154	78	801	340	461	28	14	14
Total	29,719	14,963	14,756	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,419	965	454	2,227	1,631	596	10,126	4,430	5,696	-	-	-

Source: Police Department Western Australia

Note: n/a - data not available

During the six years for which complete data are unavailable, ie. 1980-1985, numbers of missing juveniles constantly exceeded those of adults. Actual proportions of missing adults to juveniles varied considerably between years but the preponderance of juveniles over adults is in the order of a factor of five in recent years. As a general proposition, it appears adult males are slightly more often reported missing than adult females, whereas the situation is reversed among juveniles.

Readers will notice at Table 4.8 that Western Australian police include three classes of absconders, ie. from hospitals, psychiatric facilities and Department of Child Welfare (DCW) facilities, within their missing person totals. It will be noticed that although reducing in recent years, DCW absconders contribute heavily to missing person report totals.

Western Australia Police missing person reports for fiscal year 1984-85 are shown at Table 4.9 stratified by age. It will be seen that the age group responsible for most reports, both MFH and MFI, is the eleven to seventeen years group. Females predominate in both groups. Among MFH adults, males marginally outnumber females, although adult numbers generally are low. A resolution rate of 99.9 per cent was recorded for the year.

For the period 1 January 1980 to 31 December 1987, a total of twenty-three persons remained outstanding.

The Citizens Advice Bureau in Perth also undertakes tracing inquiries, although the sorts of inquiries it undertakes are not mainstream missing persons traces. The Bureau conducts between five and twenty-four traces a year. These inquiries fall entirely in the following categories: (1) family tree/reunion, (2) family lost contact, (3) friend lost contact, (4) adoption/illegitimacy, (5) death/inheritance, and (6) de facto. Over the calendar period 1981 to 1986, the Bureau's research office conducted sixty-eight inquiries, see Table 4.10. Some inquiries involved more than one person. The two categories

Table 4.9

Missing Persons Reports:
 Gender by Age by Institution,
 Western Australia, Fiscal Year 1984-85

Age Group	Adult Male	Juvenile Male	Adult Female	Juvenile Female	Hospital Absconder Male	Hospital Absconder Female	Mental Absconder Male	Mental Absconder Female	State Ward Absconder Male	State Ward Absconder Female	Total
0-10	0	53	0	28	2	0	0	0	20	2	105
11-17	0	568	0	751	5	1	8	0	320	459	2,112
18-40	187	0	167	0	22	18	92	55	0	0	541
41-65	72	0	36	0	35	10	44	19	0	0	216
66 +	27	0	20	0	64	26	10	4	0	0	151
Total	286	621	223	779	128	55	154	78	340	461	3,125

Source: Police Department Western Australia

requiring most attention were cases of lost family contacts and lost friend contacts. The inquiries split evenly between genders and a large majority involved persons over forty years of age.

Table 4.10

Traces Conducted by Citizens Advice Bureau:
Western Australia, 1981-86

Type of Trace	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	Total
Family tree/reunion	0	1	0	1	1	4	7
Family lost contact	5	12	5	3	3	7	35
Friend lost contact	3	1	1	0	4	9	18
Adoption/illegitimate	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Death/inheritance	0	0	0	0	1	4	5
De facto	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	8	14	8	5	9	24	68
Success rate/100	12.5	50.0	37.5	20.0	55.5	50.0	42.6

Source: Margaret Gadson, Citizen's Advice Bureau, Perth

The Western Australian missing persons record as reported to police for fiscal year 1984-85 is summarised as follows:

Persons (non-absconders)	1,889
• males	907 (48%)
• females	982 (52%)
• juveniles	1,400 (74%)
- males	621 (44%)
- females	779 (56%)
• adults	489 (26%)
- males	286 (58%)
- females	203 (42%)

Absconders	1,216
. males	622 (51%)
. females	594 (49%)
. juveniles	801 (66%)
- males	340 (42%)
- females	461 (58%)
. adults	415 (34%)
- males	282 (68%)
- females	133 (32%)

South Australia

In the course of fiscal year 1984-85, 4,768 persons were reported/recorded as missing. A total of 4,760 persons were located, thus providing a 99.8 per cent resolution rate. Five categories of missing persons are identified in South Australia: (1) adult male, (2) juvenile male, (3) adult female, (4) juvenile female, and (5) Department Child Welfare (DCW) absconders.

The age group in which most missing person reports occurred was eleven to seventeen years, with males slightly outnumbering females when DCW absconders are taken into account. However, when DCW absconders are excluded females outnumbered males; although not significantly so. These data are recorded at Table 4.11. In the eighteen to forty age group, missing males substantially outnumbered missing females, although frequencies are not large. It is clear older people are less likely to go missing in that within the forty-one to sixty-five age group the total number of missing reports is little more than one-third of the eighteen to forty group. The number of missing person reports in the eighteen to forty years age group is cause for concern even though the resolution rate is high. Some analysis of causation would be helpful in explaining this phenomenon, especially from a remedial perspective. What is surprising, though, is the number of sixty-six plus aged persons who were recorded as missing. Some South Australian institutions devoted to the care of the elderly have established sensible protocols

to: (1) prevent the unintended absence of patients, and (2) to assist in their rapid location. Most such institutions do have such procedures but they are mostly not recorded and in this respect the South Australian example is one that can be usefully followed elsewhere.

Table 4.11

**Missing Persons Reports:
Gender by Age by Institution,
South Australia, Fiscal Year 1984-85**

Age Group	Adult male	Juve- nile male	Adult female	Juve- nile female	DCW Abscon- ders male	DCW Abscon- ders female	Total
0-10	-	174	-	69	8	-	251
11-17	-	987	-	1,057	482	278	2,804
18-40	540	-	456	-	-	-	996
41-65	172	-	212	-	-	-	384
66+	176	-	157	-	-	-	333
Total	888	1,161	825	1,126	490	278	4,768

Source: Police Department South Australia

At the time of writing some thirty long-term missing person reports remain active. Some of these 'long-termers' are no doubt dead. At times bodies and parts of bodies are found in the ocean and the total is adjusted.

The South Australian missing person record for fiscal year 1984-85 is summarised as:

Persons (non-absconders)	4,000
. males	2,049 (51%)
. females	1,951 (49%)
. juveniles	2,287 (57%)
- males	1,161 (51%)
- females	1,126 (49%)
. adults	1,713 (43%)
- males	888 (52%)
- females	825 (48%)
 Absconders	 768
. males	490 (64%)
. females	278 (36%)
. juveniles	768 (100%)
- males	490 (64%)
- females	278 (36%)
. adults	0
- males	0
- females	0

Tasmania

As can be seen from a perusal of Table 4.12 below, missing person reports vary considerably from year to year. Although there is some suggestion of a slight overall reduction during the latter three years of the period reviewed, no particular trend over the decade is apparent. But, as the State's population increased by nearly 8 per cent over the decade, a relative decrease in the rate of reports is apparent. In those years for which data are available, it will be seen absconders from various institutions contribute significantly to overall missing person totals. In 1985, for example, absconders comprised nearly 40 per cent of total reports.

Table 4.12

Missing Persons Reports:
Gender by Status by Institution,
Tasmania, 1976-85

Year	Total Persons Missing (A + J)	Total Males Missing (A + J)	Total Females Missing (A + J)	Total Adults Missing	Total Adult Males Missing	Total Adult Females Missing	Total Juveniles Missing	Juvenile Males Missing	Juvenile Females Missing	Total Hospital Absconders	Total Institutional Absconders
1976	774	382	392	302	204	98	472	178	294	n/a	n/a
1977	532	277	255	249	126	123	283	151	132	n/a	n/a
1978	364	162	202	147	77	70	217	85	132	22	127
1979	387	170	217	157	86	71	230	84	146	n/a	n/a
1980	492	246	246	190	110	80	302	136	166	12	85
1981	637	344	293	206	121	85	431	223	208	4	236
1982	552	345	207	148	88	60	404	257	147	7	163
1983	337	185	152	132	63	69	205	122	83	25	122
1984	361	151	210	92	55	37	269	96	173	5	142
1985	321	152	169	90	51	39	231	101	130	11	114
Total	4,757	2,414	2,343	1,713	981	732	3,044	1,433	1,611	-	-

Source: Police Department Tasmania

An annual average for the decade of 476 missing person reports is noted. This figure comprises approximately 51 per cent males and 49 per cent females.

Adults were responsible for 36 per cent of missing person reports, whereas juveniles contributed 64 per cent. Among adults, males (57 per cent) exceeded females (43 per cent). Among juveniles, however, the situation is reversed; with females (53 per cent) exceeding males (47 per cent).

A breakdown of missing person reports for calendar year 1985 by age and gender is shown at Table 4.13. Total missing persons reports for the calendar year are less than half that of fiscal year 1984-85, which suggests a huge rise in missing persons during the latter half of 1985. The age group responsible for most missing persons reports is clearly eleven to seventeen years, with females slightly outnumbering males. Among adults, the eighteen to forty age group has most missing person reports, with males twice as likely to be reported as females. As can be seen, persons reported missing in other age groups are few indeed. A 98.3 per cent resolution rate was achieved.

At the time of writing, forty persons are outstanding as missing since 1980.

The Tasmanian missing persons record for fiscal year 1984-85 is summarised as follows:

Persons (excluding absconders)	321
• males	152 (47%)
• females	169 (53%)
• juveniles	231 (72%)
- males	101 (44%)
- females	130 (56%)
• adults	90 (28%)
- males	51 (57%)
- females	39 (43%)

Table 4.13

Missing Persons Reports:
Gender by Age by Institution,
Tasmania, Calendar Year 1985

Age Group	Adult Male	Juve- nile Male	Adult Female	Juve- nile Female	Child Welfare Absconder Male	Child Welfare Absconder Female	Hospital Absconder Male	Hospital Absconder Female	Mental Hospital Absconder Male	Mental Hospital Absconder Female	Total
0-10	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
11-17	0	41	0	54	10	9	0	2	0	0	116
18-40	28	0	14	0	0	0	2	1	2	1	48
41-65	8	0	3	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	15
66 +	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3
Total	36	43	18	54	10	9	6	5	2	1	184

Source: Police Department Tasmania

Absconders	125
. males	62 (50%)
. females	63 (50%)
. juveniles	114 (91%)
- males	56 (49%)
- females	58 (51%)
. adults	11 (9%)
- males	6 (55%)
- females	5 (45%)

Northern Territory

Northern Territory missing person records include lost persons (such as persons drowned at sea) as well as tracing inquiries. They are shown at Table 4.14 for the decade 1976-85 inclusive.

Out of State inquiries contribute substantially to the total number of reports recorded. Although trend analysis is not possible in respect of these data, there is some indication of an increase in Northern Territory based reports.

Missing person reports (of whatever kind) averaged nearly 245 annually, 48 per cent of which were initiated within the Territory. Of Territory initiated reports, the division between male and female reports for the decade was roughly equal. Resolution of Territory initiated reports was 99 per cent. Of the average seventy-seven annual extra-state initiated reports, some 61 per cent were resolved. This much lower resolution rate in respect of out of State reports/inquiries is understandable when one bears in mind that many subjects were either never in the Territory in the first place or had departed prior to police receipt of reports.

Thirteen persons reported as missing during the period 1 January 1980 to 31 December 1987 were still missing at the end of that period.

Table 4.14

Missing Persons Reports:
Gender by Outcome by Origin,
Northern Territory, 1976-85

Year	Total Missing Person Reports (a)	Missing Person Reports Initiated in NT (b)	Male Missing Person Reports (c)	Female Missing Person Reports (d)	Missing Person Reports Cleared (e)	(e) as a Percentage of (b) (f)	Missing Person Reports Initiated Extra State (g)	Extra State Missing Person Reports Cleared (h)	(h) as a Percentage of (g) (i)
1976	251	57	30	27	57	100	194	107	55
1977	154	43	25	18	41	95	111	106	95
1978	111	27	15	12	26	96	84	84	100
1979	176	48	29	19	48	100	128	118	92
1980	187	106	50	56	105	99	81	81	100
1981	291	193	84	109	192	99	98	81	83
1982	293	149	86	63	149	100	144	103	72
1983	387	234	113	121	232	99	153	85	56
1984	276	131	63	68	130	99	145	62	43
1985	323	195	96	99	193	99	128	52	41
Total	2,449	1,183	591	592	1,173	99	1,266	879	61
Annual Average	245	118.3	59.1	59.2	117.3	-	126.6	87.9	-

Source: Police Force Northern Territory, and Police Force Northern Territory Annual Reports

Australian Capital Territory

Data supplied by Australian Capital Territory Police reveal:

- * in fiscal year 1983-84, 255 persons were reported missing with 254 (99.6 per cent) cases resolved;
- * in fiscal year 1984-85, 241 persons were reported missing with 239 (99.1 per cent) cases resolved; and
- * in fiscal year 1985-86, 295 persons were reported missing with 274 (93 per cent) cases resolved.

These data permit little comment other than to observe that resolution rates in the years mentioned were high.

Untraced Missing Persons

The resolution rate of missing person reports is high in all States, although a clear distinction is evident between the eastern States and others. However, varying counting and acceptance criteria make inter-State comparisons invalid. According to Table 4.15 below, a total of 257 persons throughout Australia remained untraced at the end of 1985 (making due allowance for the fact that Victorian data are for 1986). It is probable a large proportion of these persons were located shortly after the end of the reporting year. It is not clear, though, what proportion of the 257 were carry overs from previous years. More pertinently, we have no idea from these figures of the size of the unresolved missing persons number over, say, a ten year period. Even if we had that figure it would not tell us how many such persons were the victims of crime and how many remained untraced because the persons reported missing wanted it that way. We are mindful, too, that an unknown number of missing persons are not reported to police.

Table 4.15

**Untraced Missing Persons:
State by Gender by Age Status,
Calendar Year 1985**

Category	NSW	VIC*	QLD	WA	SA	TAS
Juvenile male	18	n/k	25	0	0	0
Juvenile female	6	n/k	44	0	0	0
All Juveniles	24	n/k	69	0	0	0
Adult male	15	n/k	28	1	6	2
Adult female	4	n/k	33	2	2	1
All Adults	19	n/k	61	3	8	3
All up Totals	43	70	130	3	8	3

Source: Police Departments

* 1986

With regard to the three eastern States, the numbers of outstanding cases at any one time are sufficient to warrant further research, especially with regard to age and gender. One police source has suggested the possibility of a limited white slave traffic operating. Analyses of age and gender could indicate the plausibility or otherwise of such speculation - all the while remembering there are many young persons who have run away from home but who have not been reported as missing to police.

Crime Victims as Missing Persons

The problem posed by crime victims as missing persons was mentioned previously. For example, victims of crime who are absent from their normal haunts as a result of their victimisation are not infrequently reported as missing. Only later, provided they are found, is their true status understood. It is not clear if police missing person report totals are adjusted in the light of such events. However, there is one crime category that does shed some light on a missing person

category, that of abducted persons. Figures for 1986 shown in Table 4.16 below indicate some 520 abductions were recorded across the country. Inter-state comparisons should not be attempted as it seems different States have different policies with regard to laying abduction charges, eg. with respect to persons who are removed to another place in order to be raped.

It is not clear if these events are included in missing persons records or not.

Table 4.16

Kidnappings/Abductions:
By State, Calendar Year 1986

NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	NT	ACT	Total
144	142	120	65	36	7	4	2	520

Source: Police Commissioners' Advisory Committee on Crime Statistics

Conclusion

In examining the various missing person populations throughout Australia it is clear that data generally are not available concerning types of missing persons by causation, such as senile or confused wanderers or, kidnapping. However, a distinction is made in most jurisdictions between persons missing from their normal (mostly home) environment (MFH) and those absconding from institutions (MFI). It can be argued institutional absconders are not missing persons in the narrow sense of the term. But, given that in many cases tracing techniques are similar it makes administrative sense that police combine the two categories for administrative as well as operational purposes.

There is a further consideration, too. Many child welfare institution absconders were initially runaways and are, in fact, merely repeating that kind of behaviour.

It is clear from the various jurisdictional data tabulations that missing persons data are not strictly comparable across States. Thus, only gross statements can be made about the nature of the problem. Given such an important qualification, it is estimated that in the fiscal year 1984-85 approximately 18,000 persons (excluding absconders, with the exception of Queensland) were reported missing for various periods throughout Australia. An unknown proportion, generally thought by police to be a large majority, returned home within three days. A few never returned although their respective locations eventually became known in some cases. A tragic, and again unknown, proportion were victims of criminal activity. In a few cases, nothing has been heard of the person reported missing since. The anguish and emotional trauma experienced by parents and next of kin in such circumstances is touched on in Part I.

The peak age range for missing persons is eleven to seventeen years; in most States females outnumber males. In New South Wales, though, males outnumber females. Clearly, a large number of these missing children are runaways and, as such, they represent not only the largest but in many respects, the most critical element of the various missing person populations. A great deal more research is necessary in this area, especially with regard to prevention. This point is discussed further at Chapter Eight.

The age group involving the second (by far) largest number of missing persons is the eighteen to forty year olds. Males mostly outnumber females in this age group, although the balance was even in Victoria. Although much smaller in terms of missing person reports, there is probably a greater range of causations operating in this age group, including victimisation. Again, more research is necessary not only for preventive reasons but also to permit the construction of an acute typology as an investigative aid to tracing agents.

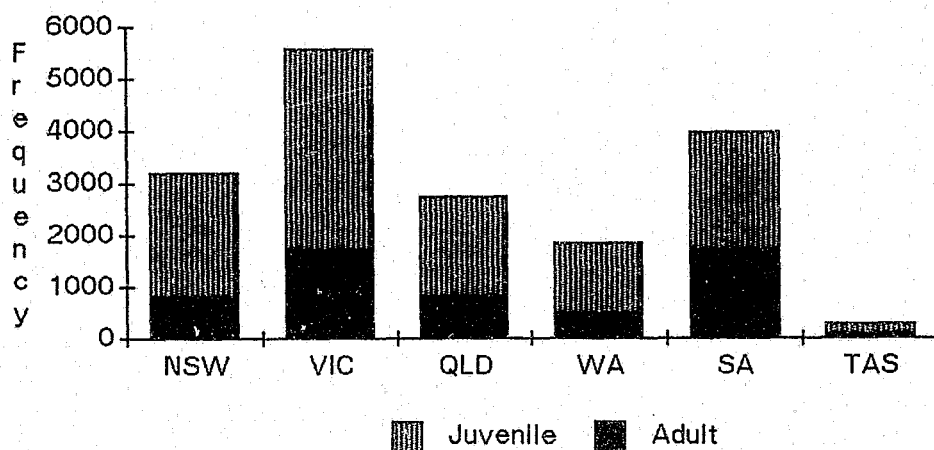
The figure of 18,000 missing persons is large, even though many of the absences involved are a matter of a few days only. The administrative load on police alone is extremely costly, although a costing is not attempted in this exploratory study. Absconder data provided in this chapter are even more uncertain than missing person data but, even on the data shown, about 6,000 absconders were reported to police in 1985. The actual figure is almost certainly considerably larger. But, even the conservative figure of 6,000 absconders imposes an enormous operational and administrative load.

Histograms showing the relative proportions of adults to juveniles and males to females, exclusive of MFI cases, are shown at Figures 4.3 and 4.4 respectively.

The issue of untraced missing persons was also canvassed as was the question of crime victims as missing persons.

Figure 4.3

Missing Persons:
Age Status by State,
Calendar Year 1985*

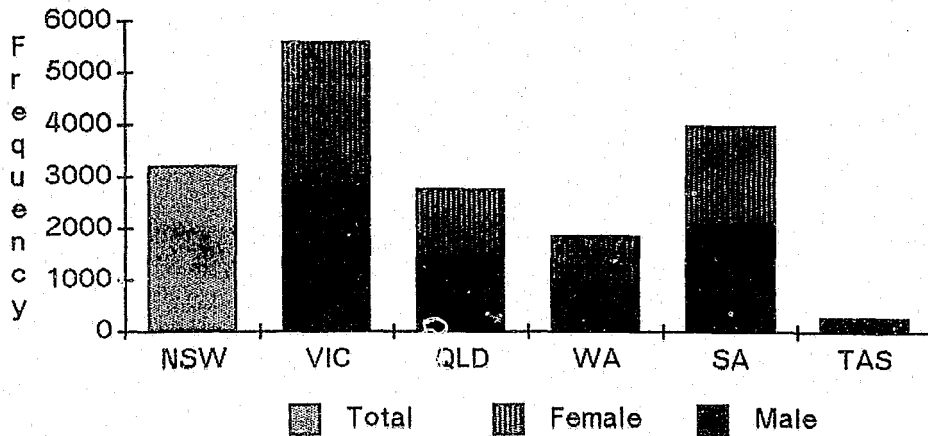


Source: Police Departments

* Victoria, 1986

Figure 4.4

Missing Persons:
Gender by State,
Calendar Year 1985*



Source: Police Departments

* Victoria, 1986

Note: Breakdown not available for New South Wales

Finally, it is apparent available statistical data provide only a limited picture of the missing persons population. In the longer term, some police agencies may wish to change their reporting procedures in order to improve the quality of that picture. Even if they do, of course, police data will never reveal the full picture because not all missing persons are reported to police. Thus, there is merit in the larger State governments undertaking comprehensive surveys of missing persons within their borders as has been done the United States of America.

CHAPTER FIVE

INVESTIGATING MISSING PERSON REPORTS

This Chapter deals with the investigation of missing person reports. It touches upon some of the major aspects of such investigations but is not intended as a complete guide by any means. The sorts of investigations or inquiries considered here are those relating to missing persons rather than absent friend tracing, although on occasion methods overlap. Much of the discussion included in this Chapter is a modification of advice offered investigators by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in the United States.

It will be apparent from earlier chapters that police are not the sole operators in the field although they are by far the most active and numerous. Some friends and next of kin of missing persons undertake their own inquiries when police efforts are unsatisfactory and/or unproductive. Private inquiry agents conduct a wide range of traces including missing person inquiries.

The great majority of persons, though, are content to leave the conduct of missing person inquiries to police. Police are widely distributed in all jurisdictions and have ample access to communications technology and other useful resources such as vehicles, trained investigators, dogs, aircraft and databanks. Thus, unless one has ample funds and a pressing need for privacy, police are an obvious choice to act as one's agents in such matters.

Procedures

Police agency procedures almost universally require the reporting of missing persons to local police (as opposed to missing person units) in the first instance. This is a reasonable requirement

as missing person inquiries are considered part of police mainstream operations. However, there are differences of practice both in Australia and overseas, especially as to the immediacy of police response. Other variations concern the promptness of report submission and whether persons must attend a police station or can report by telephone. These various matters are addressed in greater detail in Chapter Three which deals with police administration of missing person reports.

It is recommended that in all cases where resources permit such action, a police officer be promptly despatched to attend the inquirer rather than have this inquirer attend a police office. The principal reason is that an important initial action by police is to thoroughly search the missing person's dwelling, where appropriate. Individual organisational differences determine whether the attending officer is a patrol officer, a supervisor, an inquiry officer or whoever. However, at peak tasking periods when calls for police service are queued, difficult decisions have to be made by despatchers on questions of priority. Competing demands for attention to breaches of public order, crimes in progress and missing persons, all have to be prioritised. All police agencies have routine procedures for such decision making and they need not bother us further here. However, once a police officer has been despatched or an inquirer has attended a police office, the officer in question is faced with important decisions concerning the degree of urgency to be accorded the matter.

For example, it is popularly accepted in the police community that most absent persons, especially children, return within twenty-four hours. Indeed, it is sometimes said that it is difficult to get police to take a runaway child report seriously before at least a day has elapsed. Public dissatisfaction with this attitude in the USA, in which some police departments have formalised such a policy, has resulted in widespread public pressure to change policies and, in fact, contributed to the passing of federal legislation concerning missing children.

The problem is that while the twenty-four hour rule of thumb may hold in most cases, there are the inevitable tragic cases in which it does not. The enduring question for police in this regard is how to distinguish between the frivolous or non-serious reports and those which either are serious or have the potential to be. It is impossible to devise a foolproof set of criteria due to the subjective nature of much of the information provided but it is possible to formulate criteria to guide police generally on the basis of probabilities. Some police agencies have developed more detailed criteria than others. Thus, the criteria listed below possess varying relevance to the different police agencies throughout Australia.

Such criteria should provide guidance to officers receiving missing person reports as to the degree of urgency that should ideally be accorded an inquiry. The following criteria, which are largely based on those recommended by the United States National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, provide a checklist of circumstances any of which being matched should result in immediate police action:

- * **A missing person who is fifteen years of age or younger.** Such persons generally have not ceased to be dependent on their parents and do not possess the ability to protect themselves from harm in a strange environment. There is clearly scope for individual differences, a few fifteen year olds may be able to survive away from their family without great harm but it is safer in terms of first instance police response to assume they have not.

- * **A missing person who is believed to be out of the zone of safety appropriate to his/her mental age.** Zones of safety depend according to a person's age and development. A baby, for example, would only be safe while in the immediate custody of its parents or in a baby carriage, while a toddler may be safe within the surrounds of a house and garden. A mentally retarded adult may be similarly limited.

- * **A missing person who is incapacitated.** Persons who are emotionally disturbed or otherwise impaired may have difficulty in communicating with others regarding their needs, identity or address. As such, they are susceptible to exploitation but, more immediately important is the fact that some such persons would have an impaired capacity to make capable decisions concerning their physical safety.

- * **A missing person who is drug dependent (either prescribed medication or 'user's habit').** All drug dependencies, whether insulin for diabetes or addictive narcotics, place missing persons in an 'at risk' category. Diabetic or epileptic persons require medication, in the absence of which their condition becomes life threatening. Drug abusers, on the other hand, may resort to crime with females and younger males being subjected to exploitation.

- * **A missing person who is a possible victim of foul play or sexual exploitation.** Whenever a person is missing and there are indications of possible abduction - violence at the scene of an abduction, or signs that indicate possible sexual abuse - they are reasonably assumed to be at risk until shown to be otherwise.

Suspicious circumstances can be deemed to exist if a significant and/or preponderant number of the following factors are present:

- physical evidence of struggle, ie. eyewitness, bloodstains;
- personal belongings found abandoned, ie. bicycle left in shopping centre;
- personal belongings left intact at home, school or church, ie. if departure was voluntary it is possible some such items would have been taken;
- no identifiable problem in the home, ie. emotional trauma;

- . no identifiable problem at school, ie. success/failure;
- . no recent major change in lifestyle, ie. divorce, death, economic;
- . no pattern of running away, ie. never stayed away from home before;
- . it can be determined the missing person was not following his/her normal travel pattern;
- . missing person was following his/her normal routine at a normal time and failed to arrive at his/her destination, ie. child was seen on school bus but did not arrive at school, or;
- . stranger(s) seen in the area of disappearance.

- * **A missing person who might be in a dangerous environment.**
'Dangerous environment' is a relative term. It depends on such factors as age, health, faculties, etc. Sub-zero temperatures are dangerous in the case of a senile person wandering at large, and busy streets dangerous for a toddler.

- * **A missing person who has been absent twenty-four hours before being reported.** Given that many persons turn up unharmed within twenty-four hours, the probability of a person having come to harm when absent in excess of twenty-four hours increases. In addition, valuable lead time has been lost in the course of such a delay and prompt response is indicated to offset the possible negative consequences arising from the delay. There may be questionable reasons for such a delay which need to be investigated.

- * **A missing person who is a youth believed to be in company with adults capable of endangering the welfare of minors.**

- * **A person considered likely to resort to crime either to maintain life or obtain drugs.**

- * **A missing person whose absence is a significant deviation from established patterns which cannot be explained.**

It is recommended that any missing person report that checks with one or more of these criteria warrants expeditious treatment. Attending/receiving police officers must exercise their judgment concerning the truthfulness of persons making such missing person reports. All agencies have procedures (see Chapter Three) as to the actions to be taken by police subsequent to receipt of reports.

A rather shorter list of criteria is utilised by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation in the categories it utilises in its computerised Missing Person File. They are:

- * **Disability** - a person of any age who is missing and under proven physical and/or mental disability or is senile, thereby subjecting him/herself or others to personal and immediate danger.
- * **Endangered** - a person of any age who is missing and is in the company of another under circumstances indicating his/her physical safety is in danger.
- * **Involuntary** - a person who is missing under circumstances indicating the disappearance was not voluntary, ie. abduction or kidnapping.
- * **Juvenile** - a person who is missing and declared unemancipated as defined by the laws of his/her State of residence and who does not meet the entry criteria of the other three categories.

Police agencies throughout Australia treat all missing persons reports as inquiries, although some are treated as being more urgent than others. In Britain, generally, a distinction is made

between what may be termed 'full' inquiry reports and 'limited' inquiry reports. Cases warranting full inquiry include:

- * **Juveniles** - all persons under eighteen years, including absconders from institutions.

- * **Adults** - who have disappeared or unaccountably left home in circumstances which make it seem likely that he or she may have come to some harm, eg. suicidal, loss of memory, illness, victim of crime, accident, senility and all adults sixty-five years and over.

Reports not falling within these criteria are deemed non-vulnerable and subjected to a limited inquiry routine which includes checking of station records and indexes, checking the Police National Computer, forwarding of documentation to Missing Person Office for further checking against hospital and unidentified found bodies records. All such inquiries are reviewed following the expiry of one month. Persons reporting such cases are tactfully informed these are the limits of inquiry unless further information comes to light which might lead to reclassification.

This clear distinction of cases is useful as there is no sound reason why all reports of missing persons should be fully investigated. For example, adult persons known to have left home of their own free will do not warrant inquiry at all. Sometimes, of course, inquiry is necessary in the first instance to clearly establish motive.

However, one weakness of all such classification criteria is that they are applied by police officers and police officers are not always best qualified to assess such matters. Generally speaking, persons reporting spouses, offspring, etc. missing are better able to assess whether an element of risk or vulnerability applies. The case of Kim Sing, in Sydney during late 1986, illustrated quite clearly that a mother's intuitive fears for her

adult daughter's safety were sound. On the other hand, it is not unusual for parents to exaggerate circumstances of a child's absence to ensure prompt police action. Most police stations are short of resources and there is an understandable reluctance to commit scarce resources to an inquiry of doubtful seriousness, especially when experience strongly conditions officers to operate on the forty-eight-hour principle. The Sing case suggests, though, that however difficult it may be for police to respond, it should be the reporter rather than the receptionist who determines the degree of risk involved.

In addition to determining whether to treat a report as urgent, an attending police officer needs to undertake certain routine actions in the course of his/her initial response. The sorts of actions raised here are those applying in cases of persons missing from home or other accommodation.

Firstly, parents, next of kin or guardians need to be interviewed. Police officers are guided in such matters by the questions contained in their missing person (or equivalent) report form. Private and volunteer investigators would not normally be in possession of such forms. Accurate data should be taken from parents or next of kin with regard to names, nicknames, friends, date of birth, gender and age. Of equal importance, in certain cases, is whether a missing person is on a course of medication or subject to life threatening illness.

Complete physical descriptions of missing persons should be obtained, as well as details of clothing. Marks, scars, blemishes, dental work including braces, holes in nose or ear lobes should all be recorded. Recent photographs, preferably colour, of the missing person should be obtained if at all possible. If the missing person had participated in an identikid or similar program, his/her fingerprints should also be obtained.

Precise details of absence, variations of routine, etc. should be established from such interviews. Other family members, if appropriate, should also be interviewed. It should be remembered, too, that relevant persons may not be present at the time of a police officer's initial visit and return visits may be necessary. This type of follow up is essential because, in cases of foul play or juvenile decampment for reasons of sexual molestation, such persons may be crucial to the inquiry in addition to being possible offenders.

In all cases in which a person is reported missing from their family home, and with special reference to juveniles, attending officers or other investigators should search the home. There are reasons for such searches: the 'missing' person may be hiding; evidence of motivation or victimisation may be available which otherwise would remain undiscovered.

Having spoken to family members and searched the family home (subject to permission, of course) or other accommodation, investigators are then in a position to extend their inquiry to the immediate neighbourhood. Friends and nearby residents should be spoken to, and a note kept of all names and addresses. Failure to do so can, and has, resulted in badly botched inquiries. Areas near a missing child's home and likely play areas should also be searched in cases of possible child abduction. If a search is organised, the names of all searchers should be obtained as an abductor may join such searches to monitor search progress.

Quite often, especially with children, it is difficult at the outset to know if an absence is due to a person's being lost, abducted, runaway or, loss of memory. In such confusing circumstances it may well be necessary to operate on one or more assumptions simultaneously, eg. lost and abducted.

Investigators attending such incidents should remember that initial actions sometimes bear heavily on the later conduct of

inquiries. Thus, it is essential nothing be overlooked and that everything be recorded, however simple a tasking may seem in the first instance.

All police agencies have prescribed procedures concerning the follow up of such inquiries, eg. when to call in detectives or juvenile aid officers as well as how an inquiry file should be established. Other investigators lacking such support will need to develop case files. Case files will not only contain report forms, running sheets and other documentation but, also be used as the basis for case analyses and reviews.

If an initial response to a missing person report is not successful, it is necessary for investigators (patrol officers, detectives, youth aid officers, inquiry agents, etc) to move into the second phase of inquiry. The following comments do not apply to cases in which it is clear that a person reported as a missing is in fact lost. As discussed at Chapter Two, such persons are not strictly classifiable as missing. Certainly, police responsibility remains for the conduct of searches for lost persons but such procedures do not fall within the province of this Chapter.

Missing person cases fall basically into one of three categories:

- * **Voluntary** - in which persons leave their normal haunts of their own accord or at least without being forcibly abducted. Runaway children and spouse deserters fall into this category, as do people who have overwhelming debts or who wish to avoid some other personal problem.
- * **Involuntary** - in which persons are abducted either by a non-custodial parent or some other person.
- * **Altered state of consciousness** - in which persons, such as sufferers of Alzheimer's disease, wander away from their normal haunts. Lack of motivation separates such persons

from those in the first category. However, in terms of search methods, there is no difference between them and persons who are lost. Thus, this category is not considered further in this Chapter.

Voluntary

The voluntary category includes the great majority of missing person reports and in all jurisdictions most such persons return to their normal haunts without trauma and of their own accord. In many cases the efforts undertaken by police or other agents are of little effect. This fortunate state of affairs, however, should not deter police from taking prompt initial action in all cases accepted for inquiry. The probability of a favourable outcome without police effort is thought to be high but the number of unfortunate outcomes is sufficient to warrant maximum effort in all cases. The vital consideration here is that, in the early stages of a missing person inquiry, it is often unclear whether an absence is voluntary or involuntary. Investigators need to bear both possibilities in mind.

Absconders from institutions, runaway children, spouse deserters, debt jumpers, persons overwhelmed with personal problems and young persons influenced by others (possibly with a view to sexually or otherwise exploiting them) all fall within the voluntary category. Some of these cases, for instance someone who is avoiding civil process, may not be considered to fall within the province of police duties. Even so, there are a few investigators whose responsibility it is to trace them.

Where missing persons reports are not rapidly resolved there is sometimes a possibility the missing person, especially a spouse, may have merely relocated. In such cases, investigators turn to the electoral rolls as a useful resource. Generally speaking, private persons have access only to Divisional Rolls (Federal rolls shortly to be produced in microfiche). However, government personnel, such as police officers, are granted access

to centralised Rolls, which permit far simpler name checking. Legislative changes enacted in 1984 provide for 'silent' registration in cases where fear of attack is entertained if one's name is published. Investigators should bear such a possibility in mind.

In England, Taxation authorities will forward letters on behalf of parents/guardians to missing persons in those cases in which they have an address. The Australian Taxation Office does not, claiming such action would breach its secrecy provisions. However, the Federal Department of Social Services does have a policy of forwarding letters to missing persons should they have an address. The Department does not reveal to a sender whether in fact it has an address, merely advising the writer that should it have an address it will forward the communication. All such letters are read by departmental officials to ensure they are genuine and not offensive. If considered unsuitable they are returned to the sender. Requests of this nature are generally acceded to although the Department of Social Security does not advertise this service.

Section 19 **Social Security Act 1947** places stringent security demands upon the Department in respect of information held by it. However, provision is made for the Secretary to release information on grounds of public interest. A narrower interpretation of this provision is adopted by the Department and releases are only authorised in cases in which the required interaction is essential, for example, to major police inquiries such as a murder investigation involving a client.

The Medicare databank of the Health Insurance Commission contains location details of most Australian residents. Although it is very carefully guarded, under S. 130(3)a **Health Insurance Act 1973** application can be made for details of clients under a public interest provision. Strict legal formality is applied to such requests and very few are acceded to, although there is one

successful request on record in respect of a young missing child. However, the Health Insurance Commission does have a policy of forwarding mail from one party to another should it have an address. The address of the intended recipient is not revealed to the sender. Indeed, the Commission will not even reveal whether it in fact possesses an address.

At an informal level, many officials in both public and private sectors go out of their way to assist parents etc. attempting to trace their missing offspring. There is no purpose in citing examples and organisations in this context and run the risk of needlessly embarrassing someone or some agency. But, parents, next of kin or investigators should be alert to the fund of goodwill and charity that exists in all communities.

Much inconvenience and anger is occasioned among missing persons' next of kin/parents as a result of investigators/case officers failing to keep complainants well advised at all times. Responsible officers should maintain close contact with next of kin and keep them informed of events. Even negative information is appreciated.

As a rough rule of thumb, between one-half and two-thirds of all missing persons are juveniles. It is children who generally are at greatest risk and the following comments apply principally to the investigation of runaway children.

Family Considerations

In addition to the sorts of family-related inquiries suggested above, investigators should ensure friends and relatives with whom a missing person might make contact are alerted. Normally, family members can be allocated that job in the first instance. Indeed, it is often done prior to calling in police assistance. But, police (or other investigators) should record the names and addresses of such persons and make their own independent inquiries as soon as reasonably possible.

If a person is missing more than forty-eight hours, family agreement to the preparation and distribution of a flier is desirable. Fliers should be displayed in vicinities likely to be visited by the missing person, as well as facilities - especially transportation - likely to be used by a runaway, eg, bus and rail stations. All police agencies throughout Australia have procedures designed to facilitate the production of fliers and posters. Written agreement of next of kin or other responsible person is necessary in all cases. In practice distribution of such materials is not always satisfactory to clients as they are not always noticed by police officers themselves, as is evidenced in the case of Tony Jones discussed in Chapter One.

It is essential family or other persons be instructed to notify police when either relevant news comes into their possession or, alternatively, the missing person returns.

When interviewing friends and acquaintances with whom a missing person might be staying or who may have some information of relevance, investigators are well advised to adopt a non-judgmental approach. Perceptions of animosity may result in evasive responses or even denial whereas concerned questioning, such as 'Do you think so-and-so is safe?' might evince a positive response and encourage more revealing replies than might have been intended. In cases of prolonged absence, ie. more than twenty-four hours, friends and acquaintances should be quizzed as to personal problems or other concerns that might have led to the subject's running away or otherwise absenting themselves. Juvenile Aid officers and other police who visit pinball parlours, shopping malls, bus and rail stations, etc, should be briefed to keep an eye open for runaway children and be provided with physical details as well as copies of recent photographs.

Investigators need to develop investigative leads to conduct coherent and productive inquiries. In order to develop those

leads investigators need to know as much about their subjects as possible.

What mental, physical and material resources do missing persons possess? Do they have sufficient funds to support themselves or might they turn to crime to obtain same? Do they have accounts with financial institutions and have any unusual withdrawals been made recently. Missing persons need to sleep, eat and occupy themselves. Given the particular nature of a subject, an investigator has to consider how and where those needs are likely to be satisfied. It is especially important to determine if there were preparations for departure; were additional clothes taken or tickets purchased? Have they been talking recently about a place or a person in whom they were particularly interested? Have they become friendly in recent times with someone outside their normal circle of contacts? Such information plays an important role in shaping investigators' leads.

If a missing person attends school, their school should be contacted and requested to inform the investigator if information comes to hand from peers or if a request is made for school records. If the subject has a school locker it could be opened and possible leads in the form of notes, addresses, phone numbers obtained. Care should be taken to observe due process in the opening of lockers.

Teachers should be interviewed in the case of juveniles. Changes in mood and other evidence of emotional problems should be canvassed. The quality of home life should also be discussed with teachers who are in unique positions to form opinions on such matters. School attendance in recent weeks should be checked. If absences are apparent schoolmates might know the reason. Some may have been the missing person's companion in their truancy. Romantic attractions, whether in the subject's normal friendship group or outside it may also provide significant leads. Just as importantly, scholastic records

should be checked as a possible source of concern to the missing person.

On occasion, a runaway child's medical history may prove of relevance. Both GP and school health records should be checked if at all possible. Normally, the consent of parents will be necessary in such matters. Apart from evidence of dependency on medication or hard drugs, which parents may have omitted to mention, there might also be information concerning molestation or cruelty. In similar vein, local child welfare personnel should be consulted for indications of family discord or other pathogenic conditions.

An important point to bear in mind is that while an adult may leave home voluntarily without anyone knowing of their intention, such is unlikely to be the case in respect of a child. It is equally important not to assume that parents or next of kin reporting a person's absence are completely frank with an investigator. Their memory may be imperfect or they may attempt to protect some other member of the family from involvement, either direct or indirect.

Local hospitals should also be checked just in case the missing person has either attended outpatients clinic or, even, been admitted.

The pulling together of data for the development of leads should be the primary responsibility of a single officer. That officer should in addition co-ordinate the supporting activities of other officers and units as necessary in the case of a comprehensive police investigation. This consideration touches closely on the issue of file accountability. If responsibility for a missing person inquiry is shifted around the clock, strategic coordination will inevitably fail. Thus, procedures become necessary to ensure that inquiries are not delayed while accountable officers are off duty.

Involuntary

As stated above, involuntary cases of missing persons fundamentally divide into those resulting from parental abduction and others. It is this 'other' category that is serious because it includes abductions by mentally disturbed persons - women who steal babies - and people who commit crimes against other people, whether or not they be mentally disturbed. For example, serial and lust killers pick up hitchhikers and kill them. Until their bodies are found, victims are most likely to be classified as missing persons. Only when the remains are found can the subject be classified as a victim of a crime rather than merely missing.

Parental Abductions

This category appears to have increased rapidly in western countries over the last decade. No doubt it is, in part, a reflection of the greater number of divorces.

It is sometimes said police do not take very great interest in parental abductions, regarding them as family disputes best left to the participants to resolve. Parental abductions are abductions of an offspring by a non-custodial parent or retention of a child subsequent to a court approved visit. Sometimes, an actual abduction can be brutal to the child as well as to the custodial parent. In any case, an abducted child is almost invariably placed at risk, often subjected to the life of a fugitive, sometimes removed from his/her own culture and, even placed in circumstances of severe neglect.

In Australia, the **Family Law Act 1975** makes parental abductions an offence. Such abductions, although very few in number, are almost always accompanied by great emotion on the part of the aggrieved parent; investigators responding to such complaints need to exercise great care in ensuring the accuracy of information provided by complainants. In particular, an investigator attending such a complaint needs to ascertain

carefully if in fact an offence has been committed. A knowledge of relevant statutes and the various court orders issuable in relation thereto is essential. Verification of custody orders needs to be done through the Registry of the Family Law Court which made the custody order in question.

Some parental abductions occur prior to the granting of custody orders, even though court action may have commenced. In such circumstances it is possible a complainant may believe that a provisional order is in effect when, in fact, it is not. Thus, in such cases investigators must ensure the accuracy of their facts and be quite clear as to whether an abduction has occurred. Most police agencies have procedures governing such cases. The Australian Federal Police maintains a Family Law Squad to undertake such inquiries (see local capital city telephone directories for contact numbers).

Wherever possible an alleged abductor parent should be interviewed as well as the complainant parent. It is not uncommon for abducting parents to decamp with their child and when their destination is overseas, interviewing can become a difficult proposition. In such cases liaison with the Family Court and Department of Foreign Affairs is indicated.

Whatever the circumstances, until such time as an abductor parent is interviewed, the child sighted and investigators satisfied he/she is not at risk, the child should be considered missing and treated as such.

The Federal Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs is an important contact point if it is thought possible a parent has gone overseas with his/her children. Each State Police Force has a nominated officer responsible for liaising with the Department who should be contacted in such cases.

Abductions

Persons, mostly children, may be abducted. Abductors may be known or unknown to the victim or the victim's parents. It is important for investigators to ascertain the true status of a victim as soon as possible. For example, a child may run away or be abducted from his/her home or other place of residence, or a child may run away and be abducted whilst a runaway.

Investigators are faced with two concurrent problems with an abduction. Firstly, the safe return of the abductee. Secondly, the compilation of evidence with which to prosecute the offender. This latter point is obviously more pertinent to law enforcement officers than private sector investigators.

CHAPTER SIX

JUVENILES ON THE RUN: THE CONSEQUENCES

As suggested in previous chapters, juveniles make up roughly 70 per cent of the estimated missing person population. They attract considerably more attention when missing because of their age and presumed vulnerability. Young children (of pre-school age) may be missing for several hours in crowded shopping malls or at social and sporting activities. Older children (in their teens) may be classified as missing when they fail to return home at an appointed hour. Parents or guardians, not unreasonably, are quick to notify the authorities when the whereabouts of their children are unknown. Such situations call for immediate and localised detection methods, similar to those previously discussed.

However, there is a point at which a missing child becomes a runaway child. While the transition is difficult to determine and somewhat arbitrary, a category defined as 'runaways' is useful in devising prevention and detection strategies. There are differences between children who are missing and those who have run away and detailing the characteristics of runaways is necessary if we are to understand their motives and behaviours and therefore deal with this group of missing persons.

Leaving aside the category of missing children, this Chapter concentrates on young runaways. Empirical data on runaway children and their activities are presented. These data relate more to the nature of the youthful runaway than to the policing and support services offered to them. It is believed that an understanding of runaways and their activities is essential if conclusions are to be drawn about primary prevention and crime prevention.

Research

Many of these data are drawn from two studies conducted in 1982 and 1985 by Robyn Lincoln and Paul Wilson. The field research was undertaken from the University of Queensland and was funded by the Criminology Research Council. The researchers were concerned about the seemingly large numbers of kids on the streets, according to many newspaper reports. Children, who in a relatively affluent industrial country, were forced to sleep in abandoned cars and under railway bridges. The researchers were also concerned because of the reported increase in levels of crime committed by and against young persons.

The first study was a survey of 120 juveniles in Queensland (Brisbane and the Gold Coast) and Western Australia (Metropolitan Perth). These locations were selected because it was suggested in media reports that many young people were drawn to these centres, seeking work, sunshine and fun. Young people were contacted through service agencies such as the Community Youth Support Scheme (CYSS) centres and government-funded hostels. Each was given a pro forma questionnaire and the quantitative and qualitative results were analysed.

As a result of this first study, many issues were raised about the crimes committed by or against young people on the run. There were many unexpected and quite disturbing findings, particularly on drug taking, levels of property crimes, incidences of suicide and cases of violence against the young people interviewed. Such variables were not part of the initial study and so a second research program was developed. This, too, was funded by the Criminology Research Council. It adopted a purely qualitative approach and collected detailed case studies of thirty-six 'street kids' (see Wilson and Arnold, 1986). Extensive information was gathered on each participant and group discussions were held to isolate themes and seek solutions.

Based on both these studies and other work done in Australia and overseas, the following presents the characteristics of, and a typology of, runaway children as pre-requisites to discussing their behaviours and the prevention methods suggested.

Characteristics of Runaways

Few empirical studies of the activities of runaway children have been undertaken to date. As stated in Chapter Five, it is commonly accepted that the majority of runaway juveniles return home of their own accord within three days of being reported missing. Even if this assumption is correct, a large number of juveniles is still at large for periods in excess of three days in the more populated States. There is also the unknown number of runaways, the chronic and the unwanted, who are not reported to police as missing. These children are at large (and at risk) for varying periods ranging from four days to never returning home. Unfortunately, we do not have information concerning the periods of absence of those juveniles reported missing.

If one assumes that the longer the period of absence the tougher it is for a runaway to survive, it follows, for instance, that the longer the period of absence the more crime a runaway will commit. The point is important because if it is generally valid the necessity for early tracing and return and, more importantly, the necessity for preventing absences in the first place, are then predicated on crime prevention grounds. The first study indicates that a large proportion of long term and repeat runaways does come into contact with the juvenile justice system, although not always for reasons of criminality.

Many of the runaways interviewed in the course of the study had left home two or three times and had stayed away for more than a year in the course of their most recent absence. Only one-third had not had contact in one form or another with police in the course of their absences. One-third had been charged with committing serious crimes and/or multiple offences while at

large. In addition, a further 14 per cent claimed to have been charged with minor crimes, such as shoplifting. Some 11 per cent were charged with status offences associated with their running away, such as being in need of care and protection.

Overall, 52 per cent of the runaways interviewed had been subjected to juvenile court proceedings and 28 per cent had been placed in juvenile institutions at one time or another. These gross percentages undoubtedly understate the amount of crime committed by runaways. For example, 63 per cent of those interviewed admitted to having used illegal drugs and at least 20 per cent could have been classified as having a hard drug addiction. Although some of those taking drugs had been apprehended by authorities, many had not. We can only conjecture the amount of crime committed by the latter group in order to obtain the funds necessary to purchase drugs.

To compound the problem, many juveniles who are charged and who are sentenced to an institution promptly abscond. They are then apprehended by police and are again placed within the juvenile justice system and the cycle starts all over again. The consequences of being caught up in the juvenile justice system are well documented - institutionalisation, stigmatisation, entry into the criminal sub-culture and so on. Such consequences have obvious implications for the later adult life of longer term runaway juveniles and inevitably result in a proportion becoming career criminals.

Between one-third and one-half of runaways admitted to committing crimes in order to survive on the streets. This nexus between juvenile missing persons and crime is of the utmost importance to crime prevention and requires intensive high focus research.

Equally important is the effect of their lifestyle on the health and welfare of runaways. Heroin addiction was not uncommon among those runaways interviewed and the abuse of 'gutter' drugs (those available without prescription or found in household medicine

cabinets and mixed as cocktails) was common. About 20 per cent of the sample regularly abused drugs. Reasons for abuse are numerous but one factor that figures prominently was the need for relief from the pressure of life on the streets and in squats. The nutrition of abusers inevitably suffers and the physical appearance of many strongly indicated they were in poor health.

The mere process of surviving on the streets and in squats exacts its own physical toll. Bashings occur occasionally and, more frequently, infections, road accidents and illnesses result in hospitalisation. The risks of Hepatitis B and AIDS in such circumstances are obvious. About one-quarter of runaways interviewed, of both genders, had experience of prostitution and some were firmly committed to this practice. The incidence of sexually transmitted diseases among long-term runaways is not known but given the number engaging in prostitution the proportions must be considerable.

Typology of Runaways

While running away is a common juvenile behaviour in most States, the consequences of such behaviour can all too easily be disastrous, for both the individual and the community.

Reasons why juveniles run away from home are numerous: disturbed and poorly adjusted children being dissatisfied with home life by reason of their own deficiencies; pressure from friends; problems outside the home such as poor results at school; being rejected by one's family; wanting a more stimulating lifestyle; problems with parents such as excessive discipline, sexual molestation or violence. The study found there were four broad categories of runaways, each with distinct characteristics but all overlapping and not exclusive: (1) adventure seekers, (2) refugees, (3) escapees, and (4) problem solvers.

Adventure seekers are those juveniles who are basically bored with home life. They seek stimulation and excitement in places they see as being exotic. They may have other problems as well but their primary motivation in leaving home is a desire for independence and personal identity.

In the sample studied adventure seekers were mostly male (62 per cent), who left home between the ages of thirteen and fifteen years (69 per cent). Middle class youths predominated in this group. Some 38 per cent described their communication with their families as 'good' and generally there was little resentment evident. Many (42 per cent) ran away only once with the intention of remaining permanently absent from the home (50 per cent).

Although seeking a more exciting and satisfying lifestyle, adventure seekers often did not find it and found themselves forced into a delinquent sub-culture, committing criminal acts and sometimes ending up in a juvenile institution. Some 46 per cent had appeared before a juvenile court.

Refugees are young persons who consider they can no longer endure what they perceive as major problems in their families. These problems pressure adolescents at a time when they are going through emotional and troubled times associated with the move from childhood. Often refugees mentioned alcoholism and/or violence in the family as a major reason for their leaving home. But, the more acute and immediate life changes in a family, such as divorce, death or remarriage, equally precipitated departure. Often, too, runaway episodes began as a result of a number of traumatic events that occurred over a period of years, climaxing in a change in family composition.

Refugees were mostly aged fourteen or fifteen years at the time of leaving home (78 per cent) and many (40 per cent) stayed away from home for three years or more. Until well into their adult lives they tended to utilise private refuges and agencies

dedicated for use by youthful runaways. Refugees were more likely than adventure seekers to refer to violence in the family (49 per cent) and poor communication with family members (82 per cent). Upon running away, jobs were difficult to obtain (53 per cent) and 26 per cent resort to criminal means in order to survive. A massive 53 per cent of refugees had been before a court and 21 per cent of refugees admitted to having taken drugs as an escape mechanism from the punishing life they found on the street.

Escapees comprise absconders from juvenile institutions. They have run away from an institution rather than a family. Another point of distinction from refugees is that they tend to prefer a stimulating lifestyle, similar to adventure seekers. As a group they were familiar with institutions from an early age and tended to see incarceration as inevitable. They have little or no contact with their natural parents and find it difficult to relate to others in an emotionally mature manner.

In the sample studied, escapees were mostly male and between the ages of sixteen and eighteen years. A large proportion (42 per cent) had first left home when they were six to nine years old. They often lived with foster parents (50 per cent), and a significant proportion had widowed parents (18 per cent). Escapees had a history of high family mobility (33 per cent). At least half went interstate when they first ran away and stayed away for over a year (67 per cent). Escapees had long histories of running away as 58 per cent had absconded six or more times. They made extensive use of refuges (67 per cent) and were often resentful of their families and/or foster parents.

A majority (67 per cent) of refugees had been involved with crime. Fifty-eight per cent had been charged with relatively serious criminal offences during the time they were last away from home or an institution and 83 per cent had been through the juvenile court system.

Problem solvers are young persons who run away from home as a solution to an immediate personal crisis. The act of running away tends to be spontaneous following an argument or, perhaps, a brush with authority. Unlike refugees who have long histories of family turmoil, problem solvers tend to leave home after a single traumatic event. Mostly, they come from comfortable backgrounds in which family interaction is reasonable, but honest and caring communication between child and parent is deficient. Typically, the problem solver has difficulty in discussing his/her problems with his/her parents. The sorts of problems found to inhibit a problem solver's communication with his/her parents included pregnancies, relationship breakups and arrests for shoplifting. Actual problems precipitating their departure from home involved school (16 per cent), friends (13 per cent), pregnancy or major health problem (13 per cent) and unemployment (39 per cent).

Problem solvers were found to be mostly female (58 per cent) and to have first left home when fifteen years old (45 per cent). Most came from stable family backgrounds although shortage of money was recognised as a problem in 32 per cent of cases. Indeed, their parents' concern with shortage of money was seen as a reason for not burdening them with their offsprings' problems.

About one-half of problem solvers leave home only once, remain absent for relatively short periods of time and do not leave their State. Sixty-eight per cent had returned home and were generally well received. Only 19 per cent reported having resorted to crime, 13 per cent having been placed in an institution. This category was noticeable for the fact that a large proportion of juveniles so classified were charged with status offences (42 per cent), despite their relatively low association with crime. About one-third had been returned home by police or other officials.

This typology has implications for crime detection and prevention strategies that should be adopted when dealing with missing

children or runaways. The typology highlights the complexities of the runaway group and points to some similarities. But what of the runaways who take to the streets with the prospect of never returning home?

Children Who Are Not Missed

The second study conducted by Wilson and Lincoln examined these 'gross' characteristics in more detail by isolating the behavioural characteristics of runaways. In this study runaways became nominally 'street kids' because they were those who had been away from home for extended periods and were 'known' to have been involved in one or more of six types of criminal behaviour: alcohol abuse; drug abuse; female prostitution; male prostitution; property crime; and suicidal activities. Alcohol was isolated as different from other drug abuse because its manifestations were different and the consequences of it for those young people on the streets varied. Prostitution was examined from the perspective of males and females separately because it was discovered in the initial study that the consequences were different.

The research was designed to interview, observe and allow participation with thirty-six young people who identified themselves as belonging primarily to one of the six groups. In the case of suicide, case histories from those who had thought about it was not sufficient. The research concentrated on the most serious indicators of 'alienation' to uncover antecedents, processes and outcomes of the behaviours.

The subjects were treated as researchers in seeking other participants, describing and observing social settings and analysing their own and the data of others. All subjects were from Sydney or Brisbane and were aged from fourteen to eighteen years. Most were of Australian origin, including an Aboriginal female and there was equal representation of genders.

Alcohol

Most indicators point to a reduction in the average age of young people who are classified as dependent on alcohol. Alcohol is an accepted part of mature social life. The study of runaways provided additional information on the consumption of alcohol. Those who self-selected to the 'alcohol' category in the second study were also taking other drugs. Most started their drinking from an early age (around ten years). The participants defined the phases they went through in their progression to alcohol dependence. Selection of alcohol as a primary drug of choice was based largely on ease of supply or availability.

This group considered their criminal activity to be fairly minor - truancy, stealing and so on. They recognised that their alcohol dependence, while underage, was bringing them into contact with the juvenile justice system and they believed that this was the only reason they were seen as offenders.

The solutions suggested by this group centred on a thesis of decriminalisation of underage drinking so as to avoid the cycle of offending and institutionalisation.

Drug Abuse

This self-identified group blamed external causes for their addiction. They were, they said, taking drugs because of the pressures of their lifestyles and their living environments. They discounted a progression theory of drug taking, that is moving from softer to harder drugs - they all just used whatever was available in their social milieu and what was affordable.

This group in particular felt that if other aspects of their lives were 'fixed' then they would not be users. There were suggestions that drug taking had image appeal either because it was glamorous or because of peer pressure. But largely they were taking drugs to cope with lack of work, lack of shelter,

abuse by family or to assist in overcoming past problems: court convictions, personal tragedies and so on.

The participants' solutions therefore centred on alleviation of what they felt were the causes of their drug use. They advocated shelters or accommodation run by young people, training schemes for improved employment opportunities.

Male Prostitution

For young men, prostitution was a matter of survival. It is not as much a 'total lifestyle' as it becomes for girls who take up this profession. Male prostitution has always been evident but in recent years it appears to have become more obvious or open. Its higher profile may be just that, or the numbers involved may be increasing.

Economic need is the primary motivation for boys becoming involved in prostitution. While there is also an attraction to males who wish to be part of the homosexual community, financial circumstances are of prime importance. Others are attracted to prostitution as a means of exploring and experimenting with their sexuality. There is, however, considerably more public sympathy for boys who engage in prostitution than for girls. Stigma and condemnation is less than for females and public consequences are usually less severe because of the relative status of males.

The study (see Wilson and Arnold, 1986) found three types engaged in male prostitution: transients, regulars and workers. The typology was largely based on frequency of engaging in prostitute transactions. These youths suggested that they were not harmed by their involvement and were free to find other work whenever they wished. While they all did not necessarily enjoy their work or the clients they were very pragmatic, almost mercenary, in their attitude to their work.

Female Prostitution

For young girls the decision to engage in prostitution was less in their hands than for males. Economic factors were the precipitators but there was also an overriding need for shelter and structure. Once involved in prostitution, the girls were under more of a commitment to continue than for males. This was partly because there appeared to be greater reliance on drugs by females compared with males.

The consequences of female prostitution were also more severe than that for males. They were more likely to be apprehended by police and be processed through the juvenile justice system. Daily life for them was also more regulated - by agencies, brothels and others working in the area. The background and profiles of girls involved in prostitution were more homogeneous than for those of males.

Participants in the study expressed concern over the level of violence they were subjected to; the lack of viable alternatives for them in trying to survive on the streets; the severe regulation under which they worked, from those they worked for and those in juvenile justice.

Suicide

Suicidal activity was isolated as a separate category because of seemingly increasing community concern over this self-destructive act. Many of the suicide attempts, however, took place while the participants were at home, not classed as 'runaways'.

The most significant factor to emerge from this part of the study (see Wilson and Arnold, 1986) was that a direct act of suicidal intention was merely a culmination of all the other behaviours discussed. Conflict in the home was most often cited as the precipitator of a suicidal act, but the causes were also linked with alcohol and drug abuse.

Serious Crime

Other categories of behaviour can be seen less in a criminal or offending sense. For they range from the statutory - an offence to be drinking because of age - to those of economic survival - involvement in prostitution - to those centred on the self - suicidal acts. Participants in the 'serious crime' group were 'offenders' regardless of age or personal circumstance. They were committing violence on others.

Apart from the general description, useful in itself, the most significant finding from this group for a study of missing persons was that they felt subsumed by a culture of violence. By this is meant that if they were not the ones committing the offences then it would be them who would end up as victims.

Conclusions

The above data, drawn from two major studies, are largely descriptive. The studies did not involve analyses of policing methods, reporting avenues, activities of juvenile courts, nor sentencing options and servicing agencies. The studies too, focused on runaway and alienated youth as opposed to missing children. However prescriptions can be drawn from such qualitative information about children who are missing.

The first major problem for missing youth is that of reporting. As suggested at the beginning of this Chapter, parents and guardians are usually over anxious to report children to police or other agencies. But as can also be seen from the descriptions of runaway and alienated youth, this is not always the case. Many of the youthful throwaways are in fact escaping from their homes. They will never be reported as missing and so must be isolated from those who are.

With missing children - the young who are 'mislaid' or those older who are absent for brief periods - it is imperative that

detection procedures are fast and efficient. In the litany of cases that have been presented above, it is clear that youthful missing persons can be subject to violence soon after their disappearance. To avoid physical danger to those missing, action must be quick and usually localised.

However for those who are 'runaways' the first problem is lack of knowledge that they are indeed out on the streets. The categories of runaways described in this chapter can be further divided into a push-pull dichotomy. There are those, broadly speaking, who are attracted to life on the streets, a sense of freedom and adventure which pulls them from the security of their homes. The others are 'pushed' out by the very circumstances they are enduring in their home lives. They feel they cannot return. Many of these cannot and should not be returned home, once located (Joy, 1986) for the home situations are often more violent or otherwise damaging than those they would encounter on the streets.

Welfare agencies are becoming attuned to these problems and many children are now given the option of whether they return home or not. If they are not returned home, however, there is the problem that they immediately become part of the juvenile justice system and are processed as 'offenders'. For those under eighteen, in legislation, the situation remains that welfare is inextricably linked to prosecution. Young people commit offences by virtue of their age - as status offenders. Recognition of the independent status of juveniles is a first step in overcoming some problems of life on the streets.

For youth who are missing, intentionally or otherwise, there must be policy considerations for their economic survival. Many young people are forced to offend because of lack of opportunities to obtain a livelihood in any other way.

Youth services currently available for homeless children are inadequate because they do not involve young participants in the

planning and running of the schemes. Youth are often escaping rules and regulations in their homes or institutional settings and therefore will not accept refuge in a shelter that is bound by rules and regulations. The shortage of any suitable accommodation must also be addressed. Keeping young people off the street is the first step in allowing them to escape the net of the juvenile justice system and the crime sub-culture.

It is important that any policies or programs designed to either reduce the number of runaways or cater to their needs should take into account the varied composition of the runaway population. While there are some matters that are common to most juvenile runaways, there are others with more specific categories possessing specific needs. Each category has distinct motives for running away and has definite strategies for adapting to street life. Preventive and welfare personnel working with such young people must therefore have specific solutions and specific programs for each category of runaways.

PART III
FOR PARENTS AND OTHERS

CHAPTER SEVEN

VOLUNTEER, PRIVATE, SUPPORT AGENCIES, AND
OTHER AVENUES OF ASSISTANCE

The tracing of missing persons and others with whom contact is desired by third parties is not the sole function of police and other public sector agencies. A number of international and locally based welfare agencies provide their services and, in some instances, have done so for many years. There are also private sector individuals and companies which undertake tracing inquiries on a fee for service basis.

Just as importantly, agencies exist which can either directly provide services themselves or refer inquirers to appropriate and expert counselling services. A number of major agencies operating in these fields are briefly profiled below. However, readers requiring a reference list of support resources in each State are referred to in the Resource Director at the end of this volume.

International Red Cross

The International Red Cross is represented in Australia by the Australian Red Cross Society. The Australian Red Cross Society has its national headquarters at 206 Clarendon Street, East Melbourne, Victoria, telephone (03) 4197533. In New Zealand, the International Red Cross Society is represented by the New Zealand Red Cross Society at 14 Hill Street, Wellington North, telephone (4) 723750. The Wellington branch of the Society is located at 7 Donald McLean Street, Wellington South, telephone (4) 899104. The Australian Red Cross Society has divisional offices in each State. Addresses of these offices are also shown in the directory of Tracing and Support Agencies at Chapter Ten.

The Australian Red Cross Tracing Service is part of an international network which has its legal foundation in the Geneva Conventions which include thirty-six Articles relating to tracing tasks. Additional Protocol 1 (1977) specifically refers to the Tracing Agency.

The Red Cross Tracing Service is designed to bring together families dispersed as the result of war, civil conflict or natural disaster (earthquake, bushfire, etc). Welfare tracing enquiries are also accepted but legal matters are not.

A message service is operated by the Red Cross Society when complete breakdowns in communication occur, usually, as a result of conflict. Either the International Committee of the Red Cross or the National Society concerned accepts and delivers messages. Such messages are accepted from family members only, are limited to approximately twenty-five words, and must only contain family news; otherwise they may not be delivered. Breaches of this rule could place the service in jeopardy.

The Red Cross Tracing Service in Australia has a National Headquarters and a Tracing Department in each of its State Divisional offices. Requests for tracing are received from the International Committee of the Red Cross - Geneva, National Societies, Australian Red Cross Society State offices and directly. National Headquarters acts as a distributing centre for all overseas and interstate requests.

Enquiries are not normally accepted on behalf of friends. Nor is it usual for enquiries to be accepted where natural parents or children are sought. Red Cross does not have the facilities to undertake the counselling which is usually required in such cases and there are other organisations which handle that type of inquiry. However, when there are extraordinary compassionate reasons for communications of this kind exceptions are sometimes made.

Divisional offices make use of electoral rolls, telephone directories, post office directories, ethnic community groups as well as visiting homes in order to make contacts. They also, on occasion, liaise with government departments, provided departments forward communications without revealing the location of subjects. The publishing of subjects' names in the media, with the approval of inquirers, is undertaken as a last resort. Locations of traced subjects are not revealed to inquirers without the permission of those subjects.

The Red Cross Tracing Service is free and all information in trace files is strictly confidential.

The Australian Red Cross Society is active in the Natural Registration Inquiry System (NRIS) which is activated at the request of state authorities in the event of a major natural disaster in Australia.

Since the Ash Wednesday fires in Victoria and South Australia in 1983, NRIS procedures have been reviewed and training sessions conducted throughout Australia in conjunction with authorities responsible for the various state disaster plans.

Salvation Army

The Salvation Army has operated a Missing Person's Bureau since 1885 when Mrs Bramwell Booth founded an Emergency Bureau. Commencing in England, the service spread around the world. The service is well regarded and provides an important adjunct to government funded agencies.

Currently, the network extends to eighty-nine countries and its aim is the reconciliation of family members. There are five areas of missing persons inquiries in which the Army does not become involved:

- * children under eighteen years, police being better suited to this role;
- * adoption inquiries, state government agencies being better equipped for this role;
- * legal matters, lawyers are better suited to such matters;
- * de facto relations, an exceedingly difficult area. When de facto relations break down, partners often marry others and the Army is mindful that in endeavouring to link a child with a natural parent a current marriage may be upset. Legal proof of paternity is often lacking in such cases;
- * missing friends, there are insufficient resources to attempt the task.

The Salvation Army's Missing Persons Bureau is, however, particularly concerned with:

- * missing relatives, the reuniting and reconciliation of family members;
- * crisis contacts, reaching relatives at times of special need or medical emergency;
- * international service, restoring relationships across the world.

In Sydney, the Salvation Army's address is 25 Cooper Street, Surry Hills. In Melbourne, the address is 69 Bourke Street, Melbourne.

Clients who seek help from the Missing Person's Bureau are frequently affected by one or more of the following:

- * broken homes
- * immigration
- * job transfers
- * separation through travel
- * children who were reared in institutions
- * disappearances

- * periods spent in psychiatric hospitals
- * financial problems
- * imprisonment
- * desertion.

The Salvation Army in Australia is divided in two areas for administrative purposes:

- * Southern Territory - Victoria, South Australia, West Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory;
- * Eastern Territory - New South Wales, Queensland, Australian Capital Territory, Papua New Guinea.

Both Territories have missing persons bureaus (complete with a Secretary) in each State. All inquiries to or from a Territory are controlled through the appropriate Director. Inquiries originating and concluding within a State are processed exclusively within that State without Territory involvement.

Cases handled often involve loss of family contacts over long periods. Successful conclusions may take a long time to achieve, sometimes years. When a case is closed unsuccessfully it may be reactivated should fresh information be forthcoming.

Periods of time during which family contacts are broken can be considerable. In the Southern Territory the longest known parting was sixty-two years. In that case a brother and two sisters were reunited.

The usual means of initiating an inquiry is for an inquirer to complete an inquiry request. From the information provided, a determination is made whether to accept the request and, if favourable, the point at which inquiries should commence.

In the course of dealing with missing person inquiries Salvation

Army personnel spend considerable time counselling those who are distraught at the absence of loved ones.

During calendar year 1986, some 1,385 traces were undertaken throughout Australia by Salvation Army officers.

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children is an American organisation based at 1835 K Street NW (Suite 600), Washington, DC 20006. The Center serves as a clearing house of information on missing or exploited children; provides technical assistance to citizens and law enforcement agencies; offers training programs to schools and law enforcement; distributes photographs and descriptions of missing children nationwide; and provides information and advice on effective State legislation to ensure the safety and protection of children.

The Center was established in April 1984 by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention as an independent agency, although its legal mandate was provided later that year in the **Missing Children's Assistance Act 1984**.

The reason for including the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children here is that children from Australia might either be taken to the United States by a non-custodial parent or abducted while in that country. Australian parents have in the past experienced considerable difficulty in identifying and contacting a relevant organisation in North America. Now, with the establishment of the National Center, sound advice can be quickly gained. Fifteen toll free hotlines cover the USA and Canada. The telephone number is 1-800-843-5678.

NCMEC produces a range of written materials free of charge to public and professionals. These materials are directed to the

American experience and most have limited application elsewhere although some are of considerable utility across national boundaries. A list of these publications is provided at Annex B.

Parents of Missing Children (POMC)

Parents of Missing Children Inc, formed in Melbourne in 1983, comprises a group of concerned people who voluntarily support parents traumatised by their child's disappearance. The organisation's aims are to:

- * provide immediate and long-term emotional and practical support to parents of missing or runaway children;
- * encourage parents to utilise the services of police, government agencies and other bodies;
- * increase public awareness to missing and runaway children as a community concern;
- * encourage parents to recognise the warning signs of pre-runaway;
- * maintain a strong parental voice amongst government bodies and agencies concerned with missing and runaway children.

A twenty-four hour crisis telephone service is maintained (03) 7621592. Mail should be addressed to Ms Jill Rietmeyer, Parents of Missing Children Inc, PO Box 15, The Basin, Victoria 3154.

POMC utilises public meetings, seminars and other forms of publicity to generate greater public awareness of the issue.

POMC is the only support group dedicated to assisting parents of missing children. As such its counsellors have acquired considerable skill in helping clients. It is noteworthy that counsellors have all been parents of missing children at one time or another.

Upon request traumatised parents of missing children are visited by counsellors. When parents contact the POMC crisis telephone number (as above) they are advised inter alia:

- * what information police will require;
- * how to optimise child/family reconciliation prospects, including child placement during reconciliation process;
- * how to prepare for separation;
- * how to prepare for family counselling;
- * what to do about the home in preparation for their child's return;
- * what to do when a child returns from either a short or lengthy absence.

Lifeline

Lifeline's postal headquarters is PO Box 1330, Wollongong, New South Wales, 2500. Telephone (042) 292777.

Lifeline, together with associated bodies in Western Australia, Tasmania and Northern Territory, is represented in all jurisdictions in Australia. It is primarily a telephone counselling service, although in many centres face to face counselling is also available. Grief associated with missing relatives, spouses and offspring can be acute and Lifeline is an appropriate support agency for persons experiencing such grief. Telephone numbers are shown in the Resource Directory at Chapter Ten and intending callers should select the telephone number closest to their home.

Lifeline was founded within the context of the then Central Methodist Mission, Sydney, in 1963. It continues to affirm its origins and basis within the Christian Church. From its earliest days Lifeline has been identified as having a Christian rather than a denominational basis.

Central to Lifeline's work is its telephone counselling service, available twenty-four hours a day, every day. This service enables people from whatever background with any kind of problem to call at any time and talk with trained, caring volunteer counsellors. These volunteers are the heart of the Lifeline service, enabling the ministry of the organisation to exist and be effective. Telephone counsellors seek to assist those who call to develop their own resources rather than offer glib answers.

There are occasions when on-the-spot help is necessary. Mobile teams are prepared to attend emergencies at most Lifeline centres. Every Lifeline centre has some method of responding to emergency situations, either from its own resources or by arrangement with other community groups.

Private Inquiry Agents

Private investigators are located in all States and Territories and can be found in Telecom's Yellow Pages Directory under the heading 'Investigators'. Private investigators are subject to the relevant legislation existing in each State. However, apart from matters of registration and licencing, supervision of such companies and operatives is extremely limited. Some private investigators belong to overseas professional bodies and are notionally subject to the ethical codes of such bodies but the practical implications of such membership is zero. As with any other area of public endeavour, there are good and indifferent private investigators. Thus, should you choose to employ a private investigator to trace a missing person, you are best advised to employ one who is well recommended by earlier clients.

The employment of private operatives is clearly better suited to some forms of missing persons inquiries, such as debtor location. Cases in which there is a possibility of a subject being physically lost are clearly better suited to police, who possess

the personnel resources for such operations. But, if the need for privacy is pressing, especially where a person has been missing for some time and the possibility of the subject being lost has expired (and, you have the money) a private investigator may be of use. It is impossible to estimate tracing success rates achieved by private agencies and it is in part due to the lack of information that one should be careful to employ only those investigators who are recommended by earlier clients or other knowledgeable parties.

Media

Radio messages concerning missing persons (or persons needed to be contacted urgently) are normally confined to those messages approved by police and are broadcast at their request. Commercial radio stations do not normally accept paid messages of the missing persons type due in part to problems of verification and potential for embarrassment.

Newspapers are, however, regularly used as a relatively cheap and effective method of publicising messages for missing persons, whether they be beneficiaries or decamping spouses. Persons wishing to use a newspaper for such a purpose need to consider how far their message will need to travel. If it is thought a missing husband, for example, is living fairly close to home, a local newspaper is the obvious choice. Should one wish to cover the entire State, then the capital city's major morning daily is the best chance. If one wishes, on the other hand, to cover out of State areas you might consider paying for space in the major morning daily of other States or, perhaps, to buy space in the Australian which is distributed in all States although it has a smaller readership than capital city dailies. One can make a selections based on such considerations.

Police department policies regarding use of media vary. Certainly, in Victoria, reporters of missing persons are asked to approve publicity at police discretion. On occasion, media treatment

resulting from such approvals has caused deep distress to families unaware that a particular TV station, for example, is to show a program including reference (not always flattering) to one's loved ones. Police departments need to be aware of this potential for anguish and guard as best they can against such eventualities.

In recent times, newspapers and other periodicals in Britain have taken an interest in missing persons and related messages. Some are said to have a high success rate. The only similar regular column in Australia is the missing friends column in the Salvation Army's publication, The War Cry. It is surprising that some capital city newspaper editors have not considered such an initiative.

Newspaper journalists are always alert for a good story and one might consider contacting a journalist with a view to interesting him/her personally. If successful a featured article may result and this would obviously be seen by far more people than would a classified entry. Of course, such an approach would need to possess elements of particular interest, sufficient to warrant such an article. This approach has also been used with country radio stations. Advice available to the authors suggests both country radio and press are alert to interesting affairs and can be very helpful, although the potential for embarrassment always exists.

Operation 'Home Free'

Operation 'Home Free' is conducted by the Greyhound Bus Company. Under this scheme runaway juveniles aged eighteen years and under who wish to return home are required to report to police at their current location. To qualify, juveniles wishing to take advantage of the scheme must have been reported to police as a missing person. Police approached in this way check with police nearest the runaways parents; parents are contacted and it is confirmed if they wish their offspring's return. Subject to

completing the required pro forma by police the Greyhound bus depot manager nearest the reported runaway then issues him/her with a free ticket to the nearest bus halt to his/her home. The runaway is escorted to the bus by a police officer. Police are also required to meet the bus at the runaway's destination.

This service commenced Australia-wide on 12 January 1988 and is a replica of the successful Operation 'Home Free' conducted by Trailways/Greyhound in the United States of America since 1984.

It is not unusual for parents of runaway or otherwise missing children to be unable to find their fares home. Thus, this initiative is especially beneficial. Another, and somewhat similar, innovation in the United States was introduced by Holiday Inns. Under that scheme, if it is necessary for whatever reason for parents to travel in order to take care/custody of their missing children, the nearest Holiday Inn hotel provides parents and offspring with a night's free accommodation. Perhaps it will not be long before a hotel chain operating throughout Australia undertakes a similar scheme.

Just as some churches have taken a lead in providing services to some categories of missing persons and their families, such as Lifeline and 'message home' schemes (see Resource Directory), it is possible other local and state based companies and organisations might usefully contribute to the relief of suffering and lack of communication affecting missing persons and their loved one.

New South Wales Family and Community Services (FACS) Procedures for Young People Under Sixteen Years of Age Absent from Home

The New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services accepts certain responsibilities for persons under the age of

sixteen years who are absent from home. Departmental aims in this respect are:

- * to protect young persons from serious abuse or neglect;
- * to assist young persons to voluntarily return home in the shortest reasonable time;
- * to effect reconciliation between missing youth and their families regardless of a youngster's return home;
- * to ensure that during the period of a young person's absence from home he/she has safe accommodation (with the knowledge of his/her parents) which will cater to the subject's needs.

Refuges funded by FACS are obliged to notify the Department of details of youths accommodated by them. FACS then attempts reconciliation between child and parents unless there is suspicion of previous abuse.

Parents/guardians of missing children can contact FACS at their local branch. The Department is obliged to inform parents of the location and circumstance of an inquired for child provided no suspicion of abuse exists, if the Department has this information. The Department does not conduct searches for missing children. The head office address of New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services is PO Box 228, Parramatta, New South Wales, 2150. Telephone (02) 6898724.

CHAPTER EIGHT

REDUCING THE NUMBER OF YOUNG PERSONS LEAVING HOME

The greater proportion of persons reported to police as missing in all States are juveniles. This Chapter provides advice principally for the information of parents.

It is recognised different parents have different values, degrees of possessiveness and levels of concern. People living in safer suburbs are less likely to worry about their children being at large on the streets than those living in unsafe areas. Some children are naturally more cautious than others and thus require less concern for their safety. There are, quite possibly, broad differences of outlook with regard to such matters in different cities and states. But, whatever the location and whatever the perceived degree of risk, it must always be remembered that children are always vulnerable and constantly in need of a parent's guardianship. Thus, although the various categories of advice offered here will have different degrees of relevance to parents in different circumstances, they all possess some relevance to some parents somewhere.

Most schools these days have programs in which children are taught to be careful of strangers, but such programs are not an excuse for parents to avoid responsibility for the safety of their offspring. Parents need to be continually alert concerning their children's well-being. As many crimes against women and children are committed by those known to them, instruction should emphasise both strangers and acquaintances.

The items of advice offered below reflect the opinions of various individuals, police agencies and children culled from many sources. Most have been published in one form or another elsewhere and all appear to be reasonable, provided they are

intelligently interpreted. They are offered in an attempt to help concerned parents and others responsible for children but no guarantee can be given as to their efficacy; nor even if zealously adhered to, can it be guaranteed that your child will not become missing. However, common sense suggests the advice is reasonable and that if reasonable parents take reasonable precautions, the probability of your child, of whatever age, becoming missing will reduce. It is important to point out that considerable differences exist between circumstances in which a child runs away and in which a child becomes involuntarily absent from his/her home. It is in these differences that common sense in interpreting the following advice is particularly important.

Protective Behaviour

A great deal of advice relating to the reduction of children leaving home (and, by extension, reducing the problems that result from children leaving home) consists of DON'Ts. This Chapter is no exception and succeeding sections are full of statements such as 'do not let your children accept lollies from strangers' and 'do not let your children enter the cars of strangers'. Such advice is certainly necessary but, it is pleasant to be able to start this Chapter with a more positively expressed section, one that consists mostly of DO's.

'Protective behaviours' refers to a system of personal safety training capable of addressing many of the problems that influence persons to leave home. Protective behaviour as a public program commenced in America from the creative mind of Peg Flandreau-West. Sergeant Vicki Brown and her colleagues in the Community Policing Squad of Victoria Police have been strong advocates of the program in Australia. So successful have they been in promoting the program, it is now employed in all but two jurisdictions by police officers and others directly and indirectly associated with social welfare. The program is particularly effective in assisting children to develop their own

capacities to analyse and resolve problems, including the sorts of problems which conduce to their running away from home.

This account of 'Protective Behaviours' is based on a description provided by Sergeant Brown. The program addresses all forms of abuse, physical as well as psychological, and is predicated on the assumption that one can empower oneself - even in a hostile environment - by taking practical, physical and psychological steps with which to support oneself.

Protective Behaviour is based on two primary principles:

- * we all have a right to feel safe all the time;
- * there's nothing so awful we cannot talk with someone about it.

The program possesses three core concepts:

- * Safety - in which a child is encouraged to identify situations in which it is acceptable to feel scared, such as when riding a roller coaster or watching a spooky film.
- * Early Warning Signs - in which a child feels scared and trapped (as distinguished from the above) and the child's body alerts them to danger by going weak at the knees, shallow respiration, etc. - early warning signs to a child that all is not well with him/her. Signs vary from child to child and each must learn to recognise his/her own particular signs or combination of signs.
- * Networking - the ideas that victims can play a part in preventing their own abuse, and that they can obtain the help they need are stressed. Thus, a child is encouraged to identify others who can be of assistance when he/she feels genuinely unsafe. Those helpful others form a child's network.

Five strategies are used to maximise these three concepts:

- * Theme Reinforcement - the two themes: 'We all have a right to feel safe all the time' and 'Nothing is so awful that we cannot talk about it with someone', are repeated throughout the program and afterwards by use of posters. These two themes help to counter opposing messages directed toward a child.

- * Network Review - after a child has identified a personal network of trusted adults that can be called upon when feeling unsafe, the network must be periodically reviewed. For example, some members may have moved on or died, or perhaps a child may no longer feel safe with others. The program itself may alert a child to the fact that someone, perhaps a trusted relative, is abusing him/her.

- * One Step Removed - a tactic in which a person with a problem can approach another for advice. However, rather than reveal one's own problem - the initiator presents the problem as that of a friend or acquaintance. If reception is positive, the initiator may reveal his/her role but, if reception is negative, no harm has been done and someone else can be approached for advice.

- * Persistence Expectations - persons, especially children, seeking advice from others cannot assume a particular person will help them. One should be prepared to have to approach a number of persons before someone actually takes appropriate action.

- * Protective Interrupting - persons operating in support of protective behaviours should be prepared to interrupt others, including children, from being too explicit concerning their problems in public or in groups. Such disclosure can lead to gossip which in turn can be further destructive of the person

with the problem. In such instances, the one step removed approach should be encouraged.

Parents, teachers, refuge workers, welfare officers, police officers and others interested in learning more on the topic or wishing to undergo the program should contact Sergeant Vicki Brown (Victoria Police), telephone number (03) 3203635, in the first instance. In New South Wales Protective Behaviour is run by a management committee and the police representative can be contacted through the Community Relations Branch, telephone number (02) 3390277.

Prevention Advice

Most points concerning well-being and safety advice offered here have been culled from various publications designed to advise parents.

It is clearly preferable that abscondings from homes be prevented to the greatest extent possible. Principal means of prevention are for parents. to become aware of and implement preventive methods, and to notice warning signs and then behaving appropriately.

Do not assume your child will never be abducted or run away. Although the statistical probability is low, the possibility remains. During 1985, about 12,000 reports of juveniles missing from home were made to police throughout Australia.

In a general sense, the best defence against children running away from home is to ensure a happy, loving and stable family environment. Such a sentiment is easier to express than to achieve. But, regardless of the quality of family environment, there are things parents can do to minimise the likelihood of children running away or being abducted and, in the event of a child's absence, optimise the chances of an early trace.

Never leave young children alone; judgment necessarily has to be exercised in respect of older children whose capacity to look after themselves varies considerably. The younger the child the greater the level of supervision required is a reasonable rule of thumb.

Refrain from putting your child's name on the outside of his/her clothes or books. Instead, place your child's name on the inside of garments when necessary.

At the earliest age possible, make sure your child knows his/her full name, your full name, your full address and your telephone number. If you work, your child should know your work telephone number. If the numbers are too difficult to memorise, write them on a card that can be carried by the child. Clearly, this and similar items of advice are very much dependent upon your child's ability to understand and memorise the information provided him/her. Special measures need to be taken in respect of handicapped children, such as a card or inscribed bracelet. Some authorities suggest a family 'code word' be agreed upon and that no child is to go with a stranger unless the code word is given.

Teach your child how to use the telephone and to know the difference between local and distance calls. In particular, ensure he/she knows the necessary procedures for reversing calls and asking for operator assistance. Ensure, too, your child knows the emergency telephone number for police, ie. 000 in all States and Territories. As mentioned above it is essential children commit to memory their home telephone number. It is probably too much to expect them to memorise the telephone number of their local police station but, it is a good idea to teach them how to handle a telephone directory as early in their lives as possible.

If at all possible, constantly emphasise to your children that you love them very much. It is important that in the event of a

child running away from home, or being abducted by a non-custodial parent, he/she know a welcome awaits should they return.

Impress on your children they should have nothing to do with strangers other than in the normal course of events such as when purchasing goods in a store. The sorts of undesirable behaviours implied here include accepting lollies or other lures, accepting lifts in or on vehicles, and accepting money. Indeed, it is a sound practice for parents to forbid such behaviour even with friends of the family without the express permission of parents. In addition to forbidding your children to engage in such behaviours, it is sensible to instruct them to tell you if they have been invited to do so, such as when offered money or lollies by a stranger. Children should also be alerted to the possibility of strangers claiming to have their parents' permission to do certain things, such as give them a ride in their car or take them somewhere.

Inculcate in your children resistance to all strangers with the sole exception of police officers. Strangers are persons one either does not know or does not know well.

Impress on your children that they should never approach a car or even a stranger on foot in order to comply with a request for directions. A child should be advised to walk quickly away from any such situation and, if followed, to scream for help. Advice given by one US Police Department with a high reputation for its efficacy in preventing and tracing missing persons is that children in fear of being abducted should scream loudly and create a disturbance, shouting, 'You're not my mummy/daddy, I don't want to go with you'. Such advice is sound although it seems doubtful if younger children could remember the precise form of words in an emergency. If avoiding a possible molester or abductor a child should ideally walk or run as appropriate from the perceived source of danger toward other people. It is not a good idea, normally, to run and hide, according to advice

issued by Illinois State Police in an information brochure for parents.

Children playing or walking in isolated areas should be aware of the extreme undesirability of going near parked vehicles containing a person. Children must be taught not to enter any car or building on the invitation, direction or order of any unknown person. In similar vein, they should be taught never to hitchhike, a truly dangerous practice. Vacant areas and houses, should be avoided. Indeed, a general awareness of the potential for harm that exists in such places, including public toilets, should be developed in children. Similarly, an awareness of strangers loitering near school yards or following them should be fostered in children at an early age.

If actually grabbed by a molester or intending abductor, a child should be advised to scream, 'Help' as well as to kick and struggle, provided he/she does not place himself/herself at greater risk by so doing. Qualifications of this nature are almost impossible to convey to a very young child. Parents can probably communicate the message best by role playing.

Strangers are not the only threat to your child's safety. Instruct your children to inform you promptly should any adult at all, including relatives, ask them to keep a secret.

Should your child be unavoidably left alone in your dwelling and the telephone rings, probably the best advice you can offer is to answer the call but under no circumstances to admit to being alone. Rather, the child should be advised to state that his/her parent cannot come to the telephone just at that moment but will ring back when convenient. He/she should then hang up, being sure not to engage the caller in conversation. This is a far from satisfactory stratagem but it involves least risk. Your child should be taught to inform you of any telephone calls they may answer in your absence.

Child abuse may occur whether or not a child is abducted. Either way, children should be taught that there are certain parts of their body that are private, ie. the parts of the body covered by bathers. If someone does touch them on those parts or wants them to touch others, children should be taught to report that fact immediately to parent or teacher. Similarly, if improper oral contact is made with a child that, too, should be reported. In this context it is useful if your child knows the correct names for all body parts.

Sexual molestation can precipitate a child's running away from home. Parents should be alert to changes of mood and behaviour in their child which may be indicative of sexual abuse. Possible indicators that something is wrong are said to include disturbed sleep, loss of appetite and mood changes. These in themselves do not necessarily indicate child abuse but children should be encouraged to tell their parents if anyone touches them in a way that makes them feel embarrassed or awkward.

Truancing can be dangerous in that children might place themselves in jeopardy whilst absent from school. Hanging around pinball parlours and similar behaviours makes them vulnerable to the attention of pedophiles and such vulnerability can lead to abduction. Also, truancing children are likely to meet other children who will reinforce this as well as other undesirable behaviour. Unfortunately, most schools these days seem too busy to follow up most short-term absences and if there is no absentee reporting programs it is difficult for parents to monitor trancies. However, some schools do undertake absentee reporting should parents request such a service. It is an issue that can be discussed at local parents meetings. Absentee reporting can be conducted in various ways. The following guidelines represent one approach formulated by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement:

- * Teachers prepare lists of absences each morning and submit them to the school's Principal.

- * If prior notice of absence has not been provided by a parent/guardian, a nominated school employee immediately telephones the parent/guardian at a number previously provided.
- * If the parent/guardian, upon being informed of their child's absence, is unaware of any good reason for such absence, the school employee should advise the parent/guardian to remain calm and make sure someone stays at home by the telephone. The parent/guardian could also be advised to check those places the child might frequent and, in the event of the child not being quickly located, to report the absence to police.
- * Should the parent/guardian of an absent student not be contactable, the school principal, using the child's attendance record, then needs to decide whether to report the matter to police.
- * The calling of parents can be undertaken by either school employees, such as teachers, or volunteers.

Parents of Missing Children (POMC) counsellors have noticed that persistent truancing is frequently a precursor to a child's running away from home. This observation lends urgency to demands for truant reporting schemes.

Always know the home telephone numbers of your child's friends and, as new members enter the friendship group, obtain their telephone numbers as well.

Know where your child is going at all times and in whose company he/she is. This is an inflexible rule. Similarly, encourage you child to always be in the company of at least one friend.

Try to be aware of your child's haunts and the routes he/she and his/her friends take in going to and from those haunts. If

possible, travel those routes, including the way to school, noting the location of safe houses and other places of safety, such as police stations. It is recognised many parents just do not have the opportunity to observe this advice but, where opportunity does exist, it should be followed.

Cooperation always lightens the load. Watch your children as much as reasonably possible and do the same for your neighbours. Ask your neighbours to reciprocate. At the same time, be selective even with your neighbours.

Some child protection groups advocate inscribing your telephone and child's name on the leather soles of their shoes. This can be done with a heated metal knitting needle or a wood burning kit. Such garment markings might be useful in identifying amnesia cases, for example.

Baby-sitters should be screened carefully prior to employment and one should ensure they are of an age where they are capable of behaving responsibly. If an adult, be especially sure they are trustworthy. Although it is fair to say females are less likely to molest a child than are males, there is a growing awareness that some females are capable of unsavoury behaviour toward children. More to the point, though, in missing person terms, is the fact that persons of either gender are capable of abducting children; it would be catastrophic to hire a baby-sitter who subsequently abducted one's child or who, due to lack of common-sense, permitted an intruder to molest or abduct one's child. Such events are relatively rare, statistically speaking, but parents are wise to proceed on the assumption that they could be a victim rather than that they could not.

Make sure you properly brief your baby-sitter. A baby-sitter must be provided with your telephone number for the evening as well as that of your local police station. Indeed, a prepared list of pertinent telephone numbers should be standard in all dwellings. In addition, baby-sitters should be briefed on how to

deal with telephone calls while you are away from the house. In particular, he/she should never offer over the telephone the fact that he/she is the baby-sitter. Such information implies your absence from the dwelling.

Always listen when your child tells you that he or she does not want to be with someone. There could be a reason! Above all, baby-sitters should be instructed not to allow anyone other than a police officer into your dwelling.

Your baby-sitter should not leave the dwelling in your absence except in circumstances of emergency when it can be expected that he/she will take the children also. To assist in excluding strangers from the dwelling, it is desirable to have a peephole placed in all external doors. Locked screen doors may provide a limited alternative to a peephole on external doors of dwelling houses. But, for apartment dwellers, a peephole is highly desirable.

Avoid leaving children at home on their own wherever possible. If a baby-sitter is unavailable, arrange for a relative or neighbour to look after the children in your absence. Indeed, to the best extent possible try to prevent your child being alone at any time as he/she is most vulnerable to abductors and molesters at such times.

A cardinal rule to be imparted to all children is 'NEVER HITCHHIKE'.

If your children bus to school, be sure there is adequate protection or supervision between bus-stop and school and home and bus-stop. If not satisfied, the matter could well be taken up at your next school parents meeting.

Children should not be permitted to solicit door-to-door or undertake letter drops on their own. If they must engage in such activities they should at least be in groups. Door-to-door

solicitations of sponsorships is currently widely encouraged by schools and it is not uncommon to see children pestering strangers in the streets and at shopping centres for sponsorships. In addition to placing children at risk, this practice is extremely annoying to some citizens.

When in public places with your young children, eg. at a shopping mall, cinema or park, arrange a meeting place in case you become separated - always provided, of course, your child is old enough to understand such instructions. Never knowingly separate from a young child in a public place, especially places such as shopping centres and amusement parks.

Ensure your child has at least thirty cents on them at all times so that if they are abducted or become lost they at least have enough money for a bus fare or telephone call should the necessity arise.

Running Away - Reasons

Children run away from home for numerous reasons (some of which are discussed at Chapter Nine), such as seeking adventure, establishing independence and escaping from intolerable situations. According to a police training note issued by the International Association of Chiefs of Police it is suggested that avoiding an intolerable situation is the most important single factor. More detailed causes include:

- * over-strict parental discipline or inability to face parental reprimands or punishment;
- * inability to face parental disappointment/displeasure due to failing to meet expectations, eg. exam results;
- * avoidance of the consequences of acts of delinquency, eg. stealing or breaking a treasured ornament;
- * failure to adjust to a new community or the anxiety caused by the prospect of making new friends and leaving old ones behind;

- * elopement accounts for some disappearances of older juvenile girls.

An additional reason mentioned by many persons concerned with youth welfare is, for females, pregnancy - involving both fear of parents' reactions as well as affection for partners.

POMC counsellors have identified additional causes:

- * peer group pressure - kids with low self-esteem being easily influenced by friends, or the mere desire to be accepted by others to whom running away from home is acceptable behaviour;
- * emotional disturbance - kids who are emotionally disturbed or suffering a psychiatric conditions may behave irrationally;
- * cultural conflict - kids expected to conform to alien cultural norms at home can become deeply unhappy. Counsellors suspect this is a more serious problem than is currently appreciated.

Alert and aware parents will be sensitive to the possibility of such conditions developing or occurring.

Running Away - Signs of Preparation

Far more children run away from home than are abducted and parents should be aware of signs or preparation prior to a child running away. If warning signs were to be observed and acted upon by parents many cases of children running away could be prevented. The US National Network of Runaway and Youth Services lists a number of behavioural cues that might signal an intention to run away. They are:

- * growing isolation - greater reticence than normal in a child;
- * excessive blow-ups - increased irritation erupting in rows;

- * abrupt mood swings - increased frequency and/or intensity of mood swings;
- * increased home discipline infractions - the committing of a greater number of rule infractions pertaining to the home and family life;
- * increased school violations - truancy, slipping grades, indiscipline;
- * increased sleeping - can be indicative of underlying problems and/or depression sufficient to result in running away;
- * reduced communication with family members generally;
- * parental blow-ups - personal, financial and marital problems resulting in parental conflict. Some children may alleviate their anxiety in the face of such circumstances by removing themselves from the scene;
- * threats to run away - take them seriously and try to remove the causes of the child's dissatisfaction. Talk them through but do not counter with threats of punishment as, if they do eventually runaway, such threats might deter a return;
- * family crisis - such as distressing death of parent or brother/sister;
- * sudden change in friends;
- * unexplained money or possessions and/or the making of mysterious phone calls - could indicate an intention to run away and/or involvement in dishonest or immoral practices.

Common sense has to be exercised by parents in interpreting such cues but, if convinced they are significant, assistance should be sought. Sources of assistance include school counsellors, the clergy, family doctor and local government health/psychiatric services. At times of crisis, Lifeline is a useful resort, although it is seriously overloaded at time in some locations. Crisis counselling can be conducted over the telephone and, if required, face to face counselling is also available. Lifeline also has a Youthline in some centres from which both children and parents can separately seek assistance. A list of Lifeline

telephone numbers is included in the Resource Directory. Most children manifest some of the signs listed above at some time in their lives. But, just as the early signs of an illness should be acted upon, so should early signs of a child's dissatisfaction with his/her home environment.

It is well recognised adolescent children in particular undergo stresses in coping with their social environments, especially families. Gerald Arenberg et al (1984) in their book, Preventing Missing Children offer parents advice to improve communication with their offspring:

- * pay attention - really listen to what your children say;
- * give them respect - support your child's struggle to grow and accept the maturity they have already achieved;
- * try to understand - consider things from your child's point of view;
- * avoid labels - identify the real problem in your household without resorting to meaningless labels;
- * don't hassle - show interest without probing; too many questions can cut off information;
- * don't use emotional blackmail - children resent being manipulated into conforming with the wishes of parents;
- * use teamwork - work together in identifying problems and their solutions;
- * don't always give answers - encourage your child to arrive at his/her own answer to at least some problems;
- * your children are responsible - offer your children options rather than orders, help them understand the consequences of their actions;
- * praise the positives - describe to your child his/her positive as well as negative behaviour and how such behaviour impacts upon others; ensure you reinforce positive rather than negative behaviour;
- * talk about feelings - share your feelings with your child and vice versa; love in the home is perhaps the best method of preventing runaways, both juvenile and adult.

Parents sometimes need to realise that they themselves need help in negotiating their own lives. Such assistance is a necessary precursor to implementing the advice offered above.

Identification

Compile an identification file on your child. Such a file will ideally include recent colour photograph (pre-schoolers should be photographed at least four times a year): name; physical description (include lock of hair); address; telephone number; school; copy of birth certificate; medication data such as asthma treatment or insulin; other details such as blood type, previous illnesses, immunisations, allergies and speech impediments. Available X-rays and dental records of your child may also be filed.

Fingerprinting of children for identification purposes is advocated by some police agencies. Critics claim fingerprints, like X-rays and dental records, are only really useful in identifying cadavers. Macabre though the thought is, any means of aiding the identification of child corpses is of great utility to police identification technicians. There are, too, other circumstances in which fingerprints could be useful, such as in cases of memory loss. Normally, materials for juvenile identification fingerprinting programs are donated by community conscious companies and considerations of cost effectiveness do not apply. Such programs are best monitored by police agencies to ensure that:

- * volunteer fingerprinters may be well trained
- * good quality fingerprints result.

Identikid was planned in May 1985 as an on-going project operating at various shopping centres and schools by Lions, Polaroid and Radio 2UE. The project supplies parents with a kit comprising a Polaroid photo-ID card of their children and a data card containing vital information. Cost of the kits to parents

is \$2.00 each, of which a substantial portion is donated to charities nominated by the Lions Clubs.

Parents wishing to take advantage of 'Identikid' have details of their child's date of birth, height, weight, hair and eye colour, distinguishing marks and medication details recorded on special tamper-proof credit card sized data cards. If parents agree, a child's fingerprints may also be recorded on the back of the card.

Completed data cards are inserted into Polaroid instant identification cameras and the relevant child is photographed. Instant identification cameras simultaneously photograph both a child and his/her printed information, sealing both together in a tamper-resistant laminate, in two minutes. The picture has no negative and the parents retain the only copy. Parents also retain the original data card.

More than 80,000 children have taken advantage of the Identikid scheme and, as a result, more than \$88,000 has been raised for youth charities. Some thirteen Polaroid ID-3/710 cameras, worth \$61,000 are used in the scheme. Readers wishing to learn more about Identikid should write to: Lions Club National Offices, PO Box 42, The Junction, NSW 2291.

Other items that may be filed include a footprint, sample of handwriting (if relevant), tape recording of child's voice and passport. The idea of holding a passport for your child is to pre-empt someone else, say a non-custodial parent, taking out a passport and removing the child overseas. Parents may no longer place children on their own passports in Australia. Each child, if required to travel, must have his/her own travel document or passport.

Some American dentists will attach microdot chips containing identification data to childrens' molars. The service, most

useful in identifying cadavers, is not known to be currently available in Australia.

We realise few parents will be able to follow all these items of advice. It is up to individual parents to consider what they feel is important, given their particular circumstances.

Non-Custodial (Parental) Abductions

Although the number of parental or non-custodial abductions throughout Australia is not large, some children are vulnerable to such a possibility. Even so, 15 per cent of calls for assistance received by Parents of Missing Children relate to custodial disputes.

If you feel your child falls within this category, it is a good idea to keep an identification file on your spouse or former spouse. The file should include name, nicknames, address(es), telephone number(s), physical description, colour photograph, place of work, known vehicle number(s) and description(s), account numbers, citizenship status, passport information, military service, organisational memberships, and details of separation and custody orders made by the Family Court.

You might consider it appropriate to keep relevant information concerning his/her friends as well without antagonising them needlessly; maintain as friendly relations as possible.

Try to be alert to the possible effects on your former partner of changes in his/her life, your life and the child's life.

Custodial intervention can be prompted by events such as a contemplated marriage, a new job, relocation, death or serious illness of a child, and pending Family Court actions.

If at all possible, be alert to changes in your former partner's behaviour, such as:

- * change from little concern for a child to great concern;
- * sudden reappearance after an absence;
- * sudden friendliness after a period of conflict.

Of course, such apparent changes may not signal an intention to abduct but, the possibility should be appreciated.

If you are separated and if you have reasonable cause to suspect your former partner intends to take your child in defiance of your wishes, you might consider obtaining legal custody as soon as possible. Without such an order both parents have equal rights to custody. Normally, police will not intervene in the event of your child being taken from you by his/her other parent unless you can produce a custody order.

Seek to have included in your custody order a clause prohibiting the transfer of school records without the consent of both parents.

Be as precise and as reasonable as possible with regard to visitation rights specified in any separation order or divorce decree. It has been said that a common reason for custodial abductions is dissatisfaction with child access. If amicable agreement can be achieved from the outset with careful prescription of times, days, weeks, months, holidays, illnesses, etc, the probability of an abduction may be reduced.

Always keep your valuable papers, including divorce decrees in a secure place. But, keep copies of your custody order in case you need to produce it to police or other officials.

If divorce proceedings are in progress, you might consider requesting your spouse not be permitted to leave the court's jurisdiction without consent.

If you expect abduction or harassment from your former partner,

warn your baby-sitter, your child's school principal and any other relevant person.

If you have more than one child, keeping them separate when out of doors reduces the probability of a simultaneous abduction.

Also seek to have included in your custody order a provision prohibiting your child leaving the country without your permission. Children claiming Australian citizenship can only travel on their own individual passport. No longer can parents include children on their own passport. Generally speaking, applications for a child's passport must have the consent of both parents, although exceptions are made on certain grounds. Every such application is thoroughly checked. A custodial parent fearing abduction of their child and the possibility of removal overseas could apply for a passport for their child. If granted, such a procedure would preclude the non-custodial parent from making a similar application. Custodial parents with a real fear of abduction can contact the Australian Federal Police with a view to having their child's name placed on a computerised list designed to raise an alert should a named person present at passport control. Such a status lasts only three months, once approved, but can be extended. Under Australian Federal law every individual travelling overseas must do so on their own passport but, resident non-custodial parents of another nationality can sometimes place their child on their own passport or obtain a foreign passport for such a child.

As with all prevention oriented advice it is impossible for one to conform with every single precaution. You can but do your best, relating your security precautions to the degree of threat perceived.

Conclusion

This chapter has detailed actions that can be taken by parents aimed at reducing the probability of their child or children leaving home, voluntarily or involuntarily. In particular, repeated emphasis on a healthy suspicion of strangers in your children is advocated.

The issue of molestation was also raised as it can occur equally to either a missing child or a child at home. Constant concern with your child's welfare is encouraged.

The desirability of compiling relevant data and gaining knowledge of your child's school routes and likely spare time haunts is advocated so that, in the event of his/her becoming missing, you at least possess a basic knowledge of such matters rather than a baffling blanket of ignorance.

Another important precaution discussed was the compilation of an identification file for each child. Such files can be of great assistance in tracing and identifying lost children.

Tips for maintaining sound relations with one's children and identifying behaviour antecedent to running away from were offered. Finally, the possibility of custodial abduction in our divorce-prone society was discussed, together with preventive strategies.

CHAPTER NINE

WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD APPEARS TO BE MISSING

This Chapter outlines actions that might usefully be taken by parents or guardians faced with the possibility that a child in their care might be missing. It briefly considers, too, the possibilities of abduction and running away from home as well as thoughts on appropriate behaviour should runaways return. The affective impacts of persons unexpectedly leaving home can be severe on those left behind and a section is devoted to coping with the stresses experienced by parents/guardians.

Action to Take in the Event of an Abduction

Parents and guardians can be faced with the possibility of a missing child at any time. But, the time when children are particularly vulnerable to abduction is on their way to or from school. If, for example, a child is not home from school at his/her normal time and he/she is normally punctual in such matters, there may be cause for alarm and parents faced with such circumstances are best able to determine this. If reasonable cause does exist, the first action might usefully be a telephone search, telephoning the school and friends of the child. If it is known that a child is a frequenter of milk bars, pinball parlors or other such premises on their way home, those locations might be queried also.

If the telephone search is unsuccessful, a physical search of a child's route to and from school might prove useful. However, someone should be standing by the home telephone in case the child calls in. It is recommended by some sources concerned with child welfare that these two steps should not take longer than 30 minutes.

After that time, one should consider the necessity of reporting the matter to police. Ideally, parents/guardians will maintain reasonably comprehensive information kits concerning their children. In any case, once the decision is made to call in police support, a parent should be able to provide police with:

- * a physical description and recent colour photograph of the missing child;
- * a description of the garments the child was last seen wearing;
- * names, addresses and telephone numbers of friends and places the child might visit.

If sure that an abduction has occurred, parents might consider the desirability of media publicity. All State and Territory Police forces have procedures designed to facilitate media publicity in such cases. Police will normally advise at what stage they consider publicity desirable and will require a written release from parents before setting the wheels in motion (see comments at Chapter Seven). There is, of course, nothing to stop parents acting independently in such matters should they be dissatisfied with police efforts for whatever reason. In some instances, parents and relatives have received excellent support by non-metropolitan media outlets, contrary to police advice. The desirability of media publicity can only be determined on a case by case basis and may even vary as a case progresses. Thus, it should not be assumed that any publicity is necessarily useful publicity.

In addition to media publicity, consideration may be given to the offering a reward and the production of posters and fliers. Again, police agencies are experienced in such matters and will advise parents. But, parents should be prepared to follow their own advice should they feel official efforts are unsatisfactory or in some way misguided. To avoid nuisance visitors always ensure, that your home address is not publicised. Regrettably, there are disturbed people in all jurisdictions and one might

well be subjected to calls and mail from such persons, which might not only mislead investigators but can also be extremely upsetting to the recipient.

It is advisable to keep a comprehensive diary of all that you and others may do in such circumstances. With the passing of a few days, the memory can grow hazy. A detailed diary, showing who has done what and who has been contacted, can be invaluable. Such a diary is best left by the telephone and any incoming information can then be entered directly therein. Where a parent is initially too distressed to undertake such action it is highly desirable that someone accept responsibility for the task. The value of keeping a diary or log of events (or, even, a scrapbook) is not merely one of record; it helps refresh the memories of inquirers and, should there be a change of investigating personnel or a review of inquiries, a diary can clarify untapped avenues and establishing who was or was not present at particular times. More than that, even, some distressed parents of missing persons have formed considerable solace in recording their thoughts and emotions at a time when they find it difficult to express them orally. It can be useful to have a tape recorder placed on a telephone so as not to miss any information that may be difficult to comprehend at first hearing. An Ansafone will ensure you do not miss important messages when you are unavoidably away from the phone.

Some anxious parents hire private inquiry agents to trace their missing offspring (see Chapter Seven). There are some excellent tracing agents available but seek advice from a knowledgeable person before you select a particular agent. Consider also the likelihood of success of an agent working either alone or with few support staff.

It is essential parents of missing children keep their jobs. Searches can involve considerable cost and sacrificing a source of income will not help meet those costs.

Get as much publicity as you can. If the missing person is alive publicity may reach him/her and trigger a response. Police will normally check morgues and hospitals in the course of their inquiries and thus save you the trouble. It is wise to check with the officer assigned to your case as to what measures have been undertaken by police and thus save overlap, and ensure that nothing is left undone. At the same time be careful not to antagonise the officer. Encourage officers to inform you promptly of all aspects of an inquiry.

Action to Take in the Event of a Runaway

Very often, at the outset, a parent has no clear idea if a missing child is lost, abducted or has run away. Whether a child is a runaway or has been abducted, many of the points raised above apply regardless. In addition, a worried parent might consider:

- * checking out places where your child might congregate, eg. pinball parlors, missions for homeless people, etc.;
- * physically searching your dwelling and surrounds as well as usual play areas; it is surprising how smaller children in particular can hide away in small spaces and sleep so deeply they do not hear people shouting their name. One recent case (November 1987) involved a six year old who climbed into a butchers van without the driver's knowledge and was subsequently locked in for twenty-four hours while teams of police and neighbours searched for him nearby;
- * checking if your child has taken anything with him/her including clothing, money, vehicle;
- * checking with fellow club members and school friends or counsellors;
- * checking for possible religious cult involvement;
- * checking if they have joined armed forces (subject to their being of necessary age);
- * following up on any special suspicions or thoughts you might have;

- * if you have other children, keep them informed and talk to them. They may possess relevant information.

Non-custodial Abductions

The 1980 Hague convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abductions (Parental Kidnapping) applies to children under the age of sixteen years. It requires the return of a child to his/her original country, whether or not there was a custody order in existence at the time of an abduction. It applies to visitation rights as well as custody rights, although the return of a child to his/her original country might not be required to facilitate enforcement of visiting rights. Provisions of the Convention apply only when a child is taken from one ratifying country to another ratifying country, as reciprocal obligations are involved. Australia is a signatory to the Convention and has also ratified it. Other ratifying countries include Britain, Canada, France, Hungary, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland. At the time of writing the United States is awaiting legislation in support of its ratification.

No doubt resort will be made to the Convention's provisions from time to time as non-custodial parents abduct their children to other (ratifying) countries. So far, few such cases have occurred.

In addition to a liaison officer in each police agency responsible for liaising with Federal immigration authorities, there is also the National Central Bureau (NCB) of Interpol. The NCB will accept messages from State and Territory police agencies and route missing person messages to overseas police bodies where appropriate as well as handle responses.

Convincing Authorities

Police agencies are subjected to persons claiming their child is either a crime victim, lost or a runaway. Such claims are often

resolved within a very short time by the appearance of the child in question. The reception of missing person inquiries and initial search action is expensive of police resources and it is not unusual for under resourced police officers to be sceptical of claims concerning missing children. Such scepticism is occasionally misplaced and valuable lead time is thereby lost. The Neesham Committee Report (1985) sums up this quandary in the following words:

The police role in missing person inquiries is complex. In the cases of children, there is a great need for an effective police response which is credible to parents at a time of great personal stress. Reports of missing children require immediate attention. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that many children voluntarily leave home and return within a short period. Further, the police in some cases may be used as a lever in anticipation of divorce and custody proceedings.

Focusing on the importance of prompt police reaction to juvenile missing person reports, the very first recommendation of the US Attorney General's Advisory Board on Missing Children (1986) states:

Reports of missing children should be investigated promptly and pursued vigorously. Law enforcement agencies should review their policies regarding the investigation of missing child reports.

Most emphatically of all, the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police has clearly stated there is to be NO waiting period of any kind between the time a child is reported missing and the moment an investigation begins.

Despite the frequency with which parents, in particular, are mistaken as to whether their children are missing, they are nevertheless the best judges available and police officers - subject to proper consideration - should accept parents' claims. This principle should be extended to all missing person reports, not just children. If a claim involving risk to a third person is eventually proven erroneous, it is a cost the Police Department and the public purse must bear. Thus, parents and others convinced their child, friend or whoever is missing should persist in their claim in the face of police disbelief should they encounter same. In short, it seems the only way police can be sure not to place a missing person at risk is to assume that all first time reports involve a high risk of foul play.

When a Missing Person Returns

In the event of a missing child being found or returning voluntarily do not react with anger. Show compassion and love. If you display aggression you may cause a situation worse than that which led to the disappearance in the first place. There are many situations which lead to a person voluntarily leaving home, but there is a common element to most cases, ie. discontent - with a family situation, work, financial or other problem. Whether real or only perceived, such discontent makes disappearing the most acceptable option.

Perceptions change according to situations. Prior to a runaway's disappearance a family's environment can be quite hostile to the person who runs away. Then, during the period of absence, the original causes of conflict appear unimportant. 'If only he returns we will make any concession asked for', one vows. Then, after the return, the uncompromising situation can easily recur. When this happens there is a high probability another disappearance will occur.

So, once contact is reestablished a conscious effort must be made to resolve family problems. If the family is unable to do so on

its own, assistance should be sought from social workers or other counsellors. Conciliation should be undertaken, compromises made, even contracts negotiated - especially with regard to tidying rules and hours, etc.

The above comments are predicated on the assumption that a missing person, particularly a juvenile, wishes to return home. However, there are cases, especially where sexual or other violence has been used, when a child either does not want to return home or it would be inappropriate to return the child home. Police investigations, in particular, should consider such possibilities when conducting their interviews with located or returned children.

Reasons for Running Away

It is always difficult to establish just why (or for which particular combination of reasons) a person runs away from home. However, Christine Vincent, YMCA, telephone (03) 6997655, has identified six reasons or causes in her valuable pamphlet Teenage Runaways - What Can a Parent Do?. This pamphlet has been adopted by Victoria Police and copies are distributed to parents of missing children in that State by the Missing Persons Bureau. It is regrettable funding does not permit Police to provide it to everyone on request.

The six reasons identified by Ms Vincent include:

- * There are some young people who have been influenced by peers and/or the media and think home is too restrictive or dull. They mistakenly believe that by running away, life will be full of freedom and good times. These young people believe they are 'running to' freedom, adventure, new places, experiences and people. It is not that home is a bad place but the young person thinks there is a more exciting and rewarding world to meet.

- * Other young people may run away as a reaction to real events or imaginary or anticipated consequences. Many departures are impulsive. Some young people run away impulsively following an argument with parents (usually involving restrictions) or from fear of punishment by parents for some action. For example, a young person may run away after an argument with a parent over her desire to attend a disco. In a short time, she may return once her anger abates. Depending on circumstances, it may be a form of retaliation toward the parents. Running away may also occur as a reaction to a teenage girl's discovery that she is pregnant or as a reaction to the expectation of suspension from school.

- * Some young people run away for more serious reasons which usually involve longer periods of conflict with parents. Frequently the conflict results from:
 - . truancy and/or subject failure at school;
 - . use of alcohol and/or drugs;
 - . the teenager's association with friends who are law-breakers;
 - . too many restrictions by parents on clothes, hours or work at home (from the young person's point of view).

- * Children may run away from forms of abuse and neglect that have continued over long periods of time within the family. Young people who have experienced frequent fighting with a parent or parents sometimes resulting in personal injury, may run away to prevent its re-occurrence. Similarly, children who are sexually abused by a parent or family member may run away. Some parents psychologically or emotionally abuse their child by being orally offensive, making excessive demands, rejection or behaving inconsistently. Such behaviour can lead a child to run away in order to preserve their mental health. Other parents neglect their child by

failing to provide for his/her basic needs and proper levels of care.

- * Other young people have been asked to leave home or 'thrown out' by parents or guardians. This form of rejection usually eventuates after prolonged conflict or when parents have given up trying to help or control their teenager's behaviour. Some parents never really wanted their child and asking their teenager to leave home is seen as a solution from the parent's view. Some parents 'throw out' their teenager offspring and subsequently abandon them by moving residence.

- * Some young people are placed in custody or care of government or voluntary institutions as a result, usually, of a children's court case. They may be sent to a remand centre, institution, hostel or residential program to live or for a period of time. Some of these young people run away from such institutions and hostels and so become classed as missing persons.

If you are the parent of a runaway child you may be aware of some of the reasons underpinning his/her departure. Further insights might be gained from honest discussions once they return home.

When a Missing Person Does Not Return

The first thing to bear in mind is that not all missing persons who do not return home are dead. Certainly, some missing persons are no doubt dead, but one cannot automatically assume death in individual cases.

Sometimes, especially when the person missing is the sole or partial support of a family, disappearances create legal difficulties that can be difficult to resolve. Resolution may depend upon legal determination of life or death. There is a common law assumption of death after seven years but one can

approach their State's Supreme Court for a determination prior to the expiration of such a period. Legal advice would be necessary were you to consider such an option.

Legal considerations aside, one should not give up hope concerning the fate of a missing relative, especially in the short to mid-term. Grief and depression are inevitable reactions to such a loss, not greatly different from reaction to a known death - although the element of 'not knowing for sure' can impose an even greater burden as many parents in such circumstances have testified. At these times families need to pull together, support police tracing activities to the best extent possible and even, if considered appropriate, undertake their own search actions. In such cases it is wise to liaise as closely as possible with those police officers assigned to your case.

Coping

The disappearance of a spouse or child can have marked psychological impacts on spouse or parents. Not infrequently the level of grief involved is similar to that expressed as a result of death. Those situations in which parents in particular are left not knowing whether their child is alive or dead are especially traumatic. Counselling should be sought as the strain damages marriages as well as individual psyches. Some parents find the anxiety of not knowing whether their child is alive or dead quite debilitating and prefer, after a lengthy period of time, mentally to assume their child to be dead; the decision may be preferable to eternal optimism. A major problem associated with the presumption of death is that every time a false sighting occurs (and they do) massive emotional conflict occurs. No fixed advice can be offered as grieving parents/relatives need to make their own decisions in such matters based on their own needs.

Remember that if you 'go to pieces' you cannot effectively help police in their efforts to find your child. If you have a job

you are unwise to leave it as you will need to maintain an income. Desperation can force people to consider options they would never entertain in more stable times, but however desperate you become do not resort to the psychics and mystics who almost invariably approach persons so situated. Such people will charge you large amounts of money but are not capable of helping you. Similarly, be careful of private investigators who approach you with a view to investigating your child's disappearance. There are many excellent private investigators but to solicit business in such a manner is, in our opinion, highly unprofessional. Always seek impartial advice, perhaps from the police officer(s) handling your file, before even considering employing a private investigator. Their services can be very expensive.

As mentioned in Chapter Seven, emotional support from those who have experienced similar trauma is offered by Parents of Missing Children (POMC), telephone (03) 7621592 on a 24-hour basis. This service is free and available to all. POMC is of particular value as their counsellors can provide advice directly relevant to missing person situations. In terms of coping with emotional trauma per se, Lifeline and its associated bodies provide a useful resource and prompt referral of all types of emotional problems are made to well qualified specialists. Youthline is valuable in that youths having problems at home, or after running away from home, can obtain impartial and competent service from trained counsellors.

It is common for parents of runaway children to reflect on their experience. Sometimes they blame themselves, sometimes they blame others. Christine Vincent has identified a number of common reactions of parents and briefly discusses them in her pamphlet entitled Teenage Runaways - What can a Parent Do?.

A particularly common reaction is for a parent to accept all blame for a runaway child's decision to leave home. Realistically, both parents/guardians and offspring have contributed to a child's decision. It is important that a

wondering parent thinks through antecedent events and attempts, as objectively as possible, to identify contributing circumstances. It is often necessary to have the assistance of a trained counsellor. Realistic analysis is an important precursor to the subsequent re-establishment of filial relations with one's offspring. Over-protective attitudes created by the strong desire to do the best by one's children are, for example, hard for a parent to identify without help.

In similar vein, some parents conclude they have failed as parents because their child has run away. The reality is that in the 1980s running away from home is far from uncommon and such behaviour is not necessarily indicative of parental incompetence. In cases where parents lack confidence in themselves, confidence building is a necessary procedure. This can be done with the assistance of a counsellor, by reading, by attending appropriate courses and/or improving one's capacity for self-analysis generally.

Where parental contributions to running away behaviour are clearly identified - such as sexual abuse, too strict discipline or arguing - preventive action will be necessary to preclude the possibility of repetition.

The opposite reaction to parents placing all blame upon their own shoulders is that of blaming everyone else, especially their child's peers. This reaction is as illogical as its opposite but possibly more difficult to counteract. Once again, it is important for parents to assess the causes of running away behaviour and analyse it objectively. An objective assessment might indeed include peer group pressure as a major cause but, such a conclusion should not be allowed to obscure assessment of other factors.

The blaming of one parent by another is a not unusual reaction to an adolescent's running away from home. It may be objectively determined that one parent has in fact contributed more than the

other to a child's behaviour but, even so, there is little point in assigning 'blame' in such a situation. The important thing is to accurately identify reasons, particularly as perceived by the child, so that a situation can be remedied should the missing child return. The hostile blaming of one parent by another within the very stressful circumstances of a runaway child can easily contribute to a family breakup.

The departure of a child from a stressful family situation can, on occasion, result in a sense of relief on the part of the parent(s). A day or two without conflict can be extremely welcome. After that, a parent can easily start feeling guilty at their sense of relief. Such a reaction is normal and should not be considered indicative of one's having been a poor parent. Even so, analysis will be necessary to identify reasons for the original stress so that it can be reduced in future.

Once a runaway child has returned home, especially after his/her first unauthorised departure, parents sometimes resort to unwise strategies rather than address root causes of family problems. One such approach is to bribe a child to stay by 'giving way', buying expensive presents, and so on. Alternatively, parents might threaten their returned child with some dire outcome, such as having them placed in a 'home' should they run away again. As Christine Vincent puts it, 'threats are strong words, not problems tackled ...'. The lesson learned by a threatened juvenile from such an experience is how to threaten rather than the gaining of insights necessary to achieve family harmony. Lastly, some parents punish a returning child. Sanctions may make a parent feel better in the short term but do nothing for the child. Punishment might even make a child run away again.

One final point concerning coping during the post-departure stage needs to be made. Some parents of missing children experience crank telephone calls which are abusive and generally upsetting. The decision needs to be made whether to have a new telephone number assigned to defeat the cranks but, in the process,

possibly make it difficult for the absent child to make contact should he/she so wish or keep the old number and make possible communication with the missing child easier but run the risk of crank calls. If pestered by crank telephone calls, consult the police officer handling your case with a view to having Telecom place an intercept on your line.

Grief

There is no doubt that family and friends of a missing person commonly experience grief. Feelings of disbelief, sadness, loneliness, fear, anger, guilt etc. are often encountered. In cases involving missing persons, however, the grief process may be different due to the uncertainty of the situation. Often there is no proof a missing person is alive or dead, therefore there can be no finality, no resolution in the grieving process.

Many parents of missing children are familiar with this 'unresolved grief'. They describe swinging between grief and hope: one moment mourning the loss of their child, the next hoping desperately their child will be found alive, safe and well. Unresolved grief affects family members' relationships with each other and often tensions are high. It should be emphasised that individuals react very differently in situations involving enormous emotional stress and most reactions are means of coping with the situation.

In her book, On Death and Dying, Dr Elizabeth Kubler-Ross describes stages in the grief process, beginning with denial and moving to feelings of anger, helplessness, guilt, depression and finally to resolution or relief. She stresses that there is no real order to these feelings and that individuals experience grief in very different ways. Parents of missing children relate to this. Some parents recalled they began by denying something terrible had happened to their child, but as the hours and days passed they moved towards acceptance of the situation. Often anger emerges and may be directed at the child, family, friends,

journalists, police or God. Inevitably at some stage parents are angry with themselves.

This self-anger often gives way to guilt. One mother described how she felt guilty for missing a bus. The incident made her arrive home ten minutes late to find her nine-year-old daughter missing. Her daughter is still missing. Commonly, 'if only' is the means of expressing guilt; 'If only I had been there ..., if only I wasn't angry that time ..., if only I had bought her that present ...' Although guilt is a stage through which many people pass in the grieving process, some are unable to move beyond it. This can be detrimental to the individual's health, family, friendships and job. It is normal to feel some guilt but if this increases and continues for a long period it can be extremely damaging to the individual.

Other common feelings parents describe in grieving for a missing child are: loneliness, even when surrounded by people; numbness, blocking out feelings and becoming numb; fear, fear of what may happen and fear of being unable to carry on; and helplessness, wanting to do something to find the child but somehow being immobilised.

In an article written for Compassionate Friends, an organisation for bereaved parents, Lea Beaven describes vividly the fear many parents experience at the loss of their child:

We live in constant fear. Fear that we will not be able to cope with this trauma. We fear waking up in the morning because we must again face the unbearable truth. We fear contact with friends or workmates who cannot understand our grief or our need to talk. We fear going through the motions of everyday life, shopping, cooking, travelling by bus. How will we make it through the day? ... We fear the long days, the empty space at our

table, the need to 'Carry On' ... But most of all we fear going to sleep, for when we finally do, we will only have to wake again to face another fearful day.

Fortunately, in time such fear usually leads to acceptance of the new situation families find themselves in. It takes time to adjust and for many families, although they reach some peaceful acceptance, there still remains doubt in their minds as to whether the child is gone for ever. Some families complete their acceptance by holding a memorial service or other significant ceremony. Others are unable to cope with such an act and may prefer to hold a small commemorative family dinner and discussion. Still others may cling to hope as their only means of coping and prefer to do nothing. Father Brian Jones in his book Searching for Tony, describes how his family members coped very differently with the disappearance of his twenty year old brother:

... Mother placed a large portrait of Tony in the living room and this encouraged visitors to ask about him if they wished. ... it always felt better to talk about it, even if someone did shed a few tears.

Talking about it prevented us from bottling up our grief, but some of us needed to do more. I had the urge to write about our experiences.

...

My brother Tim, on the other hand, whose adventure of a lifetime had been terminated by Tony's disappearance, felt the need to complete the journey. ...

... my parents' pilgrimage to Townsville in 1984 ... were a similar experience. To drive

down Bowen Road where Tony was last seen, and to visit the phone booth from where he last spoke to them was much the same as a person visiting the grave of a loved one. ...

One of the most difficult things for Mother, in particular, was to know what to do with Tony's belongings. ... but little-by-little she began the process of letting go (p. 80).

Some parents describe reaching a level of emotional acceptance or adjustment after their child disappeared only to be stirred up again by reported sightings, rumours, media reports, family and friends' reactions and the attitudes of people who attach stigma to families of missing children (especially where that child is viewed as a runaway). Parents of missing children often re-live their child's disappearance with every media report or every sighting. One mother recalled the pain of even going shopping because she would see girls who looked like her daughter who had disappeared four years ago and this would evoke in her much emotional distress.

Other parents recall being unable to come to terms with grief when presented with the skeletal remains of their missing son or daughter. Somehow bones do not do justice to memories or allow parents to grieve for children who have disappeared without a trace, without the opportunity to say good bye.

For the family and friends of a missing person coming to terms with grief can be a real problem. Social workers and counsellors skilled in grief counselling can offer help. The major thing to understand is that grief is a process that everyone experiences at one time or another. Feelings of anger, guilt and pain should be expressed and discussed. By identifying expressed feelings the loss can be actualised and hopefully some resolution or acceptance achieved. Everyone experiences grief differently and ultimately each person must deal with their feelings on their own terms in their own time. For the loved ones of missing persons

the mourning is made more painful by the uncertainty of the situation.

Agencies and services designed to help with coping with grief are listed in the 'Resource Directory' at Chapter Ten.

Conclusion

Often a parent is unaware in the first instance whether a child has been abducted or voluntarily absented himself/herself. A range of initial actions were presented together with appropriate advice. In particular, the desirability of maintaining a diary of events was emphasised.

Problems associated with convincing authorities to take immediate action, once a missing persons report is made, were discussed.

In the event a successful outcome is achieved, ie. the missing person returns home, certain principles need to be followed. For instance, in the event of a child's running away, anger and recriminations are an inappropriate form of welcome. An honest attempt to identify problems and improve communications is more likely to achieve lasting success. Such negotiations are improved by an understanding of the reasons juveniles run away from home and, accordingly, a typology of reasons was offered.

Reasons for a child's running away were further considered in this Chapter, as motivation is important to the remedial process upon a child's return home. Six broad reasons categorised by Christine Vincent were presented.

Legal considerations in the event of a missing person were very briefly discussed as well as the need for family solidarity in such cases.

Finally and, probably, most importantly, the question of emotional coping and grief were considered. Discussion ranged from counselling through blaming to family bickering.

PART IV
REFERENCE

CHAPTER TEN

RESOURCE DIRECTORY

FOR MISSING PERSONS, THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter provides brief descriptions of agencies, organisations and services that offer help to missing persons, their families and friends.

It also provides descriptions of family and adolescent counselling centres, health centres and telephone advice and counselling services.

The Chapter lists key services in alphabetical order in each State and Territory. Although reasonable care has been taken it is not claimed the Chapter is exhaustive by any means.

Some of the services listed below may have changed telephone numbers since the time of writing. If you have a problem contacting any of the Directory's services the phone number(s) can be checked with Telecom's Directory Assistance on 013 for local directory numbers and 0175 for elsewhere in Australia.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Police

In all States and Territories missing persons should be reported to a local police station (preferably near where the person disappeared or near his/her home address).

At local police stations details of reported missing persons are taken and forwarded to the respective Missing Persons Bureau/Unit of each State and Territory.

If a missing person is believed to be in another State, that State's police force is advised by police in the home State.

See the White Pages under State Government for your local police station, eg. Sydney police stations are found at the front of the A-K Section White Pages of the telephone directory in the NSW Government Section under 'Police Stations'. Also, check your telephone director for other police services which may be of assistance, eg. sexual assaults unit.

Hospitals

Missing persons are sometimes located in hospitals because of personal injury, physical/sexual assault, distress, depression or psychological trauma.

See 'Hospitals' in the Yellow Pages of the telephone directory.

Lifeline

Lifeline provides 24-hour crisis telephone counselling, referral and advice. This Directory lists Lifeline numbers in each State and Territory.

See the White Pages under 'Lifeline' for the service in your area.

Australian Red Cross Society

The Australian Red Cross provides access to the Central Tracing Agency of the International Red Cross. Services undertaken in this respect include:

- * obtaining, recording, processing and transmitting all information required for the identification of persons in need of ICRC assistance;

- * transmitting correspondence between dispersed family members when the normal means of communication are disrupted;
- * tracing persons reported missing or whose relatives are without news of them;
- * re-uniting families, organising transfers and repatriations;
- * issuing travel documents to persons without identity papers (refugees, displaced persons, political exiles) wishing to travel to a country willing to receive them or be repatriated; and issue capture, sickness or other certificates to persons who, in order to obtain assistance or pensions, must supply such evidence.

This Chapter lists the Red Cross headquarters in each State and Territory.

Youth Refuges

Youth refuges often provide accommodation to missing and runaway persons. Because of their relationship with young people, youth workers in refuges cannot always reveal the whereabouts of specific individuals but often, through their network of street contacts, they can get messages to persons or have them phone home.

This Chapter lists key youth refuges in metropolitan and country centres only. More information on refuges may be obtained from major Youth Accommodation services listed in the directory, the Council of Social Services in each State and Territory or through State departments covering Youth Health, Welfare, Community Services etc.

Schools

Most schools now employ either counsellors or social workers who are trained to offer advice and support to students and their families on problems and concerns they may be experiencing.

Contact your school office or principal for further information.

Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS)

Telephone Interpreter Service can assist with personal and practical problems, general information and help communicating with doctors, solicitors and others.

TIS numbers are found at the front of the White Pages in the telephone directory.

Migrant Resource Centres

Most large metropolitan areas have migrant resource centres which assist migrants with information, advice, support and referral to other services.

Migrant Resource Centres are found in the White Pages of the telephone directory.

Council/Shire/Regional Government Offices

Many councils etc. employ social workers, psychologists or counsellors to assist children, adolescents, parents and families. Councils are also a good source of referral to other local agencies and services.

See the telephone directory White Pages under 'Local Government' for your nearest office.

Operation 'Home Free'

The Greyhound Bus Company operates a 'Home Free' program in which it provides free coach travel to runaway juveniles returning home throughout Australia. Police approval is required before tickets are issued and both parents and missing juveniles wishing to utilise the scheme should consult their nearest police station.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Albury/Wodonga Youth Refuge (060) 217046

- . Counselling, crisis accommodation for 12-18 year olds
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Australian Red Cross (02) 2902622

- . New South Wales Headquarters
159 Clarence Street, Sydney 2000

Community Welfare Centre (FACS Wagga Wagga) (069) 217225

- . Young offender support workers help with counselling, court work and probation
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Crisis Line (02) 4398999

- . A telephone referral and general counselling service
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

I'm OK Line (008) 424730

- . A recorded message can be left on this toll-free number to be passed on to parents, friends or guardians
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Lifeline

Sydney	(02) 2642222	Illawarra	(042) 281211
Bathurst	(063) 317731	Lismore	(066) 218488
Broken Hill	(080) 885888	Lower Blue Mts	(047) 513700
Burwood	(02) 7441016	Manly	(02) 9496699
Camden	(046) 667511	Newcastle	(049) 615353
Campbelltown	(046) 667511	Nowra	(044) 215333
Coffs Harbour	(066) 511822	Parramatta	(02) 6359000
Gosford	(043) 24111	Sthn Highlands	(048) 683211
Grafton	(066) 426377	Tamworth	(067) 657000
Hawkesbury	(045) 711622	Wollongong	(042) 281211
Hornsby	(02) 4774440		

Lismore Youth Refuge (066) 217535

- . 103 Wyrallah Road, Lismore 2480
- . Emotional support, referral and short term accommodation
- . Operates after 4.00 pm, 7 days per week.

Marrickville Legal Centre (02) 5592899**Macquarie Legal Centre (02) 6891777**

- Solicitors and youth workers available for legal advice and dealing with criminal and social security court appearances
- Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Mental Health Information Service (02) 8165688

- Counselling and information on Mental Health issues, referrals to hostels, hospitals and homes
- Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

NSW Police - Community Relations (02) 3390277

- For advice on Protective Behaviour contact the police representative, Community Relations, Police Headquarters.

NSW Police - Juvenile Services Bureau

- Sydney numbers, all (02)

Miranda	5258211
Flemington	7640055
Parramatta	6897790
Chatswood	4110914
- Juvenile Services Bureaus investigate child assault and abuse cases including: neglect, maltreatment, physical and sexual assault. Trained police officers are also available to offer advice and referral to other government agencies
- In areas outside Sydney contact your local police station and ask them for your nearest Juvenile Services Bureau.

Newcastle Youth Service (049) 692466

- 150 Beaumont Street, Hamilton 2303
- Counselling, support, referral and advice; help with long term accommodation
- Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

No. 31 Presbyterian Youth Crisis Centre (02) 3586057

- 31 Roslyn Street, Kings Cross 2011
- Accommodation and counselling for youth in crisis
- Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Salvation Army Missing Persons (02) 2641711

- . 25 Cooper Street, Surry Hills 2010
- . Provides help in locating missing adults only (18 years and over) through its independent bureau
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday

Salvos Care Line (02) 3316000 or 3312000

- . This telephone counselling and referral service regularly deals with young people and their problems
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Sydney City Mission Youth Crisis Centre (02) 3322000

- . 'The Opposition', 191 Darlinghurst Road, Kings Cross 2011
- . Counselling and short term accommodation service
- . The Drop-in Centre at the rear of the crisis centre provides meals and counselling for young people
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Sydney Rape Crisis Centre (02) 8196565 (reverse charges)

- . PO Box 188, Drummoyne 2047
- . Provides support, counselling, advice as well as medical, legal and accommodation referral for rape and sexual assault cases
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) (02) 2676962

- . Fayworth House, 3rd Floor, 381 Pitt Street, Sydney 2000
- . An international organisation of bereaved parents offering friendship and understanding to other bereaved parents
- . TCF has a counselling network throughout Sydney and NSW
- . Operates 10.30 am - 3.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

2UE Kids Care Line (02) 9297799

- . A telephone counselling service which offers counselling on family issues and concerns from trained psychologists and social workers
- . Advice and referral is also available
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Wagga Wagga Youth Refuge (069) 214436

- . Counselling, referral and short term crisis accommodation
- . Operates 4.00 pm - 10.00 am, 7 days per week.

Wayside Chapel Crisis Centre (02) 3586577 or (008) 221901

- . 29 Hughes Street, Potts Point 2011
- . The Wayside Chapel has its own missing persons centre
- . Telephone counselling and referral, drug and alcohol advice and family reconciliations are some of the services offered by the centre
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Welfare Rights Centre (02) 2675077

- . 4th Floor, 245 Castlereagh Street, Sydney 2000
- . Assists with social security claims and advice
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Wollongong Youth Refuge (042) 281946

- . 467 Crown Street, Wollongong 2500
- . Emotional support, advocacy, referral and accommodation for young people
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Youth Accommodation Association (YAA) NSW (02) 6892874 or (008) 424830

- . PO Box 810A, Harris Park 2150
- . The YAA provides accommodation for people in need on its Emergency Youth Accommodation Line
- . YAA membership includes most refuges and services offering medium term accommodation in New South Wales
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Family and Community Services (FACS)

- . See the White Pages A-K telephone directory under NSW Government Section 'Youth and Community Services' for your nearest office
- . FACS is the NSW Government Department providing information, advice and referral to other departments and agencies; YACS also has specific responsibility for Wards of the State, probationers, parolees and department hostels
- . **Child Protection Line (02) 8185555**
- . The Child Protection line is concerned with phone counselling in matters concerning child safety and welfare
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Youthline Sydney (02) 2641177, Parramatta (02) 6333666

- . Youthline offers advice, counselling and referral specifically for young people
- . Operates 12.00 noon - 12.00 midnight, 7 days per week.

VICTORIA**Australian Red Cross (03) 6169911**

- Victoria Headquarters
171 City Road, South Melbourne 3205

Bayside Youth Hostel (Frankston) (03) 7812984

- Provides emergency accommodation for 15-17 year olds and referral to drug, alcohol and employment counsellors
- Medical and legal aid referrals are also available
- Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Buoyancy Foundation (03) 4293322

- 46 Rowena Road, Richmond 3121
- A drop in centre providing crisis telephone counselling on drug related problems
- Assessment counselling and legal advice available for drug dependents and their families
- Drop-in centre operates 10.00 am - 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday
- Telephone counselling operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Children's Court Advisory Service (03) 6546033

- 108 Batman Avenue, Melbourne 3000
- Offers free confidential advice on matters related to child and family problems, children's court procedures and community services in Victoria
- Staffed by social workers
- Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Community Health Centres

- Provides: counselling on personal and family problems
health programs
information on local services
community education
- See the White Pages A-K telephone directory under Victorian Government Section 'Community Health Centres' for your local centre
- Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Community Services Victoria (CSV)

- This State Government Department employs child protection social workers who investigate complaints of neglected or abused children and teenagers
- The CSV has specific responsibility for Wards of State, probationers, parolees and department hostels
- Phone information, advice and referral are available
- See White Pages A-K telephone directory under Victorian Government Section 'Community Services Victoria - Protective Services' for your local office
- Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Direct Line (Drug and Alcohol) (03) 6141999 or (008) 136385

- Telephone counselling service offering support, information and referral on alcohol and drug related problems
- Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Ecumenical Migration Centre (03) 4284948

- 133 Church Street, Richmond 3121
- Provides information, counselling and referral
- Experienced in assisting Greek, Turkish and Vietnamese families
- Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Federation of Community Legal Centres (03) 4192752

- 272 George Street, Fitzroy 3065
- The Federation is the umbrella body for 28 general and specialist legal centres throughout Victoria covering areas such as aboriginals, tenants, women, medical, family and occupational laws
- Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Lifeline (see also Multi-lingual Lifeline entry below)

Melbourne	(03) 6621000	Horsham	(008) 153011
Albury-Wodonga	(060) 211311	Morwell	(051) 344311
Ballarat	(053) 312255	Wornambool	(005) 623254
Geelong	(052) 222233		

- Provides information, counselling and referral to those in crisis. Psychologists are available for face-to-face counselling
- Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Message Home (03) 6509129

- . A message can be left at this number to be passed on to family or guardians
- . The service operates to any part of Australia
- . It is free, confidential and no questions are asked
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Multi-lingual Lifeline (see also Lifeline entry above)

Arabic	(03) 6622141	Turkish	(03) 6622929
Greek	(03) 6222448	Vietnamese	(03) 6622727
Italian	(03) 6222595		

- . Operates 5.00 pm - 12 midnight, Monday to Friday.

Parents Anonymous (03) 6544654

- . Individual and family counselling for parents and teenagers experiencing problems; experienced in dealing with parental stress
- . Face-to-face counselling operates 10.00 am - 4.00 pm, Monday to Friday
- . Crisis phone counselling operates 7.00 am - 12 midnight, 7 days per week.

Parents of Missing Children Inc (03) 7621592

- . A crisis telephone service to assist and support parents of children who are missing or who have run away
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Personal Emergency Service (03) 3476466

- . Provides general counselling and referral
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Royal Children's Hospital - Adolescent Unit (03) 3455893 or 3455890

- . Flemington Road, Parkville 3052
- . Provides counselling for young people 13 to 18 years old, with any kind of problem. No doctors referral is needed. An appointment must be made
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Salvation Army (03) 6987222

- . 69 Bourke Street, Melbourne 3000
- . The Salvation Army operates a Missing Persons Bureau which carries out private investigations in respect of adults only (18 years and over)
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

St Kilda Youth Refuge (03) 5344612 or 5345706

- . 31 Grey Street, St Kilda 3182
- . Counselling, referral, advice and accommodation for 15-24 year olds
- . Crisis centre operates:
 - 10.00 am - 12 midnight, Sunday to Thursday
 - 10.00 am - 2.00 am, Friday and Saturday
- . Accommodation centre operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Stopover Emergency Youth Accommodation Service (03) 3470822

- . PO Box 384, Carlton South 3053
- . Providing emergency accommodation, information and referral for 13 to 18 year olds
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) (03) 2328222

- . TCF is an organisation offering comfort, compassion and strength to bereaved parents. They have a network of contacts throughout Victoria.

Victims of Crime Assistance League (VOCAL) Inc (03) 6901877

- . 71 Eastern Road, South Melbourne 3205
- . A voluntary organisation formed to assist victims of crime
- . Offers information on services, compensation for victims of crime and practical advice and information
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Victoria Police - Community Policing Squads (03) 3203635

- . A squad of police men and women trained to handle children's and family problems; also to investigate complaints of neglected, maltreated or abused children and teenagers
- . Informal advice and referral to other social service agencies available
- . In Metropolitan Melbourne see White Pages A-K telephone directory under Victorian Government Section 'Police' for your local telephone number
- . In country areas contact the local police station and ask for the nearest Community Policing Squad.

Victorian Association of Citizens Advice Bureaus (03) 4199866

- . 10th Floor, 176 Wellington Parade, East Melbourne 3002
- . Provides information, referral and some legal advice
- . Citizens Advice Bureaus operate a network of bureaus throughout Victoria
- . See the White Pages of telephone directory for your nearest bureau
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Welfare Rights Unit (03) 4161111

- . 1st Floor, 193 Smith Street, Fitzroy 3065
- . Assists with social security and other welfare claims and advice
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Wellington Youth Counselling Centre (03) 5298020

- . 4th Floor, 594 St Kilda Road, Melbourne 3004
- . Provides individual, group and family counselling for teenagers and adults; appointments necessary
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday (evenings by appointment).

Western Port Youth Refuge (03) 7915692

- . Provides emergency accommodation, advice counselling and referral for 15-20 year olds
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Women's Refuge Referral Service (03) 3298433

- . Offers advice and emergency accommodation referral for females escaping domestic violence, incest and other abuse situations
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

QUEENSLAND**Anglican Cairns Youth Service (070) 536410**

- . PO Box 2179, Cairns 4870
- . Provides support, counselling, accommodation, referral and assistance with independent living for homeless youth
- . Major part of this service is to reconcile young people with their families where appropriate
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Australian Red Cross (07) 312551

- . Queensland Headquarters
409 Adelaide Street, Brisbane 4000

Bayside Adolescent Boarding Inc (07) 3934176 or 3934170

- . 105 Edith Street, Wynnum 4178
- . Provides accommodation, support and referral for young people
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Bracken Ridge Family and Youth Support Group (07) 2690691

- . Norris Road, Bald Hills 4036
- . Provides a message home service, counselling and referral for youth, parents and families
- . Operates 9.00 am - 4.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Brisbane Citizens Advice Bureau (07) 2214343

- . 69 Anne Street, Brisbane 4000
- . Provides information, advice and referral on a range of services including medical, legal and financial
- . Operates 10.00 am - 4.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Brisbane City Mission (07) 2523571

- . 702 Ann Street, Fortitude Valley 4006
- . Provides counselling, drug and alcohol advice, crisis accommodation and referral
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Brisbane Youth Service (07) 8521335

- . 111 Wickham Street, Fortitude Valley 4006
- . Provides youth counselling, information, reconciliations, referrals for accommodation and legal advice
- . A message home service is also available
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Bundaberg Area Youth Service (071) 716017

- . 70 Woongarra Street, Bundaberg 4670
- . Provides short term emergency accommodation
- . Youth workers provide counselling, guidance, encouragement advice and referral for 14-24 year olds
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Crisis Counselling (07) 2246855

- . Emergency counselling for people in crisis
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Department of Family Services (07) 2277111

- . The Department is responsible for children, juveniles and families
- . Provides advice, information and referral to other departments, services and organisations
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Gold Coast Youth Service (075) 911933 or 913309

- . 102 Queen Street, Southport 4215
- . A major referral and advice centre providing:
 - counselling
 - Independent living skills program
 - Personal development courses
 - Street programs
 - Referral for accommodation
- . Operates 10.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday
- . A telephone answering service is in operation after hours.

Hebron House (07) 389776

- . 15 Frasers Road, Ashgrove 4060
- . Accommodation and counselling available
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Lifeline

Brisbane	(07) 252111	Maroochydore	(071) 435099
Aitkenvale	(077) 790022	Maryborough	(071) 212626
Bundaberg	(071) 726788	Rockhampton	(079) 273399
Cairns	(070) 514300	Rockhampton area	
Gold Coast	(075) 399999	excl. Mackay	(008) 015220
Ipswich	(07) 2819555	Toowoomba	(076) 329900
Lower Burdekin ext	(077) 833000	Warwick/Dalby	
Mackay	(079) 512333	area	(008) 016017

Maroochydore Area Youth Service (071) 434543

- PO Box 271, Maroochydore 4558
- A crisis centre offering counselling, material assistance referral and emergency accommodation for youth
- Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Message Home Brisbane (07) 8395334 Cairns (079) 573800

- A message can be left at this number to be passed on to family or guardians
- The Service operates to any part of Australia
- It is free, confidential and no questions are asked
- Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Sexual Abuse Treatment Program (07) 2275915

- Provides individual counselling for families and group counselling for children, mothers and perpetrators
- Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) (07) 3591897
(07) 8487086
(07) 3766463

- An international organisation of bereaved parents, offering friendship and understanding to other bereaved parents
- TCF has a network of contacts throughout Queensland.

Woodridge Family Services (07) 2088100 or 2088255

- Provides individual and family counselling including family reconciliations
- Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Youth Advocacy (07) 8571155

- 217 Lutwyche Road, Windsor 4030
- Provides legal advice, accommodation and advocacy for young people 16 years and under
- Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday
- Legal advice operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Youth Emergency Services (07) 3577655

- 25 Thorne Street, Windsor 4030
- Provides emergency accommodation, assessment, counselling reconciliations and referrals
- Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA**Anglicare (09) 3217033, 3214217 or 3216564**

- . 42 Collins Street, West Perth 6005
- . Perth's major non-government health and welfare service
- . Offers youth counselling, emergency accommodation, advice on family problems and referrals
- . Operates 8.30 am - 5.30 pm, Monday to Friday.

Australian Red Cross (09) 3210321

- . Western Australia Headquarters
357-363 Murray Street, Perth 6000

Centre Care Marriage and Family Service (09) 3356644

- . 25 Victoria Square, Perth 6000
- . Provides personal, marriage, adolescent and family counselling advice and referral
- . Staff comprises: psychologists, social workers and welfare workers
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Citizens Advice Bureau of Western Australia (09) 3442200

- . City Arcade Office Tower, 207 Murray Street, Perth 6000
- . Offers advice and referral on a host of concerns/problems
- . Provides a full time legal service
- . Operates 9.00 am - 4.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Concerned Christians Growth Ministries (09) 3442200

- . 176 Albert Street, Osborne Park 6017
- . Provides counselling, advice and information to persons who are concerned about religious cults and sects
- . Researches and monitors religious groups and provides public education through the media and a research library
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday
- . Emergency after hours telephone number (09) 3499438.

Crisis Care Unit (09) 3214144 or (008) 199008

- . PO Box 8146, Stirling Street, Perth 6000
- . A major Perth-based service run through the Department for Community Services
- . Provides 24-hour crisis intervention on a range of problems including child protection and domestic violence

Crisis Care Unit (09) 3214144 or (008) 199008 (cont'd)

- . Crisis care is a mobile service offering intervention and counselling for families and individuals experiencing stress
- . Toll free number offers support counselling and referral for areas outside Perth
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Fremantle Youth Service (09) 3253210 or 3254184

- . 7 Quarry Street, Fremantle 6160
- . A collective of youth services including employment, health, counselling and a drop-in centre
- . Operates 8.30 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Jesus People Inc (JPI) (09) 3254677

- . 277 Hay Street, East Perth (PO Box 6282) 6000
- . Provides a range of youth and community services in Western Australia including: counselling, drug and alcohol advice, accommodation, employment training and women's services.

Message Home (09) 3212330

- . A recorded message can be left at this number to be passed on to friends, guardians or family
- . The service is free and confidential
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Princess Margaret Hospital for Children - Child Sexual Abuse Service (09) 3828222

- . Roberts Road, Subiaco 6008
- . Provides a service to the children and families of Western Australia in the total area of child protection
- . The hospital funds a child sexual abuse unit which is staffed by specialists in the medical and social work areas
- . After-hours calls are managed by a social worker who is on-call and an appropriately trained medical officer
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Samaritans

Perth	(09) 3915555	Geraldton	(099) 214411
Albany	(098) 414777	Kalgoorlie	(090) 214111
Bunbury	(097) 211000	Port Headland	(091) 7211999

- . Provides 24-hour crisis telephone counselling, referral and advice throughout Western Australia.

Samaritan Youthline (09) 3812500

- . Telephone counselling for despairing and suicidal youth
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Support Group for Parents of Teenagers (09) 3226669

- . C/- YWCA, Suite 2, 17 Ord Street, West Perth 6005
- . Provides preventative counselling with teenagers experiencing problems at home
- . Support, referral and advice are other aspects of the service
- . A migrant worker is available
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) (09) 3703037

- . An international organisation of bereaved parents offering friendship and understanding to other bereaved parents
- . TCF has a counselling network in Perth and throughout Western Australia
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Western Australia Police (09) 2221111

- . Missing Persons Unit, Police Headquarters,
2 Adelaide Terrace, Perth 6000

Western Institute of Self Help (WISH) (09) 3833188

- . Provides information and advice on the hundreds of self-help groups in Western Australia
- . Covers groups dealing with a variety of concerns including: Aborigines, abuse, addiction, children and parents, migrants, grief, health, communities, women and youth
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

YMCA 'Street Syde' (09) 3252744

- . 119 Murray Street, Central Perth 6000
- . Provides emergency and short term accommodation for 15 to 25 years olds
- . Referral and counselling service available
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Youth Health Service (09) 3221489

- . 118 Hay Street, West Perth 6005
- . Offers education, information, counselling, medical treatment and practical advice on all health issues/problems
- . The service employs a social worker, doctor and nurses and has a strong emphasis on preventative medicine
- . Operates 8.30 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Youth Legal Service (09) 4810560

- . 1st Floor, 42 Collins Street, West Perth 6005
- . Provides legal advice and referral for young people
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA**Adelaide Housing and Outreach Centre (ADHOC) (08) 2316111**

- . 104A Currie Street, Adelaide 5000
- . Assists young people with advocacy, referral and counselling in the accommodation area
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Australian Red Cross (08) 2674277

- . South Australia Headquarters
211 Childers Street, North Adelaide 5006

**Child and Adolescent Family Health Service (08) 2232477
(Adolescent Resource Unit)**

- . 295 South Terrace, Adelaide 5000
- . Preventative health service and family counselling for adolescents/family conflict
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Citizens Advice Bureau (08) 2124070

- . A major advice and referral service with a network of centres throughout South Australia
- . Legal advice is available between 1.00 pm - 2.00 pm, Monday to Friday
- . Provides welfare rights, advice and assistance.

Crisis Care (Department of Community Welfare) (08) 2721222

- . A crisis counselling and referral telephone service
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Joyce Schultz Women's Shelter (08) 2240198

- . 248 South Terrace, Adelaide 5000
- . This Red Cross run service provides accommodation, counselling and referral for young women
- . Operates 4.00 pm - 10.00 am, 7 days per week.

Lifeline

Adelaide	(08) 2123444	Port Lincoln	(086) 825657
Mount Gambier	(087) 259111	Port Pirie	(086) 323300
Port Augusta	(086) 422132	Whyalla	(086) 455400

Queen Elizabeth Hospital - Sexual Referral Centre (08) 450222

- . Woodville Road, Woodville 5011
- . Emergency medical and counselling for rape and sexual assault victims
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Saint John's Refuge (08) 2237558

- . 29 Moore Street, Adelaide 5000
- . Providing emergency accommodation, counselling and referral for 12-21 year olds
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Salvation Army Youth Accommodation Service (08) 2624242**Burlendi (08) 2810163, 22 Spains Road, Salisbury**

- . Provides emergency accommodation, counselling and referral for 14-17 year olds.

Wandendi (08) 2624242, 797 Main North Road, Parooka

- . Provides emergency accommodation, counselling and referral for 18-25 year olds
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Service to Youth Council (SYC) (08) 2118466

- . 88 Currie Street, Adelaide 5000
- . SYC provides accommodation, advice counselling and referral for young people
- . Street youth workers have daily contact in areas where runaways and homeless youth congregate
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) (08) 439205

- . An international organisation of bereaved parents
- . Offers friendship and understanding to other parents
- . Contacts throughout South Australia.

The Second Storey (08) 2320233

- . 112 Rundle Mall (entrance off Charles Street), Adelaide 5000
- . Adolescent counselling and support service dealing with young people in crisis
- . Telephone counselling operates:
 - 9.00 am - 8.00 pm, Monday to Thursday
 - 9.00 am - 9.00 pm, Friday
- . Youth workers available for counselling:
 - 12 noon - 8.00 pm, Monday to Wednesday
 - 2.00 pm - 8.00 pm, Thursday
 - 4.00 pm - 9.00 pm, Friday

Trace-A-Place

- . 88 Currie Street, Adelaide 5000
- . Provides needs assessment and referral for crisis accommodation
- . Operates 10.00 am - 4.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

West Care (08) 2312850

- . 212 Wright Street, Adelaide 5000
- . Provides counselling, referral and emergency youth accommodation for 15-21 year olds
- . Operates 8.00 - 4.00 pm, 7 days per week.

Victims of Crime Service Inc (VOCS) (08) 2236038

- . Offers support, counselling, referral, legal advice and companions for court attendance
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday
- . A telephone answering machine is in operation after hours.

TASMANIA**Australian Red Cross (002) 343477**

- Tasmania Headquarters
53 Collins Street, Hobart 7000

Child Protection Board (002) 302921

- Knapwood House, 38 Montpelian Retreat, Battery Point, Hobart 7000
- Provides risk assessment, counselling, referral and crisis intervention in cases of child maltreatment and sexual abuse
- Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Citizens Advice Bureau (002) 440600

- Eastern Shopping Complex (Eastlands), Bligh Street, Rosny Park 7018
- Offers information and referral on a range of services both government and private including:
legal and welfare advice
where to seek counselling and accommodation, financial assistance, support and advice
- Operates 10.00 am - 4.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Department of Community Welfare (002) 308011

- 12 Murray Street, Hobart 7000
- The Department of Community Welfare provides referral and advice on other agencies and government departments
- Local offices employ social workers and psychologists for child, adolescent and family counselling
- Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday
- Child welfare officers are available 24-hours on telephone, (002) 303736.

Hobart Community Legal Service (002) 345988

- 29 Strahan Street, North Hobart 7000
- Provides free legal advice and referral
- Service is involved in law reform and community education
- Free legal advice sessions are held Monday and Thursday evenings between 6.00 and 7.30 pm
- Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Karinya Young Women's Shelter Launceston (003) 449520

- . Emergency Accommodation, advice and information for young women 16-25 years old
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Lifeline

Hobart (002) 280224
 Burnie (004) 317766
 Life Link Launceston (003) 313355

North West Youth Shelter (004) 247375

- . 176 William Street, Davenport 7310
- . Offers accommodation, support, advice and referral for young homeless people
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Northern Youth Shelter Association (003) 316622

- . PO Box 1210, Launceston 7250
- . Provides crisis accommodation, counselling and advice for 14-21 year old males
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Sexual Assault Support Service (002) 311811

- . PO Box 217, North Hobart 7002
- . Provides support, counselling, legal and medical referral in cases of sexual assault
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) (002) 552145

- . An international organisation of bereaved parents, offering friendship and understanding to other bereaved parents.

Youth Care (002) 346316

- . 199 Campbell Street, Hobart 7000
- . Provides referral, counselling and accommodation for young people in the Hobart area
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Youth Link Inc (004) 731744

- A crisis accommodation referral service for 12-25 year olds on the west coast
- Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Aboriginal Legal Aid

Darwin (089) 815266
 Alice Springs (089) 522933
 Katherine (089) 721133

- 1 Gardiner Street, Darwin
- Assists with legal representation and advice
- Services include:
 - assistance in obtaining lawful release while awaiting trial
 - collection of data for defence
 - public education in legal rights issues
 - assistance in enforcement of justice for all
- Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday
- A message can be left on the telephone answering service after hours.

Casey House Youth Refuge (089) 853538

- C/- YWCA, PO Box 2686, Darwin
- Provides emergency accommodation for 14-18 year olds, referral, individual and family counselling
- Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Crisis Line Darwin (089) 812040

- Crisis telephone counselling, advice and referral
- Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Department of Health and Community Services

- PO Box 40596, Casuarina NT 5792

Darwin (089) 203211 Katherine (089) 722555
 Alice Springs (089) 502501 Tennant Creek (089) 622442

- The Department has responsibility for health services in the Territory, including:
 - child health clinics
 - health centres and hospitals
 - migrant and women's health
- Provides information, advice and referral for personal or family counselling
- Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Northern Territory Police

- . Police Headquarters, Berrimah Police Centre, McMillans Road, Berrimah, Darwin (089) 223344
- . Police Station, Parsons Street, Alice Springs (089) 501211

Oakley House (089) 270251

- . C/- YWCA, GPO Box 2686, Darwin 5794
- . A refuge offering support and accommodation to teenage mothers and pregnant girls
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday
- . After hours contact Casey House (089) 853538.

Salvation Army (089) 818188

- . 49 Mitchell Street, Darwin 5790
- . Provides a missing adults (18 years and over) inquiry service, welfare office, referral for counselling and accommodation
- . Other services in the Territory include:
 - Katherine Booth House, Darwin (089) 819528 - a lone women's crisis centre
 - Alcoholic Rehabilitation Centre, Darwin (089) 812500 - provides advice, information and rehabilitation
 - Katherine Women's Crisis Centre (089) 731332
 - Alice Springs Welfare Officer (089) 529815
 - Alice Springs Hostel (089) 522777.

**Sexual Assault Referral Centre - Royal Darwin Hospital
(089) 208407 (bh) or (089) 207211 (ah)**

- . Provides counselling and support for victims, their families and friends
- . Follow-up medical services
- . Information and referral to legal, medical and financial services
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**ACT Health Authority (062) 454111**

- . ACTHA Building, Cnr Moore and Alinga Streets, Canberra City 2601
- . ACTHA coordinates and runs health services in the ACT including public hospitals, AIDS referral service, child and family guidance clinics, child health clinics, community health centres, health service hostels, mental health services, migrant health services and women's health services
- . ACTHA employs psychologists and social workers to deal with individual health and family problems
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday
- . See front of the White Pages of ACT telephone directory, Commonwealth Government Section 'ACT Health Authority' for services.

Ainslie Village (062) 486931

- . Quick Street, Ainslie 2601
- . Offers long term low cost accommodation and self help to persons 18 years and over
- . Welfare workers and counselling also available
- . Operates 9.00 am - 12.30 pm and 2.00 pm - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday
- . Person(s) on duty at village 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Australian Federal Police

- . City Police Station (062) 497444
- . Woden Police Station (062) 457377 or 457378
- . Belconnen Police Station (062) 514444
- . Tuggeranong Police Station (062) 314444

Australian Red Cross (062) 478675

- . ACT Headquarters
Hobart Place, Canberra City 2601

Belconnen Youth Centre (062) 514007

- . Chandler Street, Belconnen 2617
- . An advice, activities and referral service for young people
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Canberra Youth Refuge (062) 470330

- . 82 Bonython Street, Downer 2602
- . Provides crisis intervention counselling and referral
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Citizens Advice Bureau (062) 487988

- . Griffin Centre, Bunda Street, Canberra 2601
- . Offers information and advice on a range of services both government and private
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Civic Youth Centre

- . 14 Cooyong Street, Canberra City 2601
- . Offers a range of services, all telephone numbers (062):
 - Shortcuts 571515 - information, referral and advocacy service; assisting youth with problems including health and finance
 - The Foundry 472707 - a drop-in centre for youth providing employment programs for the young unemployed under the Commonwealth Youth Support Scheme (CYSS)
 - Youth Accommodation Group (YAG) 472428 - the umbrella body concerned with youth housing in the ACT
 - Youth Health Worker 474121 - provides information and access to health services
 - Youth Worker 470770 - provides advice and advocacy for youth
- . All above services usually operate 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

LASA Youth Centre (Lions and Salvation Army) (062) 886248

- . 36 Damala Street, Waramanga 2611
- . Provides time out accommodation, crisis accommodation and referral for medium to long term accommodation
- . Operates 24-hours, 7 days per week.

Lifeline (062) 571111

- . 24-hour crisis counselling service, 7 days per week.

Tuggeranong Community Service (062) 314404

- . Apple-tree House, Erindale College Centre, Sternberg Crescent, Wanniasa 2903
- . A family and youth counselling service
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Welfare Rights and Legal Service (062) 472626

- . Room 7, Griffin Centre, Bunda Street, Canberra 2601
- . Free community legal centre specialising in public and private housing, advice on pensions and benefits, legal counselling and referral
- . For emergency legal advice after hours a message can be left on the telephone answering machine
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Woden Community Service (062) 822644

- . Corinna Street, Phillip 2606
- . Family and youth counselling, referral and advice
- . Operates 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday

Youthline (062) 572333

- . Advice, counselling and referral specifically for young people
- . Operates 4.00 pm - 12 midnight, 7 days per week.

INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORY**Introduction**

This International Directory provides a brief listing of major missing persons organisations/agencies in Canada, Great Britain, New Zealand and the United States. Some of these organisations have offices or contacts in other countries which may be of use to persons searching for a loved one. For further information regarding organisations/agencies in a particular country you are advised to contact your nearest High Commission, Embassy or Consulate.

The following information is supplied for those with access to International Direct Dialling (IDD) facilities. Where phone numbers are listed the first set of bracketed digits is the country code for IDD dialling, the second set of bracketed digits is the area code. For dialling IDD within Australia it is necessary to dial 0011 before the country code.

AUSTRALIA**International Social Services**

- . Provides support, negotiation and practical action in cases of non-custodial (parental) abduction overseas
- . **National Headquarters (03) 4284538**
280 Church Street
Richmond Vic 3121
- . **Branch Office (02) 2350395**
5th Floor
121 Pitt Street
Sydney NSW 2000

GREAT BRITAIN**Missing Persons Bureau**

- . New Scotland Yard
Broadway
London SW1H 0BG
Ph. (44) (1) 2301212

National Organisation for the Reunion of Child and Parent

- . 49 Russell Hill Road
Purley
Surrey CR2 2XB

Salvation Army Social Services Investigations Department

- . 110-112 Middlesex Street
London E1 7HZ
Ph. (44) (1) 9851181

CANADA**Royal Canadian Mounted Police**

- . Task Force on Missing Children
1200 Alta Vista Drive
Ottawa Ontario K1A 0R2
Ph. (1) (613) 993-7425

NEW ZEALAND**New Zealand Red Cross Society**

- . National Headquarters
14 Hill Street
Wellington North
Ph. (64) (4) 723750
- . The National Headquarters will be able to provide Red Cross contact addresses/phone numbers for other areas of New Zealand.
- . NZ Red Cross Wellington Branch
7 Donald MacLean Street
Wellington South
Ph. (64) (4) 899104

New Zealand Police Headquarters

- . 180 Molesworth Street
Wellington
Ph. (64) (4) 749499

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**Child Find**

- 7 Innes Avenue (PO Box 277)
New Paltz, New York 12501
Ph. (1) (914) 255-1848
(1-800) 431-5005 (reserved for use by children within
State)

Child Seekers

- PO Box 636, Colchester, Vermont 05446
Ph. (1) (802) 865-2250
- PO Box 6065, Rutland, Vermont 05701-6065
Ph. (1) (802) 773-5988

Commission on Missing and Exploited Children

- Juvenile Court of Memphis and Shelby County
616 Adams Avenue, Room 104
Memphis, Tennessee 38105
Ph. (1) (901) 528-8441

Florida Department of Law Enforcement

- Missing Children Information Clearinghouse
PO Box 1489
Tallahassee, Florida 32302
Ph. (1) (904) 488-5224
(1-800) 342-0821 (in State)

Hide and Seek Foundation

- PO Box 17226
Salem, Oregon 97305
Ph. (1) (503) 585-7909

Illinois Department of State Police

- I-Search
200 Armory Building
Springfield, Illinois 62706
Ph. (1) (217) 782-6429 or 782-5227
(1-800) 834-5763 (in State)

Missing Children Help Center

- 410 Ware Boulevard, Suite 400
Tampa, Florida 33619
Ph. (1) (813) 623-5437 (kids)

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

- 1835 K Street NW, Suite 600
Washington DC 20006
Ph. (1) (202) 634-9821
(1-800) 843-5678 (Nationwide)

New Jersey Commission on Missing Persons

- Quakerbridge Plaza Drive
Building 12A
CN119
Trenton New Jersey 08625
Ph. (1) (609) 588-3742

Search Reports Inc

- Central Registry of the Missing
396 Route 17 North
Hasbrouck Mounts, New Jersey
Ph. (1) (201) 288-4445

The Kevin Collins Foundation for Missing Children

- PO Box 590473
San Francisco, California 94159
Ph. (1) (415) 863-6333
(800) 435-7538 (in State)
(800) 272-0012 (Nationwide)

Vanished Children's Alliance

- 300 Orchard City Drive, Suite 151
Campbell, California 95008
Ph. (1) (408) 378-5678 (lost)

CHAPTER ELEVEN

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MISSING PERSONS

This Chapter comprises a bibliography of the missing persons literature. Regrettably, limited resources preclude annotation. Thus, readers wishing to read further in the literature will need to exercise their judgment on titles alone in making their selection.

Some citations will be found incomplete. However, they have been included in the hope they will nevertheless be of use.

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PART V
CONCLUSION

CHAPTER TWELVE

PUBLIC POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

This Chapter takes up a number of points pertaining to missing persons, most of which touch on issues possessing public policy implications and which bring together some of the study's more important elements.

Missing Persons Data

Firstly, the figures presented at Table 12.1 show reports to police only. We can only speculate as to the number of unreported missing person occurrences, the so-called black figure. We also can only speculate as to the proportion of

Table 12.1

Missing Persons Reports:
State by Gender by Age Status,
Calendar Year 1985†

Category	NSW	VIC*	QLD	WA	SA	TAS
MFH	3,235	5,604	2,780	1,889	4,000	321
MFI	879	2,966	0	1,216	768	125
Juvenile male	1,918	3,095	969	961	1,651	157
Juvenile female	1,375	2,761	997	1,240	1,404	188
All Juveniles	3,293	5,856	1,966	2,201	3,055	345
Adult male	492	1,656	491	568	888	57
Adult female	329	1,058	323	336	825	44
All Adults	821	2,714	814	904	1,713	101
All Males	2,410	4,751	1,460	1,529	2,539	214
All Females	1,704	3,819	1,320	1,576	2,229	232
All up Totals	4,114	8,570	2,780	3,105	4,768	446

Source: Police Departments

† Includes both Missing From Home (MFH) and Missing From Institutions (MFI)

* 1986

persons who are really missing and not lost or who are essentially victims of as yet undiscovered crimes and who are considered missing only in the absence of that knowledge. Fortunately, the numbers missing from institutions is well recorded and it is easily seen that in the cases of Victoria and Western Australia that absconders amount to more than one-half the total of missing persons reports.

Secondly, we note considerable differences between States. For example, more than twice as many persons in South Australia are apparently reported missing to police as are reported in Western Australia. It may be there are real differences between States in the rates of persons reported missing but it is doubtful they are of the magnitude suggested here. It seems possible in this case we are presented with differences in reporting and recording procedures. There is, too, the question of public expectations of police, which can, and in some cases, do vary between States. These observations should not be construed as an argument for standardised procedures. They are, in fact, a caution against pointless inter-State comparisons. There is, however, an argument for greater rigour in recording, classifying, processing and analysing, missing person reports in each jurisdiction so that accurate and detailed data are available for research and planning purposes within those jurisdictions.

If we accept a round figure of 18,000 free or non-institutionalised persons reported as missing in a twelve month period throughout the States, police are clearly faced with a substantial demand on their limited human resources. Even if it is assumed each report occupies only ten person hours to investigate in real police time, it will be appreciated that the demand on resources is massive.

In addition, there are institutional absconders of various kinds. Some of these absconders, for example, senile aged and juveniles,

would go missing even if they were not institutionalised. Indeed, some juvenile absconders were institutionalised by reason of their running away from home in the first instance. Data displayed at Table 12.1 suggest there are in the region of 6,000 absconders a year, exclusive of escaped prisoners, throughout the States. Although only about one-third as numerous as missing from home cases, absconders nevertheless also place a substantial load on police resources.

Prevention

In both the cases of persons missing from home and missing from institutions, the majority of missing persons are runaway juveniles, which fact presupposes substantial psychic and social trauma to many families. Both factors conduce to the conclusion that preventive action is warranted. However, it is worth noting that in respect of some families the departure of a dissatisfied juvenile member is an occasion for relief rather than trauma and it is not unknown for families (however constructed) to encourage the departure of unwanted children, 'throwaways' as opposed to 'runaways'. The secret, of course, is to achieve an environment in which reasoned and negotiated departures are possible (where inevitable), rather than unannounced departures. Some States have legislation under which disaffected youths can 'divorce' their parents.

Often, satisfying conditions are not achievable within a family unaided. Given the view of the Institute of Family Studies that children in the 1990s will be increasingly alienated, uncertain and scarred, there is room for concern on this point. Happy families are in the best interests of all concerned but it is far from certain that deeply unhappy families or, families with one or more deeply dissatisfied members, are desirable. Thus, departure from family life by some juveniles is not necessarily a bad thing. If the prognosis is for more troubled youth in the future, it follows there will be an increased need for family therapists capable of ameliorating unsatisfactory family

environments. In the United States, just under 2 per cent of homicides are said to be committed on one or both parents by dissatisfied offspring. It is not assumed that Australian children are about to follow this trend, but, given the numbers of runaway children in the three largest States and the pessimistic forecast of the Institute of Family Studies, it seems desirable we vigorously consider ways of strengthening intra-family relationships. Where breakdowns (temporary or permanent) involving children are unavoidable, the negotiating of alternative options with dignity, rather than harsh words followed by flight, should be the ideal, an issue worthy of consideration by social administrators exists. The appointment of a Minister for Family Affairs by the Western Australian government is seen as a positive move in this regard.

By far the greater proportion of non-institutionalised persons reported missing, on the data available, are juveniles. The gender distribution among juveniles is even overall, with males outnumbering females in New South Wales and females outnumbering males to a lesser extent in other States. Parents of Missing Children (POMC) has found in the cases referred to it that more females go missing than males in the twelve to sixteen age interval group. Also, that boys tend to be older, travel further and more often go alone. Females, on the other hand, are more likely to run away in company with someone else.

Greatest potential for preventive action exists among juveniles. A prerequisite for such activity is accurate and detailed data. A priority in the mainland States appears to be the classification of juvenile missing persons by cause. Such a classification would not only alert police officers, social workers, teachers and others, to the sorts of problems existing within the juvenile community but also encourage the development of preventive practices and strategies. Clearly, a young girl who is the subject of incestuous attention at home is a very different proposition in preventive terms than one who has been

reported for shoplifting or who objects to reasonable home discipline.

The major task in this regard is to identify the various types of runaways or, rather, those with the potential for running away from home and who may thereby be placing themselves at risk in ways such as by hitchhiking or prostitution.

Further research will be necessary to establish a useful classification. Generally speaking, loose classifications such as runaway, throwaway, non-custodial abduction are too broad to permit detailed analysis. Remedial activities, in particular, need to be tailored closely to causative factors. The Lincoln/Wilson classification of: (1) adventure seeker, (2) refugee, (3) escapee, and (4) problem solver discussed at Chapter Nine, is useful as it is based on motivation. However, in terms of preventive strategy development, further refinement is necessary. The formulation of such a classification is regrettably beyond the scope of this preliminary study but, when eventually undertaken, it should reflect the varied pressures and forms of victimisation to which youth are subjected. It is evident such preventive strategies will need to take into account the perspectives and opportunities of a number of social specialists, including Family Court counsellors, Children's Court magistrates, juvenile aid officers and, above all, teachers. The inculcation of protective behaviour as outlined in Chapter Eight is an excellent initiative. Nevertheless, we feel that more highly focused means of identifying children with problems and addressing those same problems is required.

With regard to adults, the necessity for detailed information is not so pressing. Many adult absences are no doubt planned, there are fewer such absences and, in any case - with the exception of senile and confused persons - the preventive potential is considerably less. Even so, there is a need to research selected aspects of the adult missing population. Police, for example,

will not be able to develop differential response strategies until the different categories and their relative proportions in the larger States at least are far better understood.

With regard to long-term runaways, though, there is an important crime prevention problem. Many are involved with drugs, prostitution, thefts and, no doubt, breakings. These matters were discussed at Chapter Six. The other crime prevention facet associated with runaway children is their vulnerability as victims of crime; beatings, homosexual rapes and being forced into criminal activities being only a few of the experiences open to runaways.

Untraced Persons

In terms of public concern, the missing person category probably most in need of research is that of the untraced. We refer to those persons, whether reported to police or not, who are deemed missing and who remain untraced at any given time. At the end of a twelve month period in 1985, roughly 257 persons reported as missing remained, according to police figures, untraced. What is the fate of these persons?

Some, of course, were traced or returned of their own accord within a short period. Others will never be located. Of that number some, especially adults, want it that way. Others, bearing in mind the Truro murders, the occasional human remains found in shallow bush graves and the occasional confession, are no doubt dead as a result of criminal attack. Some have possibly died as a result of misadventure and their remains either not located or unidentified. Some juveniles will have made adjustments, of varying degrees of satisfaction, with street life. Others will have become victims of pedophile and commercial sex operators and for a period at least will be earning their livings under such circumstances.

It is recognised the bulk of untraced persons at any one time

comes from the three eastern States and it is desirable the constitution of the untraced missing persons population (say in excess of twelve months) be thoroughly researched, especially with regard to characteristics of persons, circumstances and possible linkages.

Missing Persons Support and Information Centre (MPSIC)

When considering how to assist persons who are missing from their normal haunts, as well as their loved ones, the suggestion is sometimes made that a central organisation and/or index is necessary to coordinate and oversight all such efforts.

However, when one reviews the number of persons reported missing in the course of a twelve month period throughout Australian and, in particular, the number of unresolved cases, it is quite clear that, unlike Canada and the United States of America, no case exists for a central organisation. Nevertheless, within the mainland States (and, more particularly, within each of the three eastern States), the argument for central recording and, perhaps, servicing bodies is somewhat stronger. Unfortunately, it is difficult to assess the proposition in detail because not only do we lack information concerning the duration of missing persons' absences but we also have little information concerning the real need of persons involved for the sorts of services a central State body could provide. The establishing and detailing of such needs is a matter for further research. At this stage we can only advance tentative ideas.

One important background factor is that most runaway juveniles, the largest single group of missing persons (whether or not reported to police), have little confidence in either police or government social workers. Thus, the organisational base or affiliation of any State based central missing persons information centre is a matter of considerable importance.

The sorts of functions fulfilled by what might be termed a Missing Persons Support and Information Centre naturally require careful consideration, especially the extent to which they might overlap with or duplicate already existing services.

A name index of currently missing persons would seem central to such a body. Police would be the prime (but not sole) contributor to such an index. Numerous persons missing/absent from home, especially juveniles, are not reported to police and it is possible next of kin would wish their missing relatives to be listed on a MPSIC index. It would be a matter for consideration within each State and Territory as to the range of missing person categories to be included in such an index but, practically (and depending on the level of resources available) such a list could be extended to include friends and relatives with whom one has lost touch. Care would need to be taken against abuse of such a system by pedophiles. It is not unusual for persons having temporary care of a child to wish to establish confidentially whether he/she is a runaway. A comprehensive non-police index would be welcomed by such people.

Useful though such an index might be, it would hardly justify a MPSIC on its own. Thus, cognate functions need to be identified.

One function might be that of message relaying. Sometimes a runaway person does not wish to contact personally his/her relatives but is willing to pass messages through an impartial third party; such services already exist in some capital cities (see Chapter Ten). In this way parents can at least know their child is alive. With competent publicity and promotion such a service could serve an extremely useful purpose even though the level of message traffic is difficult to estimate. Large numbers would be necessary to attract government funding which, in turn, would require substantial promotion among street kids. Actual tracing would not normally be an appropriate function, although if police agencies were to shed 'broken contact' inquiries, it

might be considered appropriate for a MPSIC to undertake such inquiries - again, subject to resources.

A Missing Persons Support and Information Centre could provide a useful coordination focus for all concerned parties within a single State. In particular, it could provide a central accommodation occupant register of juveniles in occupying hostels, refuges, and halfway houses. Names would need to be telephoned in daily by house managers, and legislation would probably be necessary to ensure full compliance. Parents and police would be greatly consoled by such a system which would at least provide the solace of knowing that an absentee is safe. In addition, police inquiry time would be reduced.

Counselling and, more importantly, referral of both juveniles and adults having problems associated with home/family life could also be undertaken by a MPSIC. An extension of such a resource could be the provision of mediation services (or referral thereto) for parents and adolescents in conflict, especially where home leaving behaviour has occurred. Sound mediation services are already available in New South Wales and duplication would be simply avoided by making referrals.

Clearly, if a body such as a MPSIC were to be established within a State, much would depend on the funds available and the capacity of all interested groups to cooperate. A coordinating and referral role could be extremely useful as there is little point in duplicating services - such as counselling - when already well provided.

It would be a matter for local decision to determine issues of scale and function. But, regardless, staff would be needed to operate an around the clock service and sufficient computer access would be essential. Just how they would be provided and structured is a matter for conjecture at this stage. Only in Victoria is there a body already in existence which might adapt

its present roles to incorporate the operation of a MPSIC. Parents of Missing Children (POMC). Elsewhere, unless police and welfare agencies were prepared to support an anonymous offshoot, new and acceptable organisations would be required.

Criminal Statistics

Criminal statistics in all States are currently structured primarily according to legal rather than functional classifications. In many areas of anti-social activity the form of presentation is adequate. However, there are some areas of concern in which a new functional approach might be useful and missing persons (in all their various forms) is one. Thus, while the abduction category is catered for in terms of measurement by the legal offences of kidnap/abduction, it is often not realised the extent to which abduction occurs in the commission of other offences, such as rape and certain kinds of assaults. If those offences which relate directly to missing persons were re-collated, we would have a far clearer idea of the extent to which criminality associates with the missing person phenomenon. Other recorded information, such as reporting to police of children being approached by strangers, could similarly be collated to improve our understanding of the prevalence of associated behaviours.

Obviously, operationalisation of this consideration requires a great deal of conceptual and administrative refinement but it has obvious potential and warrants further thought within the larger States.

Police Inquiries

As indicated previously, missing person and cognate inquiries place a considerable load on police agencies. We note too, that some of the matters considered worthy of further deliberation at the commencement of this book involve further demands on police resources. A possible compensating factor concerns the shedding

or limiting of inquiries by police in those cases in which there is clearly no suggestion of criminal harm involved, not the least of which are lost friend/relative inquiries. There is a view that police should bite the bullet and decline to continue to accept such inquiries.

This discussion leads directly to the extremely important issue of risk criteria. We have earlier discussed several risk typologies by which police officers can check clearly defined acceptance criteria. There is no need to list them again but it does appear that all States could usefully review their current criteria and consider either:

- * a modification of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children criteria presented at Chapter Five;
- * reversing the onus of proof, so to speak, and treating all reports as involving probable risk/harm unless the contrary is clearly demonstrated.

In our view the second option is preferable but it is understood that it may be too revolutionary for some authorities at present and will require development of criteria of non-risk.

Reporting of Children Missing from Home

The number of homeless children in major eastern cities, and their accommodation, has become a social problem of some magnitude. For a variety of reasons, numbers of parents are avoiding their responsibility to provide for their offspring until they at least reach school leaving age. Sometimes children just leave home and may or may not be reported as missing by parents. Other times, mutual agreement exists between parents and child as to a child's leaving home. In such cases he/she is not classifiable as a missing person. As a result, there are unknown numbers of homeless juveniles on the streets, some of whom have been reported and others not. Social administration

would be assisted if it were made obligatory for parents whose children have left home before school leaving age to report that fact to a specified social welfare agency. However, care would need to be exercised in creating such a reporting provision that it was not inconsistent with other laws already on the statute book mandating parents' responsibility to provide for their offspring until a specified age is achieved.

Disposal of Located Juveniles Missing from Home

Lack of data precludes us from even speculating as to the proportion of missing children who run away from home as a result of something seriously wrong within their families, such as sexual molestation or violence. It is, however, undeniable that some children do run away from home in order to remove themselves from such circumstances. In such cases, it would serve no purpose to return a runaway to such a family environment.

It therefore seems sensible that every located runaway child be interviewed either by a police officer or social worker to ascertain that the child's home life is suitable. Such interviews might reveal evidence of crimes committed upon or by the runaway while absent, as well as health risks experienced. Ideally, where parental deficiencies are apparent, the parents should also be interviewed and assessed. Of course, provision such as these have substantial cost implications.

Homeless Youth Accommodation

The authors have avoided discussing the question of accommodation for homeless youth for several reasons. In particular, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission is considering the issue in depth at the time of writing. Additionally, this issue impacts upon many persons other than missing children. However, the authors wish to touch briefly on the management and quality of youth accommodation and the accountability of managers.

Care has to be taken with regard to the competence of accommodation managers and associated counsellors. Inexperienced youth workers are easily conned by runaway juveniles intent on covering their tracks and their sense of community responsibility is not always highly developed. One aspect of this deficiency is the failure of such workers to check their charges/clients with Missing Persons sections. Some youth workers have an ideological objection to liaising with police and welfare authorities; questions of credibility with their young clients can also arise.

It is not suggested youth workers and accommodation, such as are available, are all deficient. However, there have been cases of drug trafficking in youth accommodation as well as substandard and dirty premises. At the time of writing it is suspected that one self-employed youth counsellor is a pedophile. Even though rare, such conditions are entirely unacceptable. Runaway children, in particular, are extremely vulnerable and must be protected, even contrary to their own wishes at times. Legal standards need to be established in all jurisdictions with clear accountability provisions in respect of both workers and accommodation. Child welfare laws vary considerably from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, some being better formulated than others. For example, in some jurisdictions, youth accommodation program committees are required to communicate with parents of kids under the age of sixteen years; but, according to reports, this is often not done. Above all, such laws need to be strongly enforced.

Missing Person Categories

Frequent reference has been made in earlier chapters to our extremely limited knowledge concerning the missing person population. As already mentioned, targeted preventive packages concerning juveniles in particular are dependent upon such information. It seems highly desirable that police missing person report formats make adequate provision to record the

various categories and associated data. Prior to such innovation however, further research is necessary to arrive at meaningful categories that are useful to both police and social workers as well as others with responsibilities in the field. There is no particular necessity for standardisation of missing person classifications among police agencies. One option is for Missing Person Support and Information Centres, should such bodies eventuate, to develop such categories and compile data designed to reveal missing person populations' structures in useful formats.

ANNEXES

MISSING PERSONS DATA SET

ADULTS + JUVENILES + NON-ABSCONDERS + ABSCONDERS,
ALL STATES, 1985

		NSW		VIC*		QLD		WA		SA		TAS		GRAND TOTAL
		Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	
Total	MFF	4,114		8,570		2,780		3,105		4,768		446		23,783
Adults +	M	2,410	59	4,751	55	1,460	53	1,529	49	2,539	53	214	48	12,903
Juveniles	F	1,704	41	3,819	45	1,320	47	1,576	51	2,229	47	232	52	10,880
Total	MFF	3,235		5,604		2,780		1,889		4,000		321		17,829
Non-	M	n/a		2,796	50	1,460	53	907	48	2,049	51	152	47	-
Absconders	F	n/a		2,808	50	1,320	47	982	52	1,951	49	169	53	-
Total	MFF	821		2,714		814		904		1,713		101		7,067
Adults	M	492	60	1,656	61	491	60	568	63	888	52	57	56	4,152
	F	329	40	1,058	39	323	40	336	37	825	48	44	44	2,915
Total	MFF	821		1,721		814		489		1,713		90		5,648
Adult	M	492	60	975	57	491	60	286	58	888	52	51	57	3,183
Non-	F	329	40	746	43	323	40	203	42	825	48	39	43	2,465
Absconders														
Total	MFF	3,293		5,764		1,966		2,201		3,055		345		16,624
Juveniles	M	1,918	58	3,044	53	969	49	961	44	1,651	54	157	46	8,700
	F	1,375	42	2,720	47	997	51	1,240	56	1,404	46	188	54	7,924
Total	MFF	1,918		3,883		1,966		1,400		2,287		231		11,685
Juvenile	M	n/a		1,821	47	969	49	621	44	1,167	51	101	44	-
Non-	F	n/a		2,062	53	997	51	779	56	1,126	49	130	56	-
Absconders														
Total	MFF	879		2,966		0		1,216		768		125		5,954
Absconders	M	n/a		1,955	66	0		622	51	490	64	62	50	-
	F	n/a		1,011	34	0		594	49	278	36	63	50	-
Total	MFF	879		1,973		0		801		768		114		4,535
Juvenile	M	n/a		1,274	65	0		340	42	490	64	56	49	-
Absconders	F	n/a		699	35	0		461	58	278	36	58	51	-
Total	MFF	0		993		0		415		0		11		1,419
Adult	M	0		681	69	0		282	68	0		6	55	969
Absconders	F	0		312	31	0		133	32	0		5	45	450

* 1986

Source: Police Departments

NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN
PUBLICATIONS

Introduction

Since 1984 the National Center has developed a wide range of publications and distributed more than 1,700,000 copies free of charge to professionals and the general public. The response to them has been overwhelmingly positive.

The National Center also distributes a bulletin reporting on current Center activities, At the Center, and sends regular information updates to non-profit organisations and State clearinghouses. Following is a list and brief description of current National Center publications, available free of charge by writing the Publications Department, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Suite 600, 1835 K Street NW, Washington, DC 20006, United States of America.

Books

Child Molesters: A Behavioral Analysis This book, produced in cooperation with the FBI Academy, is an investigative tool for law enforcement officers handling cases of child sexual exploitation. The practitioner will learn valuable investigative strategies, the characteristics of a pedophile, and difficulties often encountered in these kinds of cases. Criminal justice professionals will benefit from the chapter on establishing probable cause through expertise when applying for search warrants in cases of child molestation. For the researcher, a list of additional reading and resources is found at the end of the text. First edition: February 1986; second edition: April 1987.

Child Pornography and Prostitution: Background and Legal

Analysis Attorneys, prosecutors, legislators, and students examining child sexual exploitation issues will find the thorough and up-to-date research in this book invaluable. Written in conjunction with the US Department of Justice, the American Bar Association, and Covenant House, the book provides a history of legislation and court decisions related to child pornography and juvenile prostitution, analysis of the current state of the law, and innovative directions for reform. Also included are exhaustive notes to the text and two charts of relevant State laws. (Available to specialists only.) October 1987.

Children Traumatized in Sex Rings Developed in conjunction with the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing, this handbook provides the health care practitioner with valuable guidelines in dealing with the child victim of sexual exploitation. Issues covered include an overview of child sexual abuse and exploitation, the physical and mental assessment of the child victim, interviewing techniques, and legal considerations. March 1988.

Interviewing Child Victims of Sexual Exploitation Researched and written by a command officer in the Louisville Division of Police, this text is useful to social service, law enforcement, and legal professionals interviewing the young victims of sexual exploitation. Of special interest are instructions on using anatomically correct dolls and a list of specific questions to guide the interview effectively. February 1987.

Investigator's Guide to Missing Child Cases Now in its second edition, the Investigator's Guide is an aid to law enforcement officers handling all types of missing child cases: runaways, throwaways, parental kidnappings, nonfamily abductions, and cases in which the circumstances of the disappearance are unknown. Also included in the book are 'investigative checklists' of the activities recommended in every step of the investigation. A

list of State clearinghouses and their telephone numbers is included on the inside back cover. First edition: June 1985; second edition: October 1987.

Parental Kidnapping Produced in cooperation with the American Bar Association, Parental Kidnapping contains step-by-step information for parents who have experienced a family abduction, guiding them through the civil and criminal justice systems, explaining the laws that will help them, and suggesting prevention methods. The book also provides location strategies for law enforcement officers investigating parental kidnapping and advice to attorneys, prosecutors, and family court judges handling these difficult cases. First edition: March 1985; second edition: September 1985; third edition: May 1988.

Selected State Legislation Published in 1985, Selected State Legislation has been used by thousands of child advocates and legislators throughout the country as a guide to the most effective State child protection laws. Areas of particular interest include legislation pertaining to the child victim/witness in the courtroom, licensing and criminal history information, court-appointed advocates, and parental kidnapping statutes. First edition: January 1985; second edition: December 1988.

Youth at Risk Using material from research on runaways conducted by the University of Pennsylvania, Youth at Risk presents findings of interest to the social service practitioner handling runaway cases. In addition to examining the profiles of runaways and the patterns of runaway behaviour, the book explores possible directions for system reform and prevention measures for parents. Further, the data reinforce the link between a missing child episode and the sexual exploitation of the child. September 1986.

Brochures

Child Protection This reassuring brochure for parents and families presents valuable safety tips to help prevent child abduction and sexual exploitation. Also included is a list of indicators of sexual abuse and a thought-provoking discussion of the 'stranger danger' myth. The attractive four-colour brochure is illustrated with drawings of a family. May 1985.

Child Protection Priorities in State Legislation This brochure outlines seven areas of legislation critical for an effective State code to protect children: (1) State clearinghouses, (2) education and prevention programs, (3) training for professionals, (4) child abuse reporting, (5) multi-disciplinary child protection teams, (6) parental kidnapping laws, and (7) protecting the privacy of the child victim. Of special interest is a description of the legislative process and how interested persons can encourage state legislation. February 1986.

For Camp Counselors Specifically targeted to camp counsellors and camp directors, this brochure details child abuse reporting responsibilities, the physical and behavioural signs of sexual abuse and exploitation, and actions to take if you suspect child sexual exploitation in your camp. May 1986.

Information Brochure The well known 'red brochure' provides a description of the services offered by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and an informative explanation of the problem. The brochure also contains an order form for National Center publications. February 1985.

The 'Just in Case ...' Series

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has developed a unique series of seven child protection brochures written for parents and families and presented in a highly readable and colourful format.

Just in Case ... You Are Considering Family Separation Written for parents who fear a parental kidnapping in the event of a family separation, the brochure provides valuable guidelines on prevention techniques, suggested provisions for the custody decree, and steps to take if the child is kidnapped by the other parent. Also included is a missing child poster format for a parental kidnapping. July 1986.

Just in Case ... You Are Dealing with Grief Following the Loss of a Child Parents who have experienced the loss of a child will learn a healthy approach to the grieving process and recommendations for ways to cope with the grief and guilt associated with the loss of a child. Social service professionals will benefit from the recommendations for dealing with bereaved families and the 'ideas on wellness'. January 1987.

Just in Case ... You Are Using the Federal Parent Locator Service Written in cooperation with the US Department of Health and Human Services, this brochure helps parents use the Federal Parent Locator Service of the Office of Child Support Enforcement to find the abductor and child in cases of parental kidnapping. February 1988.

Just in Case ... Your Child Is a Runaway Parents will gain important information about reporting a runaway child to the police and their rights under the Missing Children Act of 1982 regarding entry of the child's description into the FBI National Crime Information Center computer. Also included are steps to

take when your child returns home and a missing child poster format for finding runaways. October 1985.

Just in Case ... Your Child Is Missing This brochure includes five steps for parents to prepare in the event that their child becomes missing and actions to take if the child is missing. September 1985.

Just in Case ... Your Child Is the Victim of Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Written in a calm, straightforward manner, this brochure gives parents specific instructions on what to do if they suspect that their child has been sexually abused or exploited. Steps include interacting with medical professionals, law enforcement, and counsellors. September 1985.

Each year, thousands of Australians are reported missing to police. Most return home, unharmed, after a short period: but not all found nor are all those who are located unharmed.

MISSING PERSONS provides a wide range of information concerning this little recognised human problem. It presents a range of data concerning numbers of persons reported missing together with advice and information of value to families and friends, as well as those who have the task of tracing missing persons.