



# **THE CRIME OF FEAR**

## **ATTITUDES, PERCEPTIONS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY** The Final Report of the Mulgrave Community Safety Attitudes Survey

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September 1994

**ISBN 0 646 19861 0**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This Report summarises the results of the Mulgrave Community Safety Attitudes Survey. This research was proposed in an attempt to gain an accurate, current and comprehensive understanding of local perceptions of crime and safety which followed much public comment on Law and Order issues in the Region. A Working Group of voluntary members was established to oversight the research project which included representatives from the Mulgrave Shire Council (Councillors and Staff), the business sector, the Queensland Police Service and ACRO A Community Safety & Research Organisation Incorporated.

Goals of the Working Party were to survey all households and High School students in the Mulgrave Shire to assess:

- . attitudes towards crime and safety
- . levels of victimisation

. priorities for future program development and implementation.

This was achieved via a self-report Survey which was letterboxed, one per household throughout the Shire and a "census" style Survey conducted at the various High Schools in the region. It was expected that results of this research would guide the future development of Community Safety programs in the Region. Useable Surveys were obtained from 7327 persons by the close of the Survey period (2965 from students and 4362 from adults). The timeline for the Project was three months.

Given the relatively small crime problem in the Mulgrave Shire the researchers have been able to demonstrate that the fear of crime experienced by respondents is far in excess of actual crime statistics. The authors refer to this phenomenon as the "crime of fear" which is undermining the quality of life for ordinary citizens. It is imperative that future investigations consider those factors that shape beliefs about crime. It is clear from the current Research that our fear of crime is not mediated via the actual experience of crime but may be explained by media and social contact. Additional research must focus on the type of information being provided by these sources and the relative importance given them by respondents. Such matters are of vital importance to policy makers and others to ensure that information given to the general population does not have unintended negative residual effects, such as fear and intolerance - that it not be sensationalised, but that it must be accurate.

Results of the analyses which are presented in detail in the Results section of this Report indicate that the majority of respondents feel safe from crime in their own home and neighbourhood. Feelings of safety are reduced however when shopping, when in the Cairns City Place at night and when approached by strangers. Significant numbers of respondents indicated that they had been a victim of crime at some stage in their life and a smaller percentage indicated that they had been a victim of crime within the last twelve months. More people reported having been the victim of a property related crime than reported been the victim of a violent crime. Of those who had been victims, the minority had reported the matter to the police or to their school. Levels of satisfaction with outcomes amongst those who reported crimes were low. Large numbers of respondents also indicated that they had witnessed crimes occurring in the last twelve months. Again, it seems that few of these were reported.

The responses of men and women across most of the issues considered were highly similar, as were those of the different adult age categories considered and the different grades of High School students. Marked differences were however detected between adults and students. Although students were more likely to report having been the victim of, or witnessing, most types of violent crime than were adults, they reported feeling significantly safer across all situations than did adults. We also examined respondents beliefs about crime generally and about the contributors to crime. On these issues adults and students tended to respond in similar ways though adults were generally more confident of their beliefs.

Priorities to improve feelings of safety, for future Council action, issues of importance within the Region, leisure issues and services to be improved were also examined. Differences existed between the priorities of youth and adults and between the various Suburbs. These differences are reported in detail in the Results section.

This Final Report makes recommendations that supplement those advanced in an Interim Report which was published on August 31, 1994 and adopted at a meeting of the Mulgrave Shire Council on September 5, 1994.

# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Interim Report of the Mulgrave Community Safety Attitudes Survey which was published on August 31, 1994 provided a starting point for Council and other organisations to commence the important work of increasing Community Safety within the Mulgrave Shire. More importantly the recommendations from that Interim Report provided the framework within which the subject recommendations of this Final Report may be implemented.

Given the inevitable conclusion that levels of fear within the community far outstrip the crime problem in the region, a phenomenon the authors refer to as the "crime of fear", there is some urgency in pursuing options that strengthen commonalities within the community and reduce levels of fear held by constituent members. The Mulgrave Shire appears to be representative of the general Australian community and as such this Report has relevancy beyond the Shire.

## The Recommendations of the Interim Report

***It is recommended that the Mulgrave Shire Council take a more dynamic and innovative approach to this issue and establish a Community Safety Committee. This Committee should be chaired by the Mayor and be comprised of representatives of the business sector, students, Police and Community Organisations. This Committee should have the power to draw upon Council Staff as necessary and be resourced by the Mulgrave Shire Council.***

## Objectives for this Committee should include:

the development and refinement of the partnership model established to co-ordinate the current research project;

the development, implementation and co-ordination of strategies designed to target issues raised by respondents in this Survey such as lobbying local shopping centres on the need to improve perceived safety of female and older shoppers and provide information and assistance to the Centres to facilitate this process;

assist in the development of a set of standards for development in the Mulgrave Shire that specifically address Community Safety issues and which will be uniformly applied;

the development of strategies to assist those in this research as being most fearful of crime ( but not actually at greater risk ) such as women, middle aged adults and people living on their own or with only one other person;

the examination of the role of Neighbourhood Watch and implementation of strategies designed to broaden its appeal and increase its effectiveness beyond the current policing mandate;

the co-ordination of tasks for a Community Safety Worker, proposed to be funded by the Mulgrave Shire Council;

facilitate the commissioning of mini Safety Audits in Suburbs which identified crime to be a problem (in relation to lighting, transport etc.);

lobby Local, State and Federal Governments and other service providers to ensure that issues identified in audits are adequately addressed;

promote the positive message of Community Safety and challenge misinformed reporting of crime throughout the community via Mulgrave Matters and the popular press;

support and resource Youth Action Panels and other initiatives established by schools in response to issues raised through this research;

promote victims issues at a local level;

support other currently, existing, or to be established initiatives in Community Safety such as Community Corrections initiatives (Halfway Houses etc.).

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**It is recommended that more dynamic and age appropriate forms of crime prevention be implemented. Projects suggested for consideration include:**

**Student managed and controlled Youth Action Panels similar to those operating in the United Kingdom and currently being trialled by ACRO in South Queensland. These Panels should draw assistance and support from the proposed Community Safety Committee;**

**Schools based Safety Audits locating areas within and around the schools where students do not feel safe - again to be resourced and supported by the proposed Community Safety Committee.**

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**It is further recommended that outcomes arising from the schools based Safety Audits be actioned with the support of the proposed Community Safety Committee and that all Reports from the Audits be promoted by the Committee.**

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**It is recommended that the media (and particularly the local media) be called upon to present information about crime and community safety in a manner which is realistic, objective, balanced, accurate and non-sensational. The proposed Community Safety Committee should act as a watchdog to the media and challenge any misinformation presented.**

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**It is recommended that the Cairns Post be encouraged to include a Youth Section on a weekly basis which contains articles written by youth for youth about crime issues, Community Safety, the Schools based Safety Audits and other issues relevant to youth.**

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**It is recommended that the proposed Community Safety Committee and proposed Youth Action Panels be given opportunities to editorialise crime and Community Safety via regular columns in the Cairns Post, regular segments on "John McKenzie Talkback Radio", via Mulgrave Matters, school newsletters etc.**

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#### **Additional Recommendations**

**It is recommended that strategies be developed to increase the social support available to people in smaller households. Strategies for consideration may include lobbying body corporate managers to provide some on-call service for residents who have concerns for their safety and the expansion of programs such as Neighbourhood Watch and Link a Friend to include a social support role at crisis times such as when a person suspects an intruder is present within their home.**

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**It is recommended that the Community Safety Officer liaise with the Queensland Police service in developing an information kit available to women which would include a broad range of information pertaining to simple steps which may be taken to increase general safety.**

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**It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee publish available information from this research, from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Queensland Police Service and others which highlights that whilst the women, 45-64 year olds and people living in small households feel less safe, the available statistics indicate that their rates of victimisation are likely to be lower than others within the Community. The provision of accurate information may help to reduce feelings of fear and vulnerability.**

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**It is recommended that the Neighbourhood Watch Program be restructured to incorporate a more effective partnership model involving the range of Local State and Federal Government agencies with a stake in community safety. Such agencies should include housing, employment, education, health, community services and others. It is further recommended that the Police Service should not be the principal agency to co-ordinate Neighbourhood Watch but should be a significant consultative resource to the Project.**

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**It is recommended that financial and human resourcing of the Neighbourhood Watch Program should be a shared responsibility between the beforementioned agencies as well as the corporate sector.**

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**It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee auspiced by the Mulgrave Shire Council should become the co-ordinating body for the future operation of Neighbourhood Watch.**

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**It is recommended that the mandate for Neighbourhood Watch be significantly expanded to assist in the operation of such programs as Home Secure, Home Assist, the Healthier Communities Program, YACCA and any other existing projects within the various State and Federal Government departments.**

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**It is recommended that a restructured Neighbourhood Watch monitored by the Community Safety Committee give due regard to a representation by youth and the concerns expressed by youth.**

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**It is recommended that strategies to reduce fear within the community be devised by the community which take into consideration the impact of reporting within the media about crime.**

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**It is recommended that strategies be devised to create more effective community networks particularly the elderly and those living alone.**

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**It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee:**

- 1. Further investigate those matters of concern for respondents in relation to lighting, transport and other issues and make recommendation to Council on these issues;**
  - 2. Conduct, in consultation with those neighbourhoods expressing concerns about "hot spots" for crime, Safety Audits with recommendations for consideration by Local and State authorities;**
  - 3. Create a Community Safety Development checklist for any future developments proposed for the region which will be uniformly applied by Council in town planning, consent use and other applications before it.**
  - 4. Lobby all levels of government for social reforms which effect will be to reduce hardship for citizens and lessen the possibility of conflict and crime. It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee:**
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**It is recommended that Mulgrave Shire Council lobby for improved lighting of not less than 5 lux in residential side streets and not less than 15 lux for public spaces such as in**

**parks, around libraries, sports facilities, community centres, shops and any other community facilities which are used at night.**

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**It is recommended that where lighting is deficient, Shopping Centre Managers and the Cairns City Council be lobbied to install low energy, vandal resistant lighting of not less than 15 lux to ensure the feelings of safety of shoppers in car parks and other public outdoor areas such as the mall.**

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**It is further recommended that these bodies revisit the notion of safe car parking for women and for older shoppers either via the provision of female only car parks close to Centre entrances, the provision of courtesy buses, the increased, visible presence of responsible staff (not necessarily security staff) who may act as "escorts" to assist shoppers to their cars.**

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**It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee liaise on residents feelings of safety, in the Cairns City Place in particular, with regard to strategies to increase perceptions of safety with members of the joint Police, Cairns City Council, Licencing Commission and Griffith University group currently researching alcohol related street crimes in the Cairns City Place.**

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**It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee consider social crime prevention strategies which aim to maintain or restore a sense of Community within the Mulgrave Shire which may assist in buffering residents from any perception of threat when approached by strangers, youth or other people percieved to be threatening. Strategies must highlight that residents are not taking any unnecessary risks in venturing in to their community and that their involvement in the community may actually stem any crime rate. Strategies should be positive and rewarding and may include public meetings, street parties, community drives, festivals etc.**

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**It is recommended that the Community Safety Officer liaise with the Queensland Police Service, Home Secure and other similar service providers to maintain current information on low-cost, reliable and appropriate security assistance and advice available to residents within the Region. Residents contacting the Safety Officer may then be referred to appropriate agencies for assistance in devising appropriate security strategies, selecting reliable equipment and hiring trustworthy tradespeople to install equipment or to make any necessary alterations.**

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**It is recommended that one of the messages to be addressed via the Youth Action panels is that criminal victimisation need not be tolerated as a "natural" part of being a teenager and something to put up with. Students must be encouraged to report incidents of**

victimisation occurring within schools to the school administration. Crimes occurring outside of the school grounds must be reported to the Police. Equally importantly for the long-term crime prevention goal however, is that students must also be encouraged to become involved in youth owned and driven Crime Prevention Strategies such as the Youth Action Panels.

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It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee target Crime Reporting via its regular editorials in an endeavour to encourage the Community in general to become more involved and to encourage the reporting of crimes that they are victims of and that they witness.

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It is recommended that the notion of Safety Houses be carefully revisited and contemporised for a teenage population. Rather than have particular houses assigned for the purpose, it is recommended that venues such as video stores and other such places frequented by youth at night be approached and the support of staff enlisted to improve feelings of safety for young people.

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It is recommended that school-based summaries highlighting the issues of importance for a particular school be prepared and presented to the Principal of the participating school. It is further recommended that the Community Safety Officer also present a school-based list of recommendations along with the summary to facilitate the implementation of crime prevention strategies within the schools. This process of implementation could be monitored and assisted by the Community Safety Committee and the Community Safety Officer.

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It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee be responsible for monitoring and evaluating, or maintaining evaluation information obtained by others, of all strategies implemented as a result of recommendations from this report.

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It is recommended that Local Governments throughout Queensland be encouraged and supported in any endeavours they may undertake to expand their mandate to effectively and rationally deal with social issues of relevance within their communities.

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It is recommended that Mulgrave Shire Council lobby the Department of Transport to improve the availability, affordability and accessibility of public transport within the Shire.

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**It is recommended that each Councillor upon the Mulgrave Shire Council carefully study the Tables provided within this report to ascertain which issues are perceived to be of most importance to residents within their Division. Once these issues are identified, Councillors should approach the Community Safety Committee for assistance in implementing strategies to meet the identified needs of the constituents. Where appropriate, information may also be utilised to lobby State and Federal Government to improve service provision within the Shire.**

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**It is recommended that Mulgrave Shire Council make constituents aware of Tourism and Development issues within the Shire and where possible involve them in the decision and policy making process as these were both given high priority by respondents.**

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**It is recommended that emphasis be placed upon the provision of structured and non-structured recreational activities which are accessible, appropriate and affordable in the planning for any new residential development within the Shire.**

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**It is recommended that Council consider ways of implementing recreational activities in Suburbs which express greater than average difficulties in accessing activities, particularly if as a result of a lack of activities or transport to access activities in neighbouring suburbs.**

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**It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee actively support correctional initiatives whose objectives are to reduce rates of reoffence by offenders and which promote the restorative justice model.**

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**It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee secure funds from State and Federal sources to develop meaningful strategies for young people not in the school environment. It is further recommended that any proposals be designed by affected young people with any programs commenced managed by young people.**

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**It is recommended that the proposed Community Safety Committee give particular regard to strategies that diminish the gap that exists between younger and older members of the community and devise mentor programs that will develop linkages between both groups.**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Crime is a matter of great concern to communities across the world, especially in cities. Beliefs about crime are generating unacceptable levels of fear which are severely undermining communal solidarity and creating a poor quality of life for citizens.

It is now widely understood that historical criminal justice responses, whilst necessary, are inadequate tools to reduce the incidence of activity that threatens public safety and security. In spite of a wealth of knowledge confirming this assertion there are still political, media and other interests that sustain the misinformed view that promotes police, courts and corrections as the panacea to crime reduction.

In many respects it is understandable that we should hold a simplistic view about solving crime - that more police, increased punitive measures and sanctions will provide the panacea to bring about change. This is after all what we have been told for generations by the media and others. **What we perceive to be the problem with crime, however, is often based upon misperception and distortion.**

The obsession by the media to overdramatise and sensationalise crime news is a disturbing phenomenon. Violent crime victimisation is a relatively rare occurrence. Our knowledge of such crimes is selectively edited and second-hand with our perception of the issues behind the reports being shaped by uncharacteristic images instantaneously projected across the world. This is not meant to trivialise violent crime. It is a criticism of those who appear not to appreciate the fear that these images are creating, and the impact on the quality of life for those who believe that these images are typical (Fattah, I., 1993). If they were typical, these would no longer be newsworthy.

It is critical that the message of Community Safety is conveyed in a positive and constructive manner. This will establish an "identity" for the concept that emphasises local involvement and public participation in crime reduction. The media is an essential component for this to occur, although a need exists to discourage irresponsible reporting which effect is to heighten fear in the community. A Home Office (UK) Standing Committee Conference in 1989 stated that:

"The media play a central role in forming impressions about crime. Television, radio and the Press feed the public much of their information about - and images of - crime..... The media, especially the tabloid press, frequently aggravate and exploit the fear of crime."

As far back as 1978 the "distortion" of crime by the popular press was decried by the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 1978) who stated that: "it (results) in the spread of irrational fear of crime, in irrational belief in the efficacy of traditional punishment, and in the persistence of negative attitudes towards offenders".<sup>1</sup>

Members of the same Conference heard that:

"the press has a predominant position in crime reporting;

crime news is one of the most popular sections of newspapers;

newspaper reporting concentrates on crimes of violence;

actual experience of crime plays a limited role in the development of public attitudes to crime and criminals;

dramatic reports of murders and rapes are widely read and discussed among women, the elderly and the poorly educated;

fear of crime is strongest amongst these groups of people;

the syndrome of punitiveness feeds on reports of senseless killings;

the distorted portrayal of crime and criminals counteracts efforts at the resocialisation of delinquents."<sup>2</sup>

## **A "SNAPSHOT" OF GLOBAL AND AUSTRALIAN CRIME TRENDS AND ISSUES**

There is a significant variation in crime rates between nations. This variation appears to be a function of cultural, economic and other social considerations (or a combination of factors). The rates of violent crime per 100000 in the USA are three to four times those of Canada whose rates are two to three times those of Europe. The average in Europe is three times that of Japan<sup>3</sup>. An initial observation that Japan has the most buoyant of world economies should not be understated in any analysis that would seek to explain these differences. Clearly the economic situation throughout the world has impacted upon the social fabric of the global community. It is the case that the phenomenal growth in criminal activity throughout the world corresponds with the evolution of world economic recession traced to the 1970s and maintained to a significant degree since that time. Whilst there is no great joy for our colleagues in Europe they are in a much better situation than their counterpart populations in the United States of America and Canada. Certain cultural imperatives in Europe in terms of the advancement of the welfare state, participatory management in industry and so forth may prove to be likely explanators to these differences and may have been contributory to the avoidance of a more profound social disaster on that continent than otherwise is the case. The adoption and maintenance of the welfare state in this country which seeks to ensure basic health, social security, education and employment training opportunities has substantially reduced the conspicuousness and alienation for our nations poor.

In a recent Review of Law Enforcement Arrangements (Australia, 1994) it was reported that overall trends in criminal offending are influenced by demographic factors such as the age structure of the population and the proportion of the population living in cities with more than a million people<sup>4</sup>. The authors note that the level of crime in Australia has remained steady since the 1970's, with occasional periods of change in the rate of particular offences<sup>5</sup>. It is also reported that, by international standards, Australia experiences a level of victimisation from crime in line with its age profile, relative affluence and degree of urbanisation<sup>6</sup>. Excluding the Northern Territory which boasts exceptionally high murder rates, the average murder rate for Australia is below two percent per 100000 (Law Reform Commission of Victoria, 1992). This figure is approximately one half that of Canada and one sixth that of the United States of America.

There is little empirical evidence to substantiate the position that crime rates are dramatically increasing across the board. It is true that for certain offences recorded rates are increasing, for example, sexual offences and domestic violence, however this is more likely to be as a result of greater reporting by victims (and more compassionate dealings with the issue) than any other possibility.

Similarly for drug convictions, the higher rates of conviction may be as a result of a larger number of "domestic users" being reported through programs such as "Operation Noah" and "Operation Paradox". This does not mean that the community is any closer to solving the drug

problem. At a Conference in Brisbane convened by the Australian Crime Prevention Council (1993) it was agreed that current drug policies do more harm than good, policies whose negative sideeffects outweigh its benefits. One of the Conference resolutions was to "give serious consideration to alternative strategies other than prohibition". It was also noted that drug related crime was one of the most significant causes of social disharmony. The head of Interpol, Raymond Kendall, recently reported that 60% of his staff time was related to drugrelated crime and that "There is no evidence at all that the problem is being stopped" (quoted by Wendy Holden in the Daily Telegraph "Traffic in Drugs is `Unstoppable'", September 6, 1993, p.8, quoted by Fattah, I., September 1993).

There is, however, an emerging problem in the area of property crime. Heiland, Shelley and Katoh (1992) affirm that crime against property is the dominant crime pattern for all countries analysed with this crime accounting for 60% of all criminal acts. They determined a disproportionate rate of growth in theft of motor vehicles and theft from shops and department stores (p.8). They also note that the percentage of violent offences to the total volume of crime in the countries that they had studied had declined in all countries except the United States (p.8).

It is proposed that the reasons for the rise in this form of crime can be substantially attributed to four factors the expansion of opportunities for such crime (the byproduct of affluence), the escalating rates of unemployment (linked to a ready market to convert stolen goods to cash) the demographic character of the community (age, in particular) and the increase in the use of drugs. The fact that we would prefer to maintain a fundamentally affluent society suggests that we may indeed have to live with crime of one form or another<sup>7</sup>.

Community Safety (or crime prevention) is not the responsibility of government alone. Whilst citizens everywhere are raising their voices and demanding "solutions" to unacceptable crime levels, the expectation for a Government "quick fix" through legislation, more police and harsher penalties for offenders is totally unrealistic. The empirical data suggests that these historical measures are simply not working.

There is a nexus between social conditions and crime; that issues such as intolerance, racism, sexism, poverty and gender inequity are a greater part to the equation of crime, and that we all have a part to play in changing the attitudes that sustain friction within our communities. Furthermore these are issues which will require long term strategies for resolution, a proposition not generally favoured by Governments whose tenure is relatively short term. It is more politically expedient for Governments to implement processes with apparent short term gain, no matter how unworkable these are demonstrated to be.

As elections loom, the inevitable "law and order" debate is brought from the cupboard and promises of more police to fight crime and harsher sentences abound to placate an impatient constituency. In truth no amount of increased "protection" nor punitiveness will significantly reduce the crime problem, but merely exacerbate fear and divisiveness in the community as evidenced by information from the USA where fear of crime is clearly increasing but where the number of prisons has also increased by 129% between 1980 and 1990.

To draw from the writings of Thoreau "For every thousand hacking at the branches of evil, there is one striking at the roots". The citizenry and Government need to strike at the root of crime causation and not hack mindlessly at its branches which will only regenerate and prosper. We, the collective community, have an important role to play given good leadership, a firm resolve and a clear understanding of our objectives.

As the community adopts an intelligent view about its responsibility in the prevention of crime, the important functions of role clarification, coordination, statutory obligations and strategic planning require consideration across the range of statutory, voluntary and commercial organisations. Local Government is ideally positioned as the closest arm of government to the people to direct the community in the most effective way to deal with these matters, although a comprehensive Nationally based (and State Supported) Strategy is seen to be essential to successfully facilitate an implementation. Many of the services provided by Local Authorities have direct relevance to crime reduction efforts and they are in the best position to bring together the local "partners in crime reduction" in a well planned and properly implemented fashion.

The need for a fresh approach to community safety was acknowledged by the United Nations at its Eighth Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders convened in Havana Cuba in 1990. The focus of this conference was the prevention of urban crime emphasising that prevention is the concern of all. The Conference resolved that prevention must bring together those with responsibilities for family, health, housing, social services, leisure activities, schools, the police and the justice system in order to deal with the conditions that generate crime.

The Second International Conference on Urban Safety, Drugs and Crime held in Paris, France in 1991 demonstrated through its representation of 1600 delegates including mayors, councillors, police executives, social development leaders and government leaders from 65 countries that effective models for action are available: from governments, which have national crime prevention structures; and from individual projects, which have reduced various types of criminal activity. The Seven Steps to make World Communities Safer resolution published from the Paris Conference included the statement that:

"Governments must establish national crime prevention structures to recommend improved national policies, undertake research and development, and foster the implementation of effective crime prevention programs, particularly in cities".

In Australia in November 1992, 35 of the countries police Ministers, business and civic leaders met with the Federal Attorney-General and his Federal Justice Office to consider the creation of a National Strategy on Community Safety or Crime Prevention. By the end of that day and following a meeting of the Australian Police Ministers Council the following day, a Communique was released to the effect that a National Community Safety Council would be established in Australia which would constitute government, community and corporate sector representatives in partnership to deal with the complex issue of crime prevention. The Federal Justice Office launched its document **Creating a Safer Community: Crime Prevention and Community Safety into the 21st. Century.**

For a year prior to this meeting the Australasian Police Ministers Council had examined the feasibility of a national approach to community safety. The concerns of this Council have been in response to increasing concerns about crime in the community, the shifting emphasis in certain overseas jurisdictions about the issue, and a recognition, prompted by a long period of agitation by organisations such as ACRO and The Australian Crime Prevention Council that social policy considerations can make an effective difference in the reduction of crime. In July of 1992 a National Strategy was endorsed which recognised that crime is a part of Australian society not something distanced from it, that is to say that a successful crime prevention strategy needs to acknowledge and encompass the economic social and cultural forces that influence criminal activity.

The key objectives of this Strategy are to:

. Develop effective partnerships between government and non-government agencies, public and private sector groups in community safety and crime prevention.

. Design, develop and deliver programs which enhance the safety of the community and minimise its exposure to crime.

. In particular, encourage and support innovative and imaginative approaches to:

1. social factors which give rise to crime;

2. the social dynamics of the fear of crime and the consequences of this fear for groups within the community;

3. managing the risk of crime;

4. facilitating more effective media participation in community safety and crime prevention;

5. encouraging positive approaches to issues of individual and community safety, particularly in the commercial arena;

6. encouraging social awareness of public safety and crime prevention, especially through our education systems; and

7. developing crime prevention impact statements as an integral part of corporate decision-making.

Further objectives will be to:

Ensure evaluation is an integral part of the design of all community safety and crime prevention programs.

Ensure that the development of community safety and crime prevention programs throughout Australia takes account of relevant International experience and is consistent with United Nations standards and strategies.

Some Australian jurisdictions have already commenced strategic planning on crime prevention. In South Australia for example a Ministry of Crime Prevention has been established. The Strategy implemented in that State is explicitly influenced by the local crime prevention councils in France (the Bonmaison approach) which adds to the portfolio of law and order measures through the formal development of community based crime prevention strategies.

In October of 1992 the Queensland Government announced its commitment to a Juvenile Crime Prevention Strategy to combat juvenile crime in that State. In February 1993 the New South Wales Government issued its Green Paper "Future Directions for Juvenile Justice in New South Wales".

These strategies are dependent upon the co-operation of various government departments. In the case of the Queensland Strategy, Family Services, Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, Education and Police departments are contributors. The expectation of inter-governmental

collaboration designed into this Strategy goes well beyond any other similar undertaking in that State. Furthermore the Strategy is linchpinned for its success to the development of a working partnership between these government agencies and the community.

It is unfortunate that progress on the development of National Strategy appears to have stalled. At a Conference convened by the Australian Institute of Criminology (National Overview on Crime Prevention, Adelaide, (1991) Michael Hogan remarked that:

"It is time for a national approach to crime and its prevention. It is costing the country too much money and too much waste of scarce human and economic resources; there is too much inequality in the treatment of people between jurisdictions; there are international obligations to be fulfilled; there is much to be learnt from the lessons of the rich diversity of schemes at State and National Levels; and much to be gained from a co-ordinated, comprehensive and co-operative venture".<sup>8</sup>

It is important that an effective Clearing House on crime and community safety be developed in Australia. The Australian Institute of Criminology has failed in its mission - it has tended to be elitist and introspective. A future Institute should adopt a strategic direction not dissimilar to that of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) in the United States of America. The NIJ:

**Develops Research** studies to expand understanding of why and how specific violence and crime arises;

**Evaluates Programs** to learn what is working to prevent and reduce violent crime;

**Demonstrates** how new knowledge can be put into practice;

**Communicates** new ideas for action that can benefit communities seeking better approaches.

As resources for the NIJ are limited, priorities are established that reflect the goals of the US Department of Justice in combating crime and violence. Furthermore that organisation has regard to the important contribution by the academic and community sectors.

The goals of the NIJ which were established in consultation with focus groups representing the research, evaluation, technology and practitioner communities, could be applied by The Australian Institute of Criminology. These are:

1. Reduce violent crimes and their consequences;
2. Reduce drug and alcohol related crime;
3. Reduce the consequences of crime for individuals, households, organisations, and communities;
4. Develop household, school, business, workplace, and community crime prevention programs;
5. Improve the effectiveness of law enforcement, criminal justice, correctional and police service systems; responses to offences, offending and victimisation;
6. Develop, promote, and use criminal justice research, evaluation, and technology.

It is the view of the NIJ, which would be shared by many in the Australian community, that these goals are of critical significance to the public and to those who serve in law enforcement, criminal justice and community servicing. Through the application of strategies that address these goals the Australian Institute of Criminology would have a far greater impact in generating knowledge that will help to reduce crime that would result from selecting programs that are presently only loosely integrated.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND CRIME PREVENTION**

There have been some important developments in crime prevention strategies throughout the world utilising local Government and local partnerships. Some of the more significant of these will be discussed.

### **The United Kingdom**

In the United Kingdom crime prevention has been an integral part of Government policy since the mid 1960's, however it wasn't until the 1980's that a Crime Prevention Unit was formed in that country. Waller (1991) has argued that whilst England and Wales are ahead of other countries across a range of crime prevention activities, these are primarily focused on opportunity reduction.<sup>9</sup> The Home Office directs an annual budget of \$US30 million on crime prevention. This amount is divided across a range of activities (Publicity: 40%; Crime Concern: 3%; Safer Cities: 43%; Training: 4% and Research: 10%).<sup>10</sup> The Crime Prevention Unit also provides infrastructure support for several committees which co-ordinate crime prevention directions. One such committee, the Standing Conference on the Prevention of Crime, produced the Morgan Report (1991) which promotes the partnership approach at the local Government level, which, it is argued, can implement situational and social crime prevention initiatives through community and social development processes.

Crime Concern is an organisation established in 1988 as an independent Trust which has played an important role in assisting local authorities to take responsibility for making their communities safe from crime. This organisation also works with the range of other crime prevention organisations throughout the U.K. Waller reports that in that jurisdiction, there were 90,000 Neighbourhood Watch schemes (involving 4.5 million households [or 20% of the population]), 400 local crime prevention Councils and 260 youth crime prevention councils operating in 1991.<sup>11</sup>

### **France**

In France a number of programs have been introduced to reduce unrest and criminality amongst young people. The extent of these Projects has expanded since the initial "été jeune" which provided summer activities for young people in response to public disturbances which took place in 1981 (L'été - chaude; the hot summer). Since this time some 700 city and regional crime prevention councils have been established to bring together elected officials, regional offices of housing, education, employment and justice as well as private corporations to combat crime. Popularly known as "Bonnemaison" (after the Minister who introduced the proposal [devised following a massive consultative process involving social workers, welfare practitioners, local Councils]) Waller (1992) argues that only one third of the Municipal Crime Prevention Councils exist little more than on paper.<sup>12</sup> A judge in Lyon suggests, somewhat cynically, that the Councils were developed as a political exercise to diffuse a volatile situation.<sup>13</sup>

The Bonnemaïson Report, **Confronting Crime: Prevention, Repression and Mutual Support**, stresses the role of Mayors and the need for "horizontal" solutions to combat crime whereby people from various sectors (police, social work, education etc) collaborate at the local level. "Contracts for Prevention Action on Security in the City" between the Central Government and the local community are executed that require:

1. an analysis of the communities crime problems;
2. a review of present action to cope with crime, and;
3. the plan for future action, including specific projects that required funding from the National Crime Prevention Council.<sup>14</sup>

### **The Netherlands**

The Netherlands Government Policy Paper, **Society and Crime** (1985), specifies crime prevention based upon three principles:

1. Crime must be dealt with not just by prosecution of offenders, but by society as a whole;
2. Distinctions must be made between serious offences and common crimes;
3. There must be a close co-ordination between the police, prosecutors and local Government.<sup>15</sup>

Unlike Australia much of the enforcement procedures in the Netherlands are conducted by Local Government under the direction of the Mayor.<sup>16</sup>

Like other jurisdictions the Government in Holland believes that more police and more punitiveness are not satisfactory ways of tackling crime prevention.<sup>17</sup> Clearly there is an important role to be played by Local Government in Community Safety initiatives. Unfortunately, however, this role is not currently being played to its fullest potential in most regions throughout Australia.

Jurisdictions throughout Australia might wish to establish Safer Cities strategies based upon the successful models in France (Bonnemaïson), the Netherlands and Sweden. Dr. Irwin Waller (University of Ottawa, Canada) suggests that Sweden provides the best model for the future. Whilst there is a National Strategy on Community Safety in that country (and Australia is still negotiating its Strategy) the ingredients of the Strategy in Sweden are worthy of consideration. The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (BRA) uses;

- . research knowledge as a basis for action;
- . evaluation to refine action;
- . opportunity reduction to reduce occasional offending;
- . social development to reduce the numbers of persistent offenders;
- . understanding of partnerships between agencies at the local level; and

. a national agency to provide research, development, training and evaluation assistance at the local level (Waller, I., 1992, p.39).

Waller argues that an integrated City Crime Prevention Program utilises the Mayor as its head and involves planning, housing, social services, schools and police. He proposes a strategy that diagnoses the problem (consultation, polling, surveys), proposes remedies or solutions, implements programs of best practice (based upon proven programs elsewhere) in response to the problems diagnosed, evaluates the effectiveness of the Programs and secures national and state support for the further implementation of Programs.

## **THE COST OF CRIME AND THE EFFICACY OF TRADITIONAL APPROACHES**

The financial cost of crime for Australian taxpayers in maintaining the criminal justice system is calculated at \$4 billion each year with almost 50% of this figure devoted to policing efforts.<sup>18</sup> The cost, in human terms, is unquantifiable. The financial cost translates conservatively to \$1600 for every man, woman and child in this country or \$5200 per household per annum. This constitutes some 7% of GDP or Gross Domestic Product<sup>19</sup>. For the purpose of comparison the Australian health care system is almost 8% of GDP<sup>20</sup>. Whilst many would acknowledge the obvious benefits derived from the maintenance of a health care system at this level of GDP many commentators, and the Australian citizenry in general, are questioning whether there is reasonable value for money in the current expenditure on the historical policing, courts and corrections roles. Australia is not alone in questioning the merits of this expenditure. The United States of America spend approximately \$ 70 billion per year, England and Wales \$ 14 billion and Canada \$ 7 billion (quoted in Waller, I., September, 1993). In all places there is no indication that this expenditure is achieving desirable outcomes. In fact, in the United States (and in spite of the massive expenditure on cops, courts and corrections [with the highest incarceration rate in the world]), approximately 200 American citizens per hour become victims of crime (Lidgard, C. & Hogan, M., September 1993). In 1991, the United States Senate Judiciary Committee concluded from FBI data on violent crime that in 1990 the USA "led the world with its murder, rape and robbery rates" (Weiner, 1991). Obviously expensive repressive measures fail to deter crime (Horner, 1993, p.2).

The doubling of police numbers and the quadrupling of private security personnel worldwide in the last 30 years does not seem to have had any significant impact on crime reduction. This is not to say that policing is ineffectual, as it is not, it is simply to say that such measures alone are no longer sufficient if we are to be at all serious about creating safer communities.

We have done our police service across the country a great disservice in requiring them to become the major crime prevention agent. There is a serious error in adopting the view that crime prevention is solely (and exclusively) a police task. The police force is a vital linkage to consultative processes that will aid in the reduction of crime. The prime objective of policing, that of crime detection and apprehension, is of itself an

onerous responsibility. The proposition that the police can "drive" crime prevention is unrealistic and ill-

informed, particularly if the prime objective is jeopardised. Projects which have a "problem solving" component have demonstrated two things. Firstly they work (provided there is sufficient resolve) [eg. the Delft Housing Anti-Crime Project in the Netherlands {Borric and, 1992; Graham, 1990}, the Newport News Project {in the United States} and the ACES Program in Montreal {as reported by Waller, I., 1993}] to reduce crime rates in those places. Secondly, these approaches are time-consuming and are often abandoned due to pressures for calls for

service by police on other tasks. The concept relies heavily upon analysis of local circumstances to understand what lies behind the crime problem and negotiating a resolution of problems utilising the resources of significant persons within the local community.

Programs such as Neighbourhood Watch, Business Watch and Crime Stoppers clearly require a police consultative presence. However neighbourhood mediation, employment initiatives, the development of broader community partnerships and the like (which is the "stuff" of crime prevention) are well beyond the administrative scope of the police. These matters require specialised services across a range of other government and community jurisdictions. The attempts to encourage a more community based approach by police without regard to these other government agencies (in contrast with problem solving efforts) have produced only limited success in crime reduction (Skogan, 1992).

Traditional forms of incarceration, which are expensive, are failing in their mission to protect the community. Historical approaches to imprisonment throughout most of Australia actually increase the likelihood of further offending as it makes it more difficult for the offender to consolidate family and employment connections that may well be contributory to the avoidance of further crime. This position can be reasonably tested against rates of re-offence which indicate (from studies throughout the world over sixty years) that between forty and sixty percent of persons released from prison will be re-convicted within three years of the date of an initial release. The other objectives of imprisonment, retribution and deterrence, also appear to have little relevance in the face of escalating crime rates. In fact Professor Douglas Cousineau of Simon Fraser University in Canada in reviewing sentencing practices in that country concluded that "there is little or no evidence to sustain an empirically justified belief in the deterrent efficacy of legal sanctions"<sup>21</sup>.

Available information indicates that more than 90% of inmates in Australia are male, almost 50% are in their twenties and the majority come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, approximately a third are illiterate and lacking in social skills. On any given day some 13000 persons are imprisoned throughout Australia.<sup>22</sup> In general approximately 80% of these offenders will serve sentences of six months or less<sup>23</sup>. A little over 40% of offenders are imprisoned for violent offences, with some 30% imprisoned for property offences. The balance consists of offences against good order and convictions for drug and driving offences. The 1990 **National Prison Census** indicates that the proportion of unemployed persons at the time of arrest ranges from 41.7% in Queensland to 85% in Western Australia with an average in other States and Territories at 60%. The same survey found that upwards of 80% of inmates in Australia had only partially completed schooling. The rate of re-offence throughout Australia is around 70%. These are important matters for correctional administrators whose historical warehousing function is inadequate within the context of community safety.

The present research project was designed with the three major themes raised thus far in mind, that is:

the media focus on law and order issues and the consequent shaping of communal attitudes regarding same;

the role for Local Government in Crime Prevention and Community Safety and;

the failure of existing structures to prevent crime and the resultant need to identify and implement new strategies which are more effective in this respect.

As raised above, several key organisations include a research and evaluation component in their priorities for service delivery.

In Mulgrave Shire, as in most jurisdictions in Queensland, much media attention is focussed on law and order issues. As the nature of this Shire changes from one with a primarily agricultural base to one which must consider more and more such issues as tourism, rapid development and service provision in the face of extraordinary population growth, the attitudes of residents, policy makers and service providers are being challenged. At times such as these, massive attitude shifts are possible, particularly if fed by certain sectors of the media and others. Consequently, this research was proposed as a means of identifying the current attitudes and perceptions of residents about crime and community safety. It is considered essential that policy makers understand the beliefs held by constituents in order to design effective and acceptable Policy and to make more likely, the flow on of provision of appropriate services.

Local Government has proved to be effective in implementing community safety strategies elsewhere. Given this and their proximity to Shire members, it seemed most appropriate that this body participate in the present research. Local Government is ideally poised to co-ordinate the implementation of change strategies developed as a result of this research.

## **CRIME, ATTITUDE AND SOCIAL VALUES**

A great number of crimes could be prevented not by changing people, but rather by simply changing their belief systems. Crime prevention debate will advance significantly if it concentrates upon modifying people's attitudes rather than changing people, by altering situations and environments rather than attempting to change social and economic structures (Fattah, E., September, 1993). Many of those matters that would seek to change attitudes have intrinsic worth and are socially desirable and would also reduce victimisation and fear in the community.

We are in a position to modify expectations and reshape community attitudes on issues such as intolerance, racism, sexism and other such matters that are contributory to friction and tension within the community and may influence crime patterns, provided we pursue strategies accepting that outcomes may not occur in the short term.

Effective programs of intervention involve all parts of the community in a non-patronising partnership that is responsive to the various needs expressed by target groups. The attitude shift from a dependence model which assumes that "government" will "solve" the problem to a proactive model wherein communities assume responsibility for local issues can be achieved. Existing structures such as local government, businesses and community organisations can be mobilised to achieve this goal. It requires strategic planning, public acceptance and resolve.

At that same time, processes that address attitudes that fuel disharmony within the community will need to be put in train.

It is imperative that patriarchal and sexist attitudes are challenged and defeated if we are to witness a significant reduction in family violence. No amount of legislative intervention nor court processes will protect women and children against many forms of abuse by men. Feminists have argued for some time that rape is not a crime of sex, but of power. A disturbing study recently conducted by the Domestic Violence Research Centre in Brisbane examined responses by 14 year old males to the issue of whether it is OK for a boy to hold a girl down and force her to have sexual intercourse in a range of circumstances. Consider the following results from that Survey:

. Where a couple had been dating for some time, 15% of boys believed it was acceptable to force a girl to have sex and a further 15% were unsure;

. Only 55% of boys believed it was unacceptable to force a girl to have sex if she gets him sexually excited. Of the remaining 45% of boys, 27% thought it was OK and 18% were unsure;

. If "she's led him on", 33% of boys considered it acceptable to force a girl down to have sexual intercourse. (O'Connor, Domestic Violence Resource Centre, 1992).

In a Study conducted in conjunction with the Domestic Violence Resource Centre, Fowler (1993) recorded a similar pattern of disturbing attitudes. Clearly we have a serious problem about men's attitudes towards women that spans generations, from the illinformed opinions of some Australian Judges to our children.

A similar disturbing trend towards gay men, transgenderists and lesbians was recorded in studies in Queensland and New South Wales (Cox, Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby's Streetwatch Report, 1990; Ward, Queensland Anti Violence Council, 1993). The Queensland Report noted that typical attacks involved a group of three or four young men, often of school age. The authors argue that the reason for the attack is that the victim is, typically a gay man, and the attackers are motivated by a hatred of this. They suggest that while there usually was not a premeditated motivation to kill the victim, there is such a level of intensity and irrationality in the attack that serious injury often results. Of reports to the Anti Violence Council, 67% involved at least moderate injury, ie. more than just cuts and bruises. 29% needed hospitalisation or other immediate medical attention. One nineteen year old man received permanent brain damage, and one man was killed (Ward, N., September 1993). Our community is clearly homophobic. Gender conformity is encouraged in Australia and peer endorsement of adult views that to be a "poof", a "dyke" and "queer" is a terrible insult continue unchallenged within most Australian educational institutions.

The Australian community is also confronted with unacceptable levels of child abuse. The most recent statistics from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reveal that in 1991 92 there were 54146 reports of child abuse. It is not unreasonable to assume that these figures are an underestimate. The fact that in the majority of cases the perpetrator is known to the victim adds a sinister dimension to the problem. The new phraseology of "intergenerational abuse" and "the cycle of violence" was developed in recognition of the linkage, empirically tested, that victimisation is an important factor to offending (note Cathy Widom, Child Abuse, Neglect and Violent Criminal Behaviour, Criminology, 1989, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 251 271). The Australian Committee on Violence provides a comprehensive review of the explanations and remedies to the cycle of violence. The United States National Research Council (1993, 391) states that "a more successful strategy for preventing later violence might involve simultaneously targeting the individual and other areas such as school, peers and family factors that are amenable to change".

A disturbing pattern of elder abuse has also recently been investigated by the Women's Health Sector. This has been a hidden problem in Australia until research in recent years identified its existence in Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney. The literature on elder abuse indicates that when the perpetrator and the victim live together one (or both) of them are physically, mentally or economically dependent on the other. Research from the United States indicates that abuse is likely to come from a close family member (80% - 90%), and these same findings have been replicated in Australian studies (Roberts, 1993). Whilst the causes of abuse are not generally agreed upon most experienced professional workers attribute abuse and neglect to bad situations and not to bad people (Roberts, 1993). It is impractical to expect all families to

have the necessary financial, emotional and social resources to manage the additional burden of elder care (Roberts, 1993). Another theory suggests that this form of abuse is linked to the power dynamics of other forms of family abuse ie. that "a more powerful person takes advantage of a less powerful one" (Finkelhor, 1983, p.19). Ageism relies upon the premise that the old are somehow inferior to the young. Like other prejudices such as sexism and racism, it creates its own self-fulfilling prophecies and promotes lifestyle attitudes that damage individual potential. Whatever motivations create the environment for this form of abuse, the issue will become increasingly more urgent as the Australian population ages. It is calculated that by the year 2031 one in four persons in Queensland will be over 60 years of age. With the steadily declining birth rates throughout this country, this percentage may provide a reasonable approximation for the rest of Australia.

It is time that the Australian community accepted that the traditional nuclear family structure is no longer the norm within this country. The more typical family is a one parent family with one or more children. Furthermore according to the Submission to the Prime Ministers Expert Committee on the Future of Employment and Unemployment prepared by the Caucus Task Force (1994):

"there are currently 750,000 children in families where no parent is working. One in eight unemployed teenagers are living in homes where no parent is working".<sup>40</sup>

The extraordinary stresses confronting these families who have little or no extended family support structure demand a reappraisal of child care provisions, pre and after school care, in school activities for young adults, more flexible work and school hours to cater for working parents and a consideration of other options that will assist in making these families more "functional".

There is no question that children are being displaced from their homes at earlier ages for a range of reasons including family disharmony, economic necessity and domestic violence. In some cases the decision is voluntary, in others it is forced upon them. Given the lack of opportunity for equitable access by the young to community resources normally available to adults (including social security, health care, emergency housing and the like) it is not surprising that many of these displaced youth become involved in criminal activity. This progression becomes a matter of necessity and survival.

## **THE LOCAL CRIME PICTURE**

Discussions with the Far Northern Region Research and Statistics Officer (Queensland Police Service) indicate that the crime rate across the Far Northern region has remained relatively stable in the twelve month period from the 1993 May - July quarter, to the 1994 May - June quarter. The Far North Queensland region (for the Police Service) covers a huge expanse from Tully in the South to the tip of the Cape and out West to Mareeba and the Atherton Tableland. Whilst some such fluctuations are evident in the statistics it seems likely that this is due largely to procedural issues in the way that crime reports are processed rather than from any shift in the crime rate across the region.

In spite of the large geographic area encompassing the Far North Queensland region, of the total number of major crimes reported in Queensland in the May - July 1994 quarter only six percent were reported in the Far North and only thirteen percent of the total "other" offences throughout the State were reported in the Far Northern Region. Quarterly comparisons across the twelve months from May - July 1993 to May - July 1994 indicate that whilst offences against the person reported across the State have increased by ten percent reporting of this category of

offence has remained stable in the Far North. In the same period most violent crimes against the person have decreased in the Far Northern region, including total homicides which have decreased by 43%; rape and attempted rape which has decreased by 43%; robbery which has decreased by 14%. The region has however experienced a small increase in assault, which has increased by 5% and other sexual offences which has increased by 2%. Considering all offences against the person the total has remained unchanged during the twelve month period.

With regard to the reporting of property offences in the region in the twelve months ending July 1994, these have decreased throughout the region by 3%. Offences against property include total break and enters which has decreased by 13%; motor vehicle theft which has increased by 14%; and total stealing which has decreased by 2%. Total other offences which include drug offences, driving and good order offences have increased in this twelve month period throughout the Far Northern

Region by 9%.

Whilst comparisons for the entire region during this twelve month period show the crime rate to be reasonably stable, it is of interest to consider the crime rate amongst five of the key districts in the region as they relate to the surveyed population studied. Graph 1 gives a breakdown of increases and decreases across the two major crime types for each of the five districts of interest.

It is important to note that whilst it is often interesting to consider changes in the crime rate across a twelve month period, these changes may be artificially inflated due to factors which have got very little to do with changes in crime rates per se., for example, the changes in Police reporting processes. We should therefore consider longer term changes in the crime rates. Graph 2 indicates changes in the crime rates for the five stations of interest from the 1989/90 financial year to the 1992/93 financial year. This graph indicates that, overall, crime in most districts seems to have increased. It is noted however that those reported in Gordonvale are somewhat skewed in that serious spikes were experienced in crime in 1989/90, the year of airline disruptions. So whilst they seem to have had a crime decrease in the preceding years, the overall trend has been a slight increase across the years from 1991-1992/3.

The population in the region has increased extraordinarily during the same period. Current and accurate population estimates are always difficult to obtain. Mulgrave Shire Council statistics indicate that in the three year period from June 1991 to March 1994 the overall population in the Shire has increased dramatically particularly in certain Suburbs : 101% in Redlynch, 75% population growth in Edmonton, 35% population growth in Kewarra Beach, 27% population growth in Gordonvale and 25% population growth in Brinsmead). Statistics such as these must surely account for some of the increase in the crime rates reported. It is a reasoned logic that when the population increases so too does the variety of social problems experienced by a suburb which in turn influences criminal activity.

Data obtained from the Cairns Economic Research Unit indicates that housing approvals in the Cairns urban area totalled 1,331 in 1992/93. This figure represents a 9.3% increase from the 1991/92 figure. Information obtained from the same source regarding urban unit approvals, indicate that in 1992/93 some 772 approvals were granted for the construction of units in the Cairns area. This represents a 68.9% increase over the previous year. Of all housing approvals in the Far Northern Region some 54.3% are for buildings which were to be constructed within the Mulgrave Shire.

As well as the rapidly increasing local population it is also worth noting that the Cairns/Mulgrave area also experience significant tourism. In the 1991/92 financial year it was estimated that some 1.3/4 million domestic tourists visited Far North Queensland. The Far North Queensland region also played host to some 508,000 overseas tourists in 1992. This represents an increase of 29% on the numbers experienced the previous year. It is estimated that during the March quarter of 1993 some 1,000 motel and hotel rooms within the Mulgrave Shire were occupied each night by tourists. This figure leaps to almost 4,000 motel and hotel rooms occupied per night by tourists in the Cairns city area. In addition to this some almost 1,000 additional tourists could be found in any night in either the units or caravan parks within the Mulgrave Shire Council boundaries. Again these factors combine to inflate the population and consequently increase the range of social issues and problems to be addressed within the region.

## **FEAR OF CRIME - THE UNSUSTAINABLE PARALYSIS**

The misperception about crime (promoted by distorted media presentations) - generates fear, which reaches out to every citizen in the community - the fear of becoming the victim of a violent crime, the fear of having freedom curtailed, the fear of having rights and privacy undermined by others within the community who appear uncaring about the consequence of their actions.

Perceptions of fear are complex with those who are most fearful of crime generally not being members of the groups which experience the highest rates of victimisation. This does not make the consequences of fear any less meaningful to those who experience it - fear is an undesirable emotion for citizens who have little choice but to live in communities with others.

Studies that have questioned Australians about their experience of victimisation have revealed that police statistics only reflect about 40% of all offending taking place<sup>24</sup>. Here we have a further manifestation of fear - the fear of reporting a crime. This has been a particularly potent fear for women and children who suffer at the hands of men with whom they live. It is clear that the number of offences unknown to police is highly significant and that there is a substantial amount of crime which cannot be countered by police action alone. Of reported crime except for domestic violence and sexual assault (the extent of which is still hidden from official notice) it appears that young, single, unemployed men are at a greater risk of becoming victims of violence. Both victims and offenders that come to the attention of the police come from disadvantaged backgrounds with Aboriginals facing the greatest risk of becoming victims of violence than the rest of the Australian population<sup>25</sup>.

In a Mclean's/CTV poll (Canada, 1993) 50% of Canadians reported that their feelings of personal safety from crime had become "much worse" or "somewhat worse" over the past five years.<sup>26</sup>

Fear controls and constrains - it often leads to a withdrawal from normal movement within the community. In the same Poll, 33% of respondents indicated that they did not feel safe walking alone in the neighbourhood after dark (55% of women, 11% of men).<sup>27</sup> Since this represents an 8% increase in the level of fear over a five year period, it would seem that gender, race and place of residence are important factors in a consideration of perceived risk of personal victimisation. The Maclean Poll clearly indicates high levels of concern for personal safety by women and the elderly living in urban areas.<sup>28</sup>

Research is divided on the usefulness of crime victimisation as a predictor of fear of crime. Only a very small percentage of the population ever becomes a victim of crime. In the United States, a Gallop Survey conducted in 1992 (cited in Warr, 1992) revealed however that approximately 45% of the United States population is fearful of crime.

Baba and Austin (1989) found that having been a victim of a property related crime predicted perceived levels of safety however being a victim of personal crime did not. Warr (1992) found that prior victimisation did not affect males altruistic fear (ie. their concern for other family members) however it did significantly affect the altruistic fear experienced by women.

It is useful at this point to explore some of the other variables which are thought to possibly contribute to fear of crime. One of the factors generating interest at the moment is that of environmental satisfaction or perceived social control. The Social Disorganisation Theory lends much weight to the importance of this variable. Proponents argue that signs of physical decay such as vandalism, graffiti, litter in the streets and also social decay (such as groups of unsupervised youth hanging around in streets) are interpreted by members of a population as being signs of a lack of social control or social breakdown which are in turn interpreted as being dangerous to their own personal safety. In their 1989 study Baba and Austin found that the most significant predictor of perceived neighbourhood safety was perceived control or social disorganisation.

Taylor and Covington (1993) also found that ethnic heterogeneity and rapid population turnover prevented communities from organising collectively to target social problems. Rapid changes such as these also lead to a reduction in social ties between members of a community due to perceived limited commonalities between old and new residents. The most important factor according to Taylor and Covington (1993) in predicting perceived social control and perceived neighbourhood safety was the percentage of youth and minority groups within a given population. These researchers found that in suburbs with greater signs of instability and greater numbers of people hanging about, people generally tended to be more concerned by the presence of teenagers. This research further concluded that an awareness of teen groups in turn predicted daytime fear expressed by residents.

In spite of the best information to the contrary young people are perceived as violent and anti-social.

In a Report titled **Youth Crime Prevention A coordinated Approach**, Frank Warburton writes that as many as 90% of juvenile boys (1016 year olds) commit a delinquent act at some time, although only a small percentage are involved in serious criminal activity and thus become the main responsibility of the police and the courts<sup>29</sup>.

Most jurisdictions recognise that whilst juveniles are significantly overrepresented in delinquent or less serious criminal behaviour the vast majority are likely to grow out of delinquent behaviour of their own accord and without official intervention<sup>30</sup>. There is some evidence to sustain the view, in fact, that inappropriate intervention can increase the tendency for further criminal behaviour, a point recognised in a report produced by a British Government Interdepartmental Group on Crime in 1983 which concluded that all young people go through a difficult period in adolescence and many commit offences of some sort. The great majority grow out of criminality but there is a danger that the wrong sort of reaction to their offences could propel some into further crime<sup>31</sup>. The bulk of juvenile crime consists of offences that are inconvenient however they do not threaten public safety or the fabric of society. Commonplace crime can, nonetheless, seriously reduce the quality of life for other community members and certainly contributes to the level of fear in which people live.

The youth crime problem too often is translated into a youth problem. By virtue of their conspicuousness in groups youths are characterised as threatening and are therefore perceived by adults in the community to be a risk to their safety. In these circumstances the fear of crime is generalised into a fear of young people.

In considering the development of meaningful crime prevention strategies a distinction needs to be drawn between those who commit crime **occasionally** and those who commit crime **persistently**<sup>32</sup>. Longitudinal studies that have followed a sample of children from birth to adulthood show that while persons from many different social circumstances **occasionally** commit crime there is a small group of disadvantaged youths who **persistently** are involved in a variety of offences over a long period of time studies in the United States of America and the United Kingdom illustrate the point with 50% of reported crime being committed by a small number of offenders (6% 8%). In Solihull (United Kingdom) 19 youths are said to be responsible for 65% of all crimes reported to police<sup>33</sup>. The London Home Office suggest that 5% of young people convicted commit 70% of the offences for which a conviction is obtained within their age range.

Criminologists James Q Wilson and Richard Herrnstein, authors of "**Crime and Human Nature**", argue that "criminal behaviour depends as much or more on age as any other demographic characteristic". In 1989 for example 70% of the people who were arrested and charged for crimes were between the ages of 16 and 34. Wilson and Herrnstein suggest that "shifts towards a more youthful population, such as during the "baby boom" years after World War II, would be expected to produce increasing crime rates as the babies grew into adolescents". Wilson and Herrnstein assert that all other factors being equal, with the decline of birth rates beginning in 1965, we would now expect to be seeing some declining crime rates<sup>34</sup>.

Various studies into juvenile offending behaviour have consistently correlated poverty with school age pregnancy, poor health, family stress, failure at school and violent crime<sup>35</sup>.

Farrington et. al. in the Cambridge Study in Delinquency Development demonstrates the detrimental effect of relative deprivation during childhood on subsequent offending patterns. In this Study it was demonstrated that crime rates were higher during periods of unemployment (for the 411 boys participating in the research) than during periods of employment, particularly for offences involving material gain at ages 15/16, for the most delinquent youths and for youths who had lower status jobs when they were in employment<sup>36</sup>.

Mannheim analysed the lineage between crime and unemployment during the 1930s recession, establishing that crime trends correspond closely to fluctuations in unemployment<sup>37</sup>. He raised the warning over forty years ago that long term unemployment may show its effect even many years after being brought to an end and it is capable of changing permanently the whole attitude of a family towards society . A more recent study by Phillips, Votey and Maxwell in 1972 echoed this view suggesting that one of the main outcomes of substantial, long term unemployment is to undermine and destabilise communities and that this, in turn, produces high crime rates.

Other researchers such as Wilkinson (1991) suggest that inequality rather than poverty has the most stressful effects<sup>38</sup>. In concurring with Wilkinson, Elliott Currie writes that the trend toward growing inequality, in short, is increasingly international in scope, international in its consequences. And it is deeply implicated in the pattern of crime. Currie concludes that "... real social crime prevention like the prevention of other social ills is now more than ever dependent on our capacity to build more effective movements for social action and social change. Movements that can effectively challenge those forces now international in scope that are ripping apart communities from Harlem to Glasgow to Bogota; that are dimming the life chances of vast numbers of people in the developed and developing worlds. In terms of building organisations committed to the longrange effort to replace a society based increasingly on the least inspiring of human values with one based upon the principles of social solidarity and contributive justice"<sup>39</sup>.

The behaviour of young people is not created in a vacuum. The relationship (or lack thereof) between juveniles and adults, the response of local agencies to antisocial behaviour, the availability of services and opportunity for the young, the role models presented, social and economic factors are more significant indicators to a persons predisposition to crime than any presumption of personality disorder or maladjustment. Criminal behaviour for all age groupings is manifestly a reaction to a combination of social circumstances.

A reasoned youth crime prevention strategy should necessarily include an antipoverty component. It may be argued that most other risk factors stem from poverty unwanted, neglected and abused children, failed educational systems, domestic violence and so forth. Complementary government programs that afford good quality schooling, quality family support, occasional and full child care will ease the burden on families that become dysfunctional as a consequence of poverty.

As mentioned earlier, age is often thought to be a significant predictor of fear of crime, with the elderly generally being considered as being more fearful of crime due to their reduced physical strength and generally diminished ability to protect themselves from any physical form of threat. Baba and Austin (1989) found that age was significantly negatively correlated with perceived neighbourhood safety. i.e. the older the respondent the lower their level of perceived safety within their own community. Another variable which may effect a persons level of fear of crime is the length of time that they have resided in an area. This variable is significant in that it contributes to the number of social contacts a person may have via friends and family and general social support networks and may also affect the number of familiar faces that a person sees when they are walking down a street, shopping in a shopping centre, visiting libraries, recreating etc. Contact with familiar faces in day to day activities increases a persons feeling of control and reduces their feelings of uncertainty and threat. A high degree of social organisation has generally been found to result in stronger community ties with members of a given community feeling better able to control or to combat crime and other social problems.

The length of time that a person has spent residing in an area is also significant in that it reflects the level of commitment to an area and their desire to remain content and feel safe. These issues are highly significant for Mulgrave Shire which has an extremely transient population and an extremely large number of tourists. It is possible that the number of transient residents passing through the town who do not get to know the "so called" locals significantly impact upon the general feeling of wellbeing experienced by locals. The large number of tourists passing through the Mulgrave Shire at any given time may also reduce a persons feelings of comfort and safety. Baba and Austin (1989) found that the length of time in an area did significantly predict a persons rate of fear. They also found however that this variable was positively correlated with the rate of personal and property victimisation witnessed by a resident. i.e. the longer a person had lived within an area the more likely they were to report having been the victim of a personal or property related crime or having had a friend or neighbour who had been the victim of a personal or property related crime. Amson and Grove (1989 cited in Taylor and Covington p. 36, 1993) also found a significant influence of residential stability on rates of victimisation and offending.

Another variable which has attracted some attention by researchers interested in perceptions of threat is gender. It is generally believed that women will be more fearful of crime than men. Support for this assumption was obtained by Lugford (1984) and Taylor and Covington (1993), both of whom found that women were more fearful of crime than were men in the day and at night.

Socioeconomic status has also been considered as an influence upon fear of crime. Baba and Austin (1989) however did not find that it had any significant effect on a person's rate of property or personal victimisation. It seems most likely that the influence of this variable is driven by environmental satisfaction with people from high socioeconomic status background living in more affluent better managed suburbs which show fewer signs of social disorganisation. They therefore feel safer. Taylor and Covington (1993) reported British Crime Surveys for 1982 and 1984 which showed that socioeconomic status did predict victimisation and offending rates. This however was primarily a result of the higher number of youth living in low socioeconomic areas.

As was raised earlier, the presence of groups of unsupervised youth on the street is often perceived as being a sign of social disorganisation or decay. Taylor and Covington (1993) further reported that in suburbs which experience an unexpected change in socioeconomic status, residents were more fearful of being out at night than they had been prior to the change. It is most likely however that this is again mediated through the influence of environmental satisfaction with changes to the socioeconomic status being reflected in again higher numbers of youth and also increased signs of instability such as vandalism, litter etc.

The other major variable of interest in predicting which members of the population will be fearful of crime is race. Baba and Austin (1989) found that race did not predict a person's satisfaction within their environment nor did it predict their rates of personal victimisation or fear of crime. Taylor and Covington (1993) had predicted that an unexpected population change would lead to increased instability and hence reduced feelings of personal safety. This was found to be the case, however only to the extent that social change led to increased racial heterogeneity. Thus it seems that the racial mix of a population is more important in predicting fear than is a person's race per se. It seems likely that more heterogeneous communities feel more fearful again because they perceive fewer commonalities between the various sectors of a community. This reduction in ties leads to a reduced sense of community and potentially an "us and them" mentality which prevents groups from working together to target any potential difficulties which may arise within their community.

Warr (1992) also found that those people who perceived their environment to be threatening and who were fearful of crime (not necessarily for themselves but for others such as their spouse, their child, their parents etc) often chose to take steps to reduce their fear and to protect their spouse or family. A significant proportion of subjects sampled by Warr had purchased weapons of some form in order to protect their family. These individual outcomes clearly impact upon society in general. If people who are fearful of crime purchase weapons in order to protect themselves and their property, the opportunity for violence to increase is well and truly established.

Regardless of the variables mediating a person's perception of safety and the rationality or otherwise of a person's perception of threat, the behavioural outcomes of their fear of crime, their fear of threats, are very real for the individual and also for society in general. Individuals who are rationally or irrationally fearful of crime or who feel unsafe within their own communities tend not to venture out into their community. They may avoid certain areas within their own neighbourhood, may not venture out of their homes at night, may not answer the door bell when it rings, and will generally feel uneasy within their own neighbourhood and potentially even within their own home. This general unease may lead to unnecessary stress and potentially also to medical problems and it will impact negatively on a person's general psychological well being.

By having proportions of the population avoiding certain areas by not venturing out at night and so on, the community also runs the risk of creating "no go areas" where people generally feel unsafe because they do not run into any other members of their own community. This is

potentially dangerous as other members of the community who wish to practise acts which are less socially condoned may seek to move into these "no go areas" because they are aware that they are not widely used by the general population and that they can engage in their activities free from interruption.

The trend for people to remain at home, to become less trusting of one another and to interact less with members of their own community must surely reduce the strength of social ties, the sense of social cohesion within a given community. This lack of social cohesion and social involvement by a range of members of a given community may ultimately reduce the power of that community to deal with issues and problems as they arise within a neighbourhood. An example of this is the fear of groups of youth which is often seen to be a symptom of a lack of social control and hence areas where youth are known to congregate may be avoided by older members of the community. Youth may in turn see this as an opportunity to experiment with minor crimes or acts of social deviance. The lack of any presence of other members of the community to advise, to guide and to reprimand this behaviour may mean that the youth actually get away with their acts

of crime. Those adults or members of the community who do witness the acts but who are too fearful of implementing any control over the youth may refuse to become involved. Youth in turn may perceive this as the ideal situation to continue on in their behaviours and consequently the crime rate may actually increase. Support for this notion is provided by Taylor and Covington (1993). It can be seen that a vicious cycle can develop, i.e. members of the community perceive crime to be out of control and feel threatened and thus start to withdraw into themselves. These very actions of withdrawing from community has the effect of creating "no go areas" and also of reducing social ties and cohesiveness which may actually have had a positive effect in combating crime.

With the demise of social control mechanisms which prevent social decay, given the lack of involvement and fear of the community, many suburbs will ultimately experience a rise in crime. Thus regardless of whether that persons initial perceptions were rational or not, their behaviour has actually led to an increase in that which they feared in the first place - i.e. crime. Whilst social change may lead to an increase in fear by reducing common bonds and reducing perceived control it does not necessarily have to be this way. If society takes steps to curb signs of physical and social disorganisation e.g. by improving the look of suburbs through clean up campaigns, more effective town planning, and general maintenance of an area and reducing groups of teens on the streets (through the provision of alternative activities) we may actually be able to prevent an increase in fear experienced by the community, and consequently prevent an increase in the actual crime rate itself.

It is important, therefore, that people accurately understand the extent of the crime problem and be encouraged to utilise this information in a positive and constructive manner. But first we must come to an understanding of the problem, hence the need for research such as this which is conducted within a local and manageable area amongst a group of people with significant commonalities and is anonymous and hopefully more accurate and realistic than other information currently available.

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## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Conceptualisation Phase**

ACRO's Executive Director and the Regional Field Worker for the Far North Queensland Branch of ACRO first presented the idea for this Survey to the Mulgrave Shire Community Development Officer and to a Councillor with the Shire. Following a favourable response from both parties, an initial discussion was held between the Mayor of Mulgrave Shire Council and ACRO representatives (March 28, 1994). At this meeting the Mayor expressed considerable interest in obtaining additional information regarding such a Survey. A formal proposal was prepared for the Mayor and was tabled at a full Council meeting on May 30, 1994. The Executive Director for ACRO, the Association's Regional Chairperson and Field Worker were present at this meeting and fielded several questions from Councillors. Following some detailed discussions about the proposal, "in principal" support for the Project to be undertaken was granted by Council subject to an acceptable indicative budget being prepared and tabled at a subsequent meeting. Expressions of interest in membership of a proposed Working Party were also sought at this first meeting. Seven Councillors indicated an interest in becoming members of a Working Party formed as a result of any Council resolution in relation to the Survey.

ACRO undertook to provide an Interim Report on the Survey results to Council by August 31, 1994 with a Final Report to be tabled by the end of September 1994 should the Council decide to proceed with the Project.

A stringent time line was established to demonstrate that the partnership model is a potent vehicle for action - that individuals, government departments, corporate entities and private organisations can successfully mobilise on issues of public importance (and with limited time) given a common set of objectives and belief in fundamental principles.

During the following week costings were negotiated between ACRO staff and the Mulgrave Shire Council's Acting Chief Executive Officer. The Project was designed so that the bulk of costs would be contained within existing budgets, utilising existing infrastructure and resources. ACRO did not seek any form of consultancy fee or reimbursement for its involvement in the Project. The Chief Executive Officer presented the Costings for the Project to Council the week following the initial presentation and approval for the Project to proceed was minuted (June 6, 1994).

The first meeting of the newly formed Mulgrave Community Safety Attitudes Working Party was called (June 9, 1994). This Working Party comprised of: the ACRO Regional Field Worker (who acted as Chairperson); three Mulgrave Shire Councillors (who attended as permanent representatives) with other Councillors attending meetings as available; one representative from the business community; the Community Development Officer with Mulgrave Shire Council; the Public Relations Officer from Mulgrave Shire Council and; an administration worker to assist

with minute taking. The Regional Assistant Police Commissioner and ACRO Executive Director also attended meetings on a monthly basis.

The diverse range of experience, knowledge and goals brought to this Working Party by its various members reflects the dynamic approach towards community safety adopted by ACRO which embraces the need for a range of organisations, bodies and government departments to be involved in coordinating an effective and comprehensive Community Safety Strategy. All members of this Working Party became members on a voluntary basis. This diverse range of backgrounds not only made the tasking for the project considerably easier, but it also added a more exciting dimension to planning with members bringing to the group a diversity of opinion. In addition it also lent to the project considerable credibility and importance which added weight to an involvement by the community. The other advantage of a broadly based Working Party is that it ensures a wider dissemination of information amongst council, community based organisations, the police force and other interested bodies.

Times and venues for weekly Working Party meetings were established and resolved at the first meeting. Members were presented with a discreet range of tasks which would need to be completed in order for the project to succeed. Members self-nominated for these tasks which included promotion with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander and other non-government organisations; media co-ordination; school co-ordination; and corporate support for the project.

The promotion with the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Organisations and other non-government bodies involved meetings between Working Party members and representatives of the key organisations in the Cairns Mulgrave area. Information was provided to representatives of each of these organisations with most

being shown draft copies of the Survey. Feedback and input for the proposed Survey was requested from several key organisations. The person appointed to this position was also tasked with the role of dealing with questions as they arose from members of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Organisations and clients from other non-government organisations. Furthermore this person was also tasked with the provision of feedback on the results of the Survey once the Survey period was completed.

Tasks for media co-ordination included dissemination of information to the press at all stages of the Survey process, including the period prior to the Survey commencement, i.e. after initial support had been obtained from council; once ongoing support had been obtained; and then generally throughout the Survey period. Attention was focused on all three media outlets, i.e. radio, television and the press in the Cairns/Mulgrave region. Contact with the print media included editorials and general ongoing information via media articles and Press Releases. Media coverage on radio included regular weekly discussions by the Mayor of Mulgrave Shire on Talkback Radio together with community service announcements and news segments.

Tasks for the visual media included the eliciting of support from the three commercial stations in the region including the production and co-ordination of two separate community service announcements.

The person tasked with this media responsibility was also tasked with the responsibility of disseminating the results of the Survey once it had been completed.

Several members assisted in the co-ordination of the Survey process for the various schools in the region. The people appointed to this task had several responsibilities including the initial liaison with the regional Education Department Director; meetings with the various school

principals; the delivery of Surveys to each of the schools; the actual answering of questions from school students as necessary, and; the collection of completed Surveys. These people were also briefed to answer any questions posed by the Principals, teachers or students with regard to the Survey questionnaire. Ideally these people would take on the responsibility of feeding information from the completed Survey back to the schools that they were responsible for enlisting in the first place.

The final task was that of seeking corporate support for the project. The person tasked with this role was to contact as many local business representatives as possible with the aim of eliciting both "in principle" support for the project and also any on going financial support for separate parts of the Survey process. This could include production costs for the community service announcements, production and printing costs for the final report, or for any other purpose as deemed appropriate by the various business representatives and which would be agreed upon by Council and the Working Party. The person responsible for this aspect of the Project would also ensure that the businesses involved received due recognition for their efforts and were advised of the final outcomes of the Survey.

An additional role was created during the actual Survey process itself. During the two week Survey period one person was dedicated to deal specifically with all enquiries either made via telephone or direct contact with regard to the Survey. This was done so that an accurate record could be kept of the concerns and questions of the rate payers which arose as they attempted to complete the Survey.

A final discreet task was assigned for members to conduct a statistical analysis on the data once it was returned and to prepare the final report to be presented to the Council.

Time lines for each task were agreed upon with members subsequently providing weekly progress reports. The ACRO Staff Person for the Far North Queensland region and the Mulgrave Shire Community Development Officer made themselves available to assist other members of the Working Party achieve their set tasks. Both were also available to deal with the ongoing administrative details of the project such as finalising printing details, collecting Surveys from Australia Post, circulating Surveys, preparation of instructions for teachers etc.

Following the development of this Working Party, support for the project was also elicited by a direct contact from the Mayor with the Assistant Police Commissioner for the Far North Queensland region and also the

Executive Director for the Regional Education Department. Both officers in turn elicited support for the Project from their respective staff.

## **Survey Development**

This research was designed to provide initial, exploratory data only. The primary goal was to provide an opportunity for the residents of Mulgrave Shire to express their attitudes, beliefs and experiences. It was envisaged that strategies would be developed based about the information provided by constituents rather than on any assumptions currently held by the media, Council or other interest groups. To this end, the Survey was not designed with any specific hypotheses in mind but covered an extraordinarily diverse range of issues which have previously been found to be related to perceptions of fear and crime.

Given the ambitious nature of the research and the goal of Council to survey as large a proportion of the population as possible, a multiple response format was considered to be the

most effective method of capturing as much information as possible as cost-effectively as possible. This method did not require the training of interviewers, nor did it require that respondents spend hours writing answers. Demographic information was collected by having respondents mark the box(es) which corresponded to their situation eg. 35-44 years old, female, European etc. To obtain information regarding attitudes and beliefs, respondents were presented with twenty-eight (28) statements and were asked to indicate (by marking the appropriate box) whether they strongly agreed, agreed, were unsure, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. A further seventeen (17) questions were presented regarding victimisation, lighting etc to which respondents were asked to answer "yes" or "no" again by marking the appropriate box. Respondents were then presented with six (6) questions regarding victimisation, issues of importance etc. and were asked to indicate which of the items listed on the response list applied to them. Multiple responses were possible on these six questions eg. when asked "Which services could be improved in your neighbourhood?" a respondent may choose to indicate Health, Public Transport and Education but not Parks, Library Services or Emergency Services. The final three (3) questions were open ended and were dealt with as described under the section "Report Preparation & Recommendations".

Given the extremely short time line for the project it was not possible to conduct any form of pilot testing for the Survey. To compensate for this, feedback was sought on the Survey from as wide a variety of persons as possible during the Development Stage. Each member of the Working Party was presented with a draft of the Survey at the first meeting. Following this meeting the Survey was faxed to all Councillors of Mulgrave Shire Council with their feedback being sought. The Survey was also shown to the Police Commissioner and his Research Officer, to members of ATSIC and the Aboriginal Coordinating Council, to several members of the public including an administration officer, a barrister, corrective services employees, members of the business sector and a researcher from the Psychology Department of James Cook University. Feedback was obtained from each of these persons and was incorporated into a series of new drafts.

Contact was also made between several members of the Working Party and the Mayor of Cairns City Council and several Councillors from that council. This discussion was initiated to ensure that there was no animosity between the two parties and to explain the motivations for the Working Party to ask questions on the Survey which related to the Cairns City Council jurisdiction. Support was received from both the Mayor of Cairns City Council and also from the Councillors approached. Questions were asked of Mulgrave Shire residents which related to Cairns in that many residents from Mulgrave Shire actually work, recreate, shop and so on within the Cairns City Council jurisdiction. Given this experience many people are in a position to make comment on whether or not they felt safe within Cairns City Council jurisdiction and to make comment on other issues as they pertained to that area.

Once the final draft of the Survey was prepared, the document was embargoed until the distribution date to ensure that contamination of results via campaigns from various interest groups did not occur.

The final draft for the Survey was tabled and adopted at a Working Party meeting. Given that the focus for the Survey was initially on peoples attitudes and perceptions of crime, no definition was offered for crime itself. The justification obtained from the Working Party for this was that a persons attitude towards crime and victimisation are not necessarily based on fact and therefore are not necessarily based on any one definition of crime but rather a persons feeling towards crime and what they perceive to be crime. The Survey focussed primarily on attitudes and perceptions. However once the Survey moved to questions with regard to victimisation the emphasis moved from changing perceptions to looking at real issues and real statistics - as

such more comprehensive lists of types of crime being considered were offered. It is hoped that in doing this we were able to obtain a more accurate understanding of real crime as identified by a public encouraged to make anonymous comment on their experiences of crime, free from any fear of repercussion or request for detailed information (refer Comments).

The final draft of the Survey was designed to be completely confidential with residents not needing to identify either their name or their address. Given the high mobility of Mulgrave Shire residents between the boundaries of Mulgrave Shire and Cairns City Council an "other" category was included on the suburb list. This was done to account for students attending schools in Mulgrave Shire but not actually living in the Shire. Whilst the Survey was conducted in Mulgrave Shire it did discuss some issues relevant to Cairns City. This was done again as a result of the high mobility of residents between the two Shires with many Mulgrave Shire residents working, shopping or recreating in the Cairns City Council area.

## **Survey Phase**

### **1. Households**

A kit containing the questionnaire, a reply paid envelope and a cover sheet outlining the rationale for the project, instructions for completing the Survey and a message from the Mayor of Mulgrave Shire Council was hand delivered, one per household, to each house with a letter box in Mulgrave Shire. In the rural parts of the Shire, kits were distributed via Australia Post private boxes. The reply paid envelopes were used to encourage a greater rate of return from the constituents.

An immediate campaign was commenced prior to the Survey distribution, which included weekly discussions on Talk Back Radio, articles in the local newspapers and coverage of the proposed Project via television stations and also the local radio. This media campaign was intensified once the Surveys were distributed with five community service announcements being shown per day on each of the three local television stations. Two separate community service announcements were prepared. One was to be shown in the week during which the Surveys were distributed which advised constituents that the Survey would be distributed and advised them of the instructions on how to complete the Survey. A second community service announcement commenced during the second week of the Survey period. This second announcement reminded householders of the importance of the Project and the need for them to return their questionnaires once completed. Residents were asked during these community service announcements and through other media presentations, to have only one person per household complete the Survey. The deadline for the return of the Surveys was fourteen days after the Surveys were distributed. Residents were advised of this via the cover sheet and also via press responses.

Information kits were also posted to the Family Resource Service (an information service coordinating Community Based Organisations in the area) and to the rate payer organisations in each suburb. These were provided the week Surveys were distributed so that information would be available should rate payers ask questions of these bodies. Courtesy copies of the Survey information were also sent to each of the State & Federal politicians.

### **2. Schools**

Having obtained consent from the Executive Director of the Regional Education Department the Principals of each high school within the Mulgrave Shire boundary were presented with an information kit containing a draft Survey; a copy of the letter from the Mayor to the Executive

Director of the Regional Education Department seeking his support for the project; an outline of the goals and strategies for the project and a letter in support of the project from the Assistant Commissioner for Police in the Far North Queensland region. Each Principal gave permission for the Surveys to be completed in their respective schools. Each school was asked to nominate a census day and time for example; period 3, Monday 11 July 1994. Times and days varied from school to school, but with the exception of one school all students at all levels of each school completed the Survey at the same time. Teachers were presented with Surveys for their class and also a sheet of standardised instructions to be read to the students prior to the students completing the Surveys. The cover sheet which was delivered to the householders was also given to teachers. Completed questionnaires were stored in the administration office and were collected by members of the Working Party and in turn were delivered to the training area at Mulgrave Shire Council.

## **Report Preparation and Recommendations**

All returned questionnaires were maintained separately by Australia Post who provided the Working Party with daily counts on the number of returns received via the reply paid system. All returned Surveys were stored in a discreet area of the Council chambers.

Once the Surveys were returned the three open ended questions at the end of the Survey were all hand coded. Codes were developed by tallying the responses received from the first two hundred and fifty Surveys returned. Five codes were developed around the five most common responses received from the initial results. The sixth code became an "other" category and was used when the responses presented by respondents did not fit one of the five defined categories. Upon completion of one full day of coding (using a number of members of the Working Party) the existing codes were refined and new lists of codes and examples were prepared. Each member of the Working Party was presented with a list of the code headings for example; roads and traffic, together with example responses for each, viz; better roads, more traffic lights, more speed bumps, more efficient road maintenance, more bike paths, lights at railway crossings, better sign posting, fewer roundabouts etc. Codes were provided for each of the three open ended questions, and where necessary training was then provided for each member of the Working Party to ensure that all members were coding the same responses under the same headings. The open ended questions were the only questions to be coded manually.

Once this was done the Surveys were all sent away to a Bureauging group in Brisbane to be computer scanned to ensure accurate data entry. The Surveys were scanned (OCR/OMR) and data was sent by modem to Cairns as a flat ASCII tab-delimited file. In their analysis the researchers have been totally reliant upon the integrity of the data provided by this method.

It was decided that where multiple responses were received on the demographic information, (for example; are you male or female), when a respondent indicated both male and female that this case would be deleted for all analysis using that variable, ie "gender" as no reliable way existed for assigning an appropriate response to the questionnaire.

While multiple responses were recorded for multiple choice questions (which did not permit same) the more moderate answer was used, such as; do you feel that crime has increased as a result of tourism; "strongly agree" and "agree", the option which would be used for the Survey would be "agree".

The Final Report and recommendations based upon the results of the Survey was prepared by ACRO Staff with feedback and assistance from Working Party members.

## **COMMENTS**

### **Methodological difficulties**

#### **1. Survey Distribution**

Complaints were received from several constituents via their Council representatives that they had not received a copy of the Survey questionnaire. As is outlined in the methodology, Surveys were hand distributed to all households with a letter box in Mulgrave Shire. Several phone calls were made to the company which was responsible for the distribution of the Surveys. These discussions indicated that the letter box drop had gone ahead as planned. To ensure that this was the case, however, several houses were door-knocked in each street of the suburbs in question, showing householders copies of the Survey and asking whether or not they had received a copy. The results

of these enquiries, which were conducted over a matter of days, indicated a 100% response rate, i.e. 100% of those people questioned had actually received a copy of the Survey. It is unclear, therefore, why some households did not receive Surveys. Obviously those without letter boxes missed out and future Projects should endeavour to make copies available to those people who do not have letter boxes but who would like to participate in the Survey all the same. One such way of being able to do this would be to publish contact numbers for the organisations involved in conducting research, so that people may telephone in and have copies sent out.

One possible explanation as to why certain householders did not remember receiving copies of the Survey is that it was distributed in an envelope marked "To the Householder". Whilst "Survey" was written on the envelope it was not in the prime position, i.e. in the centre of the envelope. It is possible, though unfortunate, that several or many householders may simply have read this envelope (which was addressed to the householder) decided it was junk mail and thrown it away. One way of combating this in future would be to commence media coverage showing copies of the Survey and the envelope, ideally a week in advance of its distribution. Thus the media could make people aware that Surveys were coming, could show copies of envelopes of Surveys so that people would know what to look for in their letterbox with possible respondents not accidentally or inadvertently throwing it away once they arrived as they would be actually looking out for the documentation.

#### **2. Lack of Pilot Study**

Members of the Working Party received some feedback from Councillors and also from constituents regarding the ambiguity, or the perceived ambiguity, of certain questions. Unfortunately the very strict time frame for the Project did not permit the conducting of a pilot study in the development of the Survey phase (refer to the methodology). Ideally in future this initial Survey could be used as a model which can be refined and updated and improved upon as necessary.

#### **3. Open Ended Questions**

Several problems arose in coding of the open ended questions. The first of the difficulties encountered by people coding was that the codes developed were not sensitive enough to capture all of the information. This was caused by the relatively small number of codes which could be used in this research. Ideally future research could incorporate a larger number of smaller categories.

An additional problem was encountered in that many people gave several responses to the open ended questions, however two or more of these responses belonged under the same category heading. This resulted in only one response being recorded, for example if a person responded

"housing, youth activities, recreation" all three responses would be categorised under the heading of "community services", thus the person would be credited with having made only one response.

A further major problem which resulted from the codes that were used was that much information was lost in the "other" category. The amount of information which found its way into the "other" category was extremely frustrating as several interesting trends appeared to exist within the data however these trends can not be accurately analysed at this point in time without additional coding occurring on the Surveys. Some of the points raised by respondents which were identified revolved around youth, eg. youth seemed to be more likely than adults to talk about the need for additional services to be provided for youth. This is obviously not surprising. What was surprising however (and extremely disconcerting) was the number of youth who reported that rape and stalking were the most common crimes within the Mulgrave Shire district. This is obviously an extremely important issue and one which warrants additional research. Another interesting trend which appeared to exist within the data was the number of youth who identified racism as being one of the most common crimes with the Mulgrave area. The final point to arise from the youth's information was the desire expressed to see Neighbourhood Watch groups either established or expanded within their area. This is obviously important as it is a community based crime prevention initiative, one which is owned by the community and in which the community provides a service for themselves. This is in stark contrast to the more retributive type of crime prevention strategies expressed by others. Additional examination of this trend by the youth towards Neighbourhood Watch could in future, lead

to more dynamic youth driven alternatives, or equivalents of the Neighbourhood Watch program whereby youths could keep an eye out upon each other whilst in the streets, whilst at basketball courts, whilst at beaches, and other areas commonly frequented by youth. Various research has shown that with crime prevention, strategies are most likely to work when they are driven and owned by the people who are most at risk - in this case the youth themselves. It is also highly likely that in allowing youth to provide services for themselves and for their peers the youths who may become involved in situational crime through boredom and inactivity would be provided with more meaningful and positive and (socially condoned) methods of alleviating this boredom rather than involvement in crime.

Another trend revealed through "eye balling" of information contained in "other" categories was the sensitivity of the questionnaire to specific and current local issues such as water chlorination which was mentioned by many Babinda residents but was not likely to be mentioned by people living in other suburbs.

The final point of interest noted by coders was the trend for issues which had been raised recently in the media to be mentioned in Survey responses. During the first week of surveying very few people mentioned hill slope development for example, however, during the second and third week of the Survey period (which followed a visit by the Australian Prime Minister and his very public discussions on the need for Mulgrave Shire to protect its hill slopes and its tree lines) many residents took up this issue through the Surveys. An additional example of this trend for the media to influence issues raised in Survey responses was in regard to common crimes where many students during the first week of the Survey described "hit and run" as one of the most common crimes to occur in the Shire. It is significant that at the time when the

schools were Surveyed a person was reported extensively throughout the media as conducting something of a terrorism campaign by harassing students outside several Mulgrave Shire and Cairns high schools and primary schools.

#### **4. Lack of Involvement by Cairns City Council**

It is unfortunate in a region such as Cairns where the boundaries between Mulgrave Shire and Cairns City are so highly permeable with residents living in one Shire but working in the other or going to school in one Shire but living in another, that only 50% of the population could be surveyed i.e. those within the Mulgrave Shire Council district. This certainly led to some difficulties during the Survey phase, however these were adequately resolved so that the Survey could continue unimpeded. What is most disappointing however is that Cairns advised the researchers after the Survey stage had commenced that they had been interested in participating. Had this have occurred the results would have been significantly more representative with all of the population being surveyed. It would also have been highly exciting to have an entire population of 100,000 people or more all

contributing their ideas, values and preferences with regard to crime prevention and community safety.

#### **5. Self Report**

Results obtained from this Survey rely upon self report data, ie. we rely upon respondents answering questions honestly and accurately. Whilst some researchers question the validity of this type of research method, it was considered to be essential in understanding attitudes and perceptions. It was also considered useful in the context of crime research where it is generally accepted that less than 40% of crimes are reported to the Police. Anonymous research such as this may overcome some of the problems inherent in the reporting of crime to the police and may generate additional, if not more comprehensive, information on the crime picture than is currently available. It is possible to validate the responses obtained from this sample to an extent by comparing their responses with those obtained in other such research. The results of these comparisons will be considered in the Final Report.

#### **6. The Social Aspect of Fear and Safety**

When considering respondents perceptions of fear and safety we focussed primarily on personal feelings of safety. What may prove interesting in any future research is to also consider the concerns respondents may have for the safety of those close to them such as partners, children etc.

Subjects were asked to indicate what steps, if any, they had taken in the last year to improve their own safety or that of their family. Whilst this list covered many behavioural responses such as installing security screens etc. it failed to consider any social measures that respondents may have taken such as "stopped going out at night", "only catch public transport during the day" etc. Future research may benefit from considering this issue.

## **RESULTS**

(When interpreting the Tables included in this Section, numbers included under the "count" heading indicate the total number of respondents who identified this issue, problem, crime etc. Percentages reflect the proportion of the total number of respondents identifying an issue.)

## **Demographics**

Valid surveys were returned by 7,327 respondents. Of this figure some 2,965 were received from high school students with the remaining 4,362 being returned by householders. It is important to note that where multiple responses were received for any one of the demographic variables eg. indicating that they were male and female, this case was deleted from any further counts of demographics as there was no valid and reliable way of determining which was the most appropriate response category. Consequently the counts to be reported will not always sum to 7,327 as cases have been deleted for the above reason or respondents may simply have neglected to respond to certain questions.

Of the 7,327 respondents 3,902 were received from females and the remaining 3,025 were received from males. Results indicate that the majority of our respondents were from white Australian backgrounds (n = 5,599). An additional 725 were received from respondents from other European backgrounds, 293 from other racial backgrounds, 153 from Aboriginal Australians, 152 from respondents from an Asian background and 61 surveys were returned by people from Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

Table 1 shows the number of responses received from each of the suburbs considered. The vast majority of respondents (n = 4,614) had lived in the Cairns/Mulgrave region for five years or more. Of the remaining respondents some 1,024 had lived in the region for between 1-3 years, 933 had lived here for between 3-5 years and the remaining 538 had lived in the Cairns/Mulgrave region for less than 1 year. The majority of respondents lived in 2-5 person households (refer table 2 for actual counts received). Table 3 indicates the number of responses received from each grade from each of the high schools surveyed.

***It is difficult to assess the overall representativeness of our Survey respondents. Clearly we obtained roughly equal numbers of responses from males and females. Respondents from non-white Australian backgrounds were however under-represented in our sample and consequently analyses based on race were not considered. A quick scan of this information also indicates that people who have lived in the region for longer were more likely to return Surveys. This result is consistent with research by Baba & Austin (1989) which indicated that people living in an area for longer periods of time had greater ties to the area and more to benefit from improvement to the area. There is no question of the representativeness of student responses as all students in the region completed the Survey. The only point to remember being that some students would have been absent or not completed the Survey fully. It is thought however that these difficulties would have been encountered at all schools thus spreading any effect rather than distorting results for a particular school.***

## **Safety Questions**

Consideration was given to respondents who indicated that they felt safe within their own home according to the various different adult age categories considered in this research. Significant differences were detected across the age categories  $H_2(24) = 107.59, p < 0.001$ . Of those in the 18-24 year age group some 67.3% indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they felt safe from crime whilst in their own home. This compares with 60.6%

of 35-44 year olds who strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, 57.7% of 25-34 year olds, 56.2% of those in the over 75 year category, 52.4% of those in the 65-74 year age category, 48.8% of those in the 55-64 year age category and only 43.5% in the 45-54 year age category. We also detected significant differences between the two genders on this variable with 68.3% of all males surveyed indicating that they felt safe from crime whilst in their own home, as compared with only 64.5% of women who indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe from crime whilst in their own home. Highly significant differences were detected between adults and students on this variable  $H_2(4) = 679.75, p < 0.001$ . Of the entire adult population surveyed some 56.5% indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they felt safe from crime whilst in their own home. This compares with the total received from the student population of 79% of all students surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Highly significant differences were also detected between responses coming from respondents living in different household sizes  $H_2(20) = 317.60, p < 0.001$ . For people living in households with three or more people in excess of 70% of all respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement that they felt safe from crime within their own home. This compares however, with the responses received from people living in one person dwellings or with only one other person. Of those persons who lived on their own only 56.8% indicated that they felt safe from a crime whilst in their own home, and of those living with one other person only, only 65.6% indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. A further significant difference was also detected between the responses of those people according to the length or time that they had lived in the Cairns/Mulgrave area  $H_2(12) = 29.93, p < 0.01$ . Whilst these differences were fairly small respondents who had lived in Cairns for between 1 and five years generally were more likely to respond that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they felt safe from crime within their own home, than were those who had only lived in the area for less than a year, or for those who had been here for five years or more.

***Clearly the majority of respondents, particularly students and young adults, report feeling safe within their own home. Future strategies however should aim at increasing the perceived safety of women, adults in the mid-late age categories and those in one and two person dwellings.***

Examination of peoples responses as to whether or not they felt safe from crime whilst out alone in the neighbourhood during the day failed to detect any significant differences between the various adult age categories considered  $H_2(24) = 32.41, p=n.s.$ (not significant). We also failed to detect any differences between the feelings of safety during the day between males and females  $H_2(4) = 2.75, p=n.s.$  We did however, detect differences between adults and students  $X^2(4) = 125.54, p < 0.001$ . Whilst this difference was significant it was extremely small with 82.4% of students indicating that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, as compared with 81.1% of adults. This significance is likely to have occurred due to the high number of people across all age categories indicating that they either strongly agreed or agreed that they felt safe from crime whilst in their own neighbourhood during the day. Clearly most respondents feel safe in this situation.

We also asked respondents to consider whether or not they felt safe from crime whilst out alone in their neighbourhood at night. Again we failed to detect any differences between males and females responses to this question  $H_2(4) = 5.34, p=n.s.$ , nor did we detect any significant differences between the response patterns of the various adult age categories considered  $H_2(24) = 28.64, p=n.s.$  We did however, again determine differences between the responses of adults and students  $H_2(4) = 71.11, p < 0.001$ . Students were more likely to indicate that they agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe from crime whilst in their own suburb at night than were adults with 35.3% either agreeing or strongly agreeing to this statement as compared with

only 29.1% of adults. 28% of both adults and students however, commented that they were unsure on this statement.

***It is significant to note that in this instance, the majority of residents were unsure or disagreed with the statement. Attention needs to be focussed on the issues raised later in this Report in an attempt to ascertain what would make people safer from crime whilst out alone in their neighbourhood at night.***

When considering respondents replies to the statement "I feel safe when people I don't know approach me for cigarettes or money", we failed to detect any significant differences between the response patterns for the various adult age categories considered  $H_2(24) = 23.47$ ,  $p = n.s.$ , nor did we detect any significant differences between the genders  $H_2(4) = 6.98$ ,  $p = n.s.$  We did however, determine differences between adults and students  $H_2(4) = 90.01$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Whilst very few people in either the adult or the student category either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe when people that they did not know approached them. Students were more likely to indicate that they felt comfortable with 9.2% of the total student population agreeing or strongly agreeing as compared with only 6.4% of the adults. It was also interesting that 21.9% of students indicated that they were unsure as compared to 15.4% of adults. Clearly the adults are more set in their belief that they do not appreciate strangers approaching them for cigarettes or money than are students. We failed to detect any significant differences between the different age and grade categories considered in this research  $H_2(16) = 17.72$ ,  $p = n.s.$

***This is clearly an issue for Mulgrave as the number of strangers being encountered by residents is set to increase as the population and tourism continue to grow in the region. Strategies need to consider how to most effectively maintain or restore residents feelings of confidence within their community.***

Consideration was also given to those indicating that they did or did not feel safe from crime whilst shopping in centres at night. Significant differences were determined on this question between adults and students  $H_2(4) = 325.37$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Whilst 33.5% of adults agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe in shopping centres at night 48.8% of students either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Given that shopping centres are traditionally places where students do tend to congregate it may mean that the larger numbers of highly visible groups of youth in shopping centres may actually lead to a reduction of feelings of safety for adults. We also detected significant differences between feelings of safety as expressed by males and females whilst in shopping centres  $H_2(4) = 198.29$ ,  $p < 0.001$  (refer Table 4). Not surprisingly it is the males who are more likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement that they feel safe in shopping centres (49.2%) than are females (33.5%). Significant differences were also detected between the various adult age categories considered as to whether or not they felt safe from crime while shopping in centres at night. Feelings of safety were lowest in the 55-64 year age category where only 27.3% indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, and those in the 65-74 year age category of whom only 18.2% indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe in shopping centres at night.

**Clearly it may be in the best interest of shop owners or management to consider ways of redressing this imbalance and increasing perceived levels of safety for females and older shoppers either through the provision of female only car parking, better lighting in car parks, increased security patrols, etc.**

When considering those who did and did not feel safe from crime whilst in the Cairns City Place we failed to detect any differences between the adult age categories considered  $H_2(24) = 19.19$ ,  $p = n.s.$ , or between the different genders  $H_2(4) = 4.16$ ,  $p = n.s.$  We did however, detect

differences between adults and students  $H_2(4) = 157.44, p < 0.001$ . Whereas 6.5% of the adult population indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed to feeling safe from crime in the Cairns City Place, 11.9% of students indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed to feeling safe. Whilst this difference is significant it is worth noting very small numbers of both adults and students agreed or strongly agreed to feeling safe in the Cairns City Place.

### **Clearly some action needs to be taken if residents are to feel safe whilst in their own major City Heart at night.**

We failed to detect any significant differences between males and females in their responses to whether or not they felt safe whilst travelling to or from work or school whilst on their own  $H_2(4) = 3.09, p=n.s.$ , nor did we detect any differences between the responses across the various different adult age categories  $H_2(24) = 23.73, p=n.s.$  We did however, determine significant differences between the responses of adults and

students  $H_2(4) = 152.40, p < 0.001$ . Again this difference is very small given the major number of respondents who indicated that they felt safe. However, it is again the students who are more likely to indicate that they agree or strongly agree with the statement (76.6%) than were adults (74.5%). Table 5 shows the total responses to these seven questions. Table 6 shows responses to these questions by Suburb.

Although significant differences emerged when considering the responses of adults and students on the various safety questions, it is important to note that on all questions the patterns of responses for both were highly similar though a higher percentage of students indicated that they felt safe across all situations than did adults. It may be most useful to consider programs addressing perceptions of adults rather than for students. As will be considered later, caution may be appropriate for students who report being safer but actually report higher levels of victimisation than adults.

### **Variables Related to Feelings of Safety**

Having examined feelings of safety, we endeavoured to identify variables which may be related to these feelings. Research from the United States by Taylor and Covington (1993) indicated that rapid population change was related to fear of crime. Consequently we utilised statistics provided by the Mulgrave Shire Council to identify the five suburbs in the Shire which had experienced the highest levels of growth in the period June 1991 to March 1994 and the five which had experienced the lowest rates of growth. Feelings of safety of residents in the two growth categories (high vs low) were compared. We failed to find any significant differences on the safety variables with the exception of feelings of safety in Shopping Centres  $H_2(4)=12.39, p<0.05$ . In this instance a larger percentage of people living in the low population growth areas agreed to feeling safe than did those in the high growth suburbs. We also considered responses to the statement "Crime is a problem in my suburb". Again we detected a small but significant difference between the response patterns of high and low growth suburbs with a slightly higher percentage of respondents living in high growth areas agreeing with the statement as compared with those in the low growth suburbs  $H_2(4)=11.49, p<0.05$ . Whilst the percentage rate of growth in the high growth suburbs considered ranged from 27% to 101% the nett population increase in three of the suburbs was less than 1000 people over the three years. It may be that similarly high percentage of population growths experienced in larger cities which resulted in larger nett population increases may experience different levels of fear. This was however, clearly beyond the scope of the current research.

Previous research on the impact of population growth on levels of fear within the community has indicated that the effects of growth may be mediated by the increased presence of youth and increase ethnic heterogeneity. Consequently we also compared the responses of those who indicated that their suburb had groups of unsupervised youth getting together at night with those who did not and the responses of respondents from the five suburbs most frequented by tourists and the five least tourist-oriented suburbs. Again we failed to detect any significant differences between the levels of safety experienced on the basis of these comparisons.

The level of support a person feels within their own community has been suggested as being important in predicting how safe they will feel. We asked respondents to indicate whether they spoke with their neighbours regularly and compared the feelings of safety between those who did and those who did not. Significant differences were detected between the number of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed to feeling safe in their own home  $H_2(4)=20.48, p, 0.001$ , when approached by strangers  $H_2(4)=9.52, p<0.05$ , and when in the Cairns City Place at night  $H_2(4)=11.04, p<0.05$ . Interestingly however, these differences were in the opposite direction from what was expected. In each instance, more of the respondents who indicated that they did not speak with their neighbours regularly indicated that they felt safe than did those who did speak with their neighbours regularly. It seems possible that talking to neighbours may not be the best measure of social support and we may have been better considering involvement in sporting and social clubs, number of friends and family contacts in the Region etc.

Lighting is another variable commonly reported to be associated with feelings of safety within a given environment. Consequently we asked respondents to indicate whether their neighbourhood had badly lit areas where crime might occur. The response patterns to the seven safety questions were compared for those who indicated that lighting was a problem and those who did not. The only significant difference detected was with regard to whether or not respondents felt safe in their own home  $H_2(4)=14.59, p<0.01$ . A slightly higher percentage of those who indicated that lighting was a problem disagreed or strongly disagreed to feeling safe than did those who did not perceive lighting to be a problem.

The final variables considered in this series of analyses were respondents beliefs about whether or not crime is increasing in Mulgrave. Small but significant differences were detected in the responses of those who stated that they believed that the incidence of violent crime had increased in Mulgrave Shire in the last three years and those who did not on three of the safety questions ie. those relating to feelings of safety at home  $H_2(4)=13.43, p<0.01$ , at night  $H_2(4)=9.69, p<0.05$  and when approached by strangers  $H_2(4)=9.17, p<0.05$ . In each instance, a higher percentage of those who stated that they believed violent crime was increasing also stated that they felt unsafe than was the case for those who did not believe that violent crime was increasing in the Shire. We also compared the responses of those who stated that they believed property crime was increasing in the Shire and those who did not. Small but significant differences were detected on six of the seven safety questions; safe at home  $H_2(4)=19.28, p<0.001$ ; safe during the day  $H_2(4)=17.15, p<0.01$ ; safe in the City Place  $H_2(4)=13.41, p<0.01$ ; safe at night  $H_2(4)=16.87, p<0.01$ ; safe when shopping in Centres  $H_2(4)=16.91, p<0.01$ ; and when travelling to or from work/school  $H_2(4)=20.64, p<0.001$ . In each of these analyses, a larger percentage of those who indicated that they believed property crime was increasing in the Shire also indicated that they did not feel safe than did those who did not believe property crime to be increasing.

Thus it seems that of the variables available for comparison in this research, the most useful in determining differences in feelings of perceived safety are beliefs about crime rates. Consequently it is imperative that citizens receive accurate information about the crime levels

within the Region. It seems important that an attempt be made to understand how these beliefs are formed so that the most effective strategies can be developed to provide accurate information. Unfortunately we were somewhat limited in our capacity in the current research to consider what factors contribute to attitude formation about crime. Methods of information acquisition which seem logically related and which were available for preliminary consideration in this research include prior victimisation, media and social contact. Preliminary comparisons were conducted on each of these variables. As is reported elsewhere in this paper, we did not detect differences in feelings of perceived safety between victims and non-victims. A series of Chi Square analyses were conducted which sought to detect differences in perceived safety, beliefs about the crime rate, about the risk of violent crime to women, beliefs about offenders and victims etc according to beliefs about the media. All of these analyses found highly significant differences however the patterns were unfortunately uninterpretable. Future research should further examine this issue by better defining media (eg. print or wire) and asking a series of questions which more directly relate to the shaping of beliefs. The other method through which it seems likely that respondents may develop beliefs about crime is through talking to friends, families and associates. Again future research should consider this issue more closely. We did however compare the responses of those who did and did not talk to their neighbours regularly and their beliefs about crime. Results of these analyses indicated that there were no significant differences detected in respondents beliefs about increased violence according to whether they spoke with their neighbours or not  $H_2(1)=16, p=n.s.$

### **Steps Taken To Increase Safety**

Having examined respondents perceptions of safety within their own home and their own neighbourhood, it seemed appropriate to consider any steps that respondents may have taken to increase their overall safety in the past twelve months. It was expected that this would provide some sort of validation for the information previously received with regard to feelings of safety, ie. if a person felt unsafe one would expect them to have taken some measures to increase their overall safety. Results revealed that of the respondents surveyed the largest majority for any of the categories provided indicated that they had not taken any steps whatsoever over the last twelve months to increase their own safety. 31.1% indicated that they had not taken any steps at all. An additional 7.7% indicated that they had not taken any steps to increase their safety as they were unsure as to what would be most appropriate. The next most common response for people to take was to install security screens. 30.8% of respondents i.e. 2,257 had installed security screens over the last twelve months. The next most common response provided by respondents was talking to children or parents about safety issues; 18.3% or some 1,339 reported having taken this measure over the last twelve months. In addition to these results 17.2% of those surveyed (ie. 1,261) reported having bought a dog in order to improve their own safety; 12.9% reported having pruned shrubs away from doors and windows; 8.4% reported having taken some other measure, such as acquiring a fire arm or weapon; and 5.4% (or some 398 of our respondents) indicated that they had moved house during the last twelve months in order to increase safety for themselves or for their family.

Respondents were asked to indicate multiple responses to this question where it was appropriate. Consequently it is of interest to consider the number of steps taken by respondents in this survey. Of those surveyed 19.7% (or 1,441 of the respondents) indicated that they had taken two or more of the steps listed in the question over the last twelve months; 5.8% of respondents (or 423) indicated that they had taken 3 of the steps outlined; 1.4% indicated that they had taken four of the steps outlined; only 17 of the total respondents (ie. 0.2%) indicated that they had taken five of the steps outlined; and only 2 respondents out of the entire 7,327 indicated a response on all of the six possible categories for this question. These results

indicate that whilst people may be concerned that crime is increasing it has not yet reached a level which is prompting people to take extraordinary measures to increase their safety. As was mentioned above, the majority of respondents had done nothing whatsoever to increase their safety. It is also encouraging that the most common responses were to install security screens and to discuss safety with parents and children ie. residents taking responsibility for their own personal safety, rather than taking more drastic steps to increase safety for themselves or for their family. Again the very low number of multiple responses to this question received indicate the general population is not taking extreme measures to increase their safety. One possible way of interpreting this is that they do not yet perceive this to be necessary. We failed to detect any significant differences between the people who had responded on our survey that they had been a victim of a property crime, a violent crime or both a property or violent crime with regard to the number of steps that they had taken to increase safety for themselves or their families  $H_2(14) = 9.05, p = n.s.$

### **Experiences of Crime**

Having examined respondents perceptions of safety, we then chose to consider their experiences of crime. Of the respondents surveyed some 3,196 (or 43.6% of the total population sampled) indicated that they had been a victim of a property related crime at some stage in their life. A further 1,380 (or 18.8%) indicated that they had been a victim of a violent crime at some stage in their life. Of those who indicated that they had been a victim of crime at some stage during their lifetime, 34.6% (or 2537) indicated that they had reported the matter to the police.

Given the relatively low percentage of people reporting crimes to the police, further examination was conducted in an attempt to endeavour to understand who reported matters and who did not. Examination of differences between the sexes revealed that there were no significant differences between males and females with regard to whether or not they were likely to report a crime having occurred.

Significant differences were determined between the various adult age categories considered and the rate at which they indicated that they had reported the matters to the police  $H_2(6) = 30.53, p < 0.001$ . Of the total number of respondents in the 18-24 year age category who indicated that they had been a victim of crime only 62.1% stated that they had reported the matter to the police. This figure rose to 62.3% in the 25-34 year age category to 73.1% in the 45-54 year age category to 76.3% for the over 75's, 76.7% for those aged between 65-74, 78.3% in the 35-44 year age category and to 81% of all 55-64 year old respondents who indicated that they had been a victim of crime and stated that they had reported the matter to the police. This is significant, however in that even in this age category where the percentage is highest, we still see only 4 out of every 5 victims are reporting matters to the police. We also detected significant differences between the various house sizes considered in their rate of reporting incidences of crime to the police  $H_2(5) = 137.35, p < 0.001$ . Of those respondents who indicated that they lived in houses with five or more other people only 45.9% indicated that they had been a victim of crime and had reported the matter to the police. This figure was slightly higher for those respondents living in four person households, where 57.3% of victims indicated that they had reported the matter to the police. Of those residents living in five person households matters were reported by 60.6% of respondents as compared with 66.3% of respondents living in three person households, 71.8% of persons living on their own and 75.4% of people who shared a house with one other person. It seems likely that those persons living in larger dwellings are more likely to gain support and assistance from other household members and are less likely to report the matter to the police. Table 7 shows the frequencies for this variable. We did not find any differences in the rate at which crimes were reported as a result of

the length of time that people had lived in an area, ie. people that had lived in an area for a reasonably short time did not differ from those living in the area for a long time. Highly significant differences were detected between adults and students however  $H_2(1) = 363.75$   $p < .001$ . Of the adults surveyed who reported having been the victim of crime some 68.6% indicated that they had reported the matter to the police. This is in stark contrast to the students who had been a victim of crime of whom only 31.4% indicated that they had reported the matter to the police.

When considering respondents answers when asked whether or not the police had acted once a crime was reported, only 53.4% indicated in the affirmative. We failed to detect any significant differences between the adult age categories considered  $H_2(6) = 6.24$ ,  $p = n.s.$ , nor did we detect any significant differences in the rate at which respondents indicated that the police had acted according to the gender of the complainant  $H_2(1) = 2.8$ ,  $p = n.s.$  We did however, detect a significant suburb difference, however, as has been mentioned previously these results are unreliable given to the very, very small cell sizes encountered, through this comparison. Consequently this matter will be considered elsewhere once police districts are considered.

Of those who did report the matter to the police some 38.3% responded that they were happy with the outcome of the police action. Examination of differences according to who was and was not happy with the outcomes, revealed: no significant differences between age groups in whether or not they were happy with any actions taken by the police  $H_2(6) = 0.928$ ,  $p = n.s.$  An additional analysis was conducted examining differences between genders. This result also failed to obtain any difference in the rate at which males and females were likely to report being happy with police action  $H_2(1) = 1.107$ ,  $p = n.s.$  Again suburb differences were obtained in that some residents from certain suburbs were more likely to report having been happy with the actions of the police than were others. Additional analyses need to be conducted on these variables, but rather than considering suburbs, considering police districts (refer elsewhere).

***Clearly the most important factor in determining whether or not people reported crimes to the police was age with younger adults being less likely to do so. Previous research indicates that people in these ranges were more likely to be a victim than others and statistics from the Queensland Corrective Services Commission indicate that it is people in this age category who are more likely to have been incarcerated for offences. Should the police seek more representative reporting rates, consideration needs to be given as to how best access people in this age category. Focus should also be placed on ways of increasing the public's satisfaction or on improving their understanding of police issues and what is possible once a crime is reported as this is currently reported to be very low (only 38.3% satisfied) and may impact upon future reporting rates.***

***Caution also needs to be taken in interpreting these results as they may not necessarily relate to crimes and issues of reporting crime in the Cairns/Mulgrave region as respondents were asked about their experiences in general and not just those which have occurred whilst in Mulgrave.***

Another way of examining people's exposure to crime was to ask respondents whether they, or their children, had ever been victimised or bullied at school. 2,006 respondents (or 35.4%) indicated in the affirmative to this question ie. had been victimised or bullied. Differences between grades were examined, however we failed to detect any significant differences in the rate at which different grade levels reported having been victimised or bullied  $H_2(4) = 5.22$ ,  $p = n.s.$  Results of our survey also failed to indicate any differences in the rate at which males and females reported having been bullied or victimised  $H_2(1) = 0.95$ ,  $p = n.s.$

Of those who indicated that they had either been victimised or bullied at school, some 42.6% indicated that they had told the school of the incident in question. Examination of this variable failed to detect any differences in the rate at which males and females reported incidences of victimisation to the school  $H_2(1) = 1.86$ ,  $p = n.s.$  26.1% of people who reported matters of victimisation or bullying to their school were satisfied with the outcome of the schools response to the report. Levels of satisfaction were not found to be related to gender  $H_2(1) = 3.25$ ,  $p = n.s.$ , or grade  $H_2(4) = 1.31$ ,  $p = n.s.$  however we did detect differences between schools  $H_2(7) = 18.17$ ,  $p < .01$ . Again caution is required however as incidents of victimisation and the reporting thereof may not necessarily have occurred at the school in which a student is currently enrolled. **Clearly schools need to be taking greater heed of complaints of victimisation and bullying and some reconsideration of policies and action could be in line. Possible attention may also need to be focussed on encouraging students to report certain types of crime or incidents occurring within school grounds.**

### Victimisation

Of respondents surveyed, 63.4% indicated that they had not been the victim of any of the crimes listed during the past 12 months. Table 9 indicates the numbers of people reporting having been a victim of each of the crimes specified by adults and students and by Suburbs. Examination across each of the twelve different crime types listed, by gender, failed to detect any significant differences in the rates at which males and females reported having been a victim of those crimes. This includes the rates of victimisation of domestic violence, for stalking and rape, ie. men and women were equally likely to report having been the victim of all types of crimes.

Differences between the rates at which adults and students reported having been the victims of each of the crimes were examined next, refer Table 8. Examination of those people who reported not having been the victim of crime in the last twelve months indicated that adults were more likely to report that they had not been victims of crime in the previous twelve months than were students. Examination of reports of assault indicated that a higher percentage of the students surveyed reported having been the victim of an assault than were adults  $H_2(1) = 44.3$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Examination of reports of bag snatching again indicated that more students reported having been a victim of bag snatching than were adults  $H_2(1) = 12.80$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . There were no differences obtained in our sample with regard to the rates at which adults and students reported having been the victim of a break and enter  $H_2(1) = 0.05$ ,  $p = n.s.$  or the victim of business related crime or vandalism  $H_2(1) = 1.66$ ,  $p = n.s.$  Examination of the rates at which adults and students reported having been the victim of domestic violence again indicated that more students were likely to report having been a victim than were adults  $H_2(1) = 11.61$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . It is likely in this case that domestic violence has been interpreted by the students as being some form of violence by parents against students, be it through discipline, through parental abuse or so on. Examination of the rates at which motor vehicle theft was reported by our respondents failed to detect significant differences between adults and students, although not surprisingly significantly more adults reported having been a victim than did students,  $H_2(1) = 3.49$ ,  $p = n.s.$  It seems likely in this instance that students are reporting crimes experienced by their family as a unit rather than for themselves as individuals. Additional analyses were conducted which indicated that adults were more likely than were students to report having been the victim of some other form of crime not listed on our questionnaire  $H_2(1) = 8.42$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Examination of those people who reported having been the victim of rape in the last twelve months indicated that significantly more students reported having been the victim of rape than did adults  $H_2(1) = 46.86$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . This result is quite concerning in that 62 students reported having been the victim of rape and 16 adults reported having been a victim in the last twelve months. This result goes a long way to explaining responses obtained by students to the

final question of the survey which asked them to predict the three most common crimes in Mulgrave. Whilst statistical analysis is not presently possible for this issue as rape is included as a crime of personal violence and not in a category of its own, large numbers of students reported that one of the most common crimes within the Mulgrave area was rape - a matter revealed when initially coding. Additional analysis indicated that a larger percentage of adults than students indicated that they had been a victim of robbery in the last twelve months  $H_2(1) = 11.55, p < 0.001$ . Examination of those people who had reported being a victim of stalking in the last twelve months indicated that students were much more likely to report having been the victim than were adults  $H_2(1) = 61.25, p < 0.001$ . No significant differences were detected between the rates at which adults and students reported having been the victim of vandalism  $H_2(1) = 0.01, p = n.s.$

***These results are extremely disconcerting and strategies need to be considered which address the rates at which students report that they are becoming the victim of personal and violent crimes such as assault, rape, stalking and bag snatching.***

Examination of the rates at which respondents reported having been a victim of crime were also considered according to the size of the household in which a respondent resided. These examinations failed to detect any differences in the rates at which respondents from the six different house size categories reported that they had not been a victim of crime  $H_2(5) = 7.22, p = n.s.$  Examination of the rate at which respondents reported having been a victim of assault however did seem to vary across the different house size categories  $H_2(5) = 16.48, p < 0.01$ . Examination of Table 10 shows that of those who reported that they had been a victim of assault some 30% came from households with four people. As house size increased so too did the comparative percentages of those who reported that they had been a victim of crime as opposed to those who reported that they had not been a victim of assault, ie. for those people living on their own, only 2.5% had been a victim of assault; whereas for those living in two person homes the percentage rose to 2.7; those in three person households went to 3.6; for four person households the rate rose to 4.6; for five person households the rate rose to 5%. Of those respondents living in households of 5 or more some 4.6% indicated that they had been a victim of assault. No significant differences were detected in the rates as which people

reported having been a victim of bag snatching according to the size of the household in which they resided  $H_2(5) = 7.64, p = n.s.$ , or Break and Enter  $H_2(5) = 1.59, p = n.s.$  or of a business related crime  $H_2(5) = 0.18, p = n.s.$  Examination of the rates at which people reported having been a victim of domestic violence did detect significant differences across the different house sizes  $H_2(5) = 11.6, p < 0.05$ . Again it is those people living in households of four persons (who represent over 30% of all respondents) who indicated that they had been a victim of domestic violence. No significant differences were detected in the rates at which people reported having been the victim of a motor vehicle theft  $H_2(5) = 1.4, p = n.s.$ , of some "other" form of crime not listed on our survey list  $H_2(5) = 9.99, p = n.s.$ , of rape  $H_2(5) = 9.05, p = n.s.$ , or of robbery  $H_2(5) = 3.01, p = n.s.$  Examination of the rates at which people reported having been a victim of stalking in the last twelve months did, however, differ across each of the different house size categories  $H_2(5) = 30.95, p < 0.0001$ . Examination of Table 11 reveals that of all of those people who did report having been a victim of stalking the vast majority were reported by people who lived alone. Within each of the house size categories it seems that those respondents living in households comprised of five, or five or more, residents, more people reported having been a victim of stalking, than did not, ie. for those people living in residences of five, 5.4% had been a victim of stalking; and those living in households greater than five, 5.8% reported having been a victim of stalking. No significant differences were detected according to the rate at which people reported having been a victim of vandalism  $H_2(5) = 6.20, p = n.s.$

Comparisons were also made for each of the crimes listed on the survey according to the length of time in which respondents had lived in the Cairns/Mulgrave area. None of these comparisons obtained significance, that is, those people who had been in the region for less than a year did not differ in their rates of victimisation, to those who had been in the region from one-three years, from three-five years or for five years or more. Similarly there were no other differences detected between the remaining three time categories.

Rates of reported victimisation for each of the crimes listed on the survey were also compared across the different adult age categories utilised in this survey. We failed to detect any significant differences between any of the age categories for any of the crimes reported, with the exception of the rates for victimisation of rape. This result however, although significant, is likely to be an artefact resulting from the small number of adults in our sample who reported having been a victim of rape with this cross tabulation resulting in two empty cells (and five of the six cells had  $N < 5$ ). 50% of those respondents who reported having been a victim of rape were however, in the 35-44 year age category, It must be noted that this 50% still represents a

relatively small total of 9 victims of rape. Significant suburb differences were obtained when considering the rate at which respondents from each of the suburbs reported having been a victim of each of the crimes considered (refer Table 9). These results however, are highly dubious given the relatively small numbers in certain cells and the number of empty cells for some categories. These results will be better considered according to a larger grouping variable such as electoral division or police district (see elsewhere).

Thus whilst 36.6% of respondents indicated that they had been the victim of crime within the previous twelve months, it is difficult to detect groups within the community who are more likely to become the victim of the crimes considered than others. Clearly the most useful distinction in this research is that made between the victimisation rates of adults and students. Students were more likely to report being the victim of most of the crimes considered than adults. This is consistent with previous research conducted. We did not detect any differences between grades which seems to indicate that the age of a student has little to do with whether or not they are likely to report having been the victim of crime.

It is also interesting to note that we failed to detect differences between males and females in reported victimisation. Thus, whilst respondents generally indicated that females were more likely to be the victim of violent crime than were males (refer "Beliefs about Crime"), the experiences of Mulgrave residents as expressed in the Survey failed to lend any empirical weight to this belief.

Similarly few, or no, differences were detected between adult age categories, house sizes or according to the length of time that a respondent had lived in the Cairns/Mulgrave region. That is, according to the rates of crime described by our sample, the elderly are no more likely to be the victim of any of the crimes listed than any other age category considered, people living on their own are no more likely to be the victim than those living in larger accommodation units (and may in fact be less likely to be the victim in some instances) and longer term residents are no more or less likely to be the victim of crime than others.

Thus the results obtained from the 7000 plus respondents in this Survey fail to support many of the commonly held beliefs about crime.

### **The Witnessing of Crime**

Table 12 shows the rates at which adults and students reported having witnessed each of the crimes presented in the list on the survey and Table 13 reveals differences between Suburbs. As can be seen the most frequently reported crime which people report having witnessed in the last twelve months is break and enter, with some 54.4% of all respondents reporting having witnessed this crime occurring. The next most frequent acts to be witnessed by our sample were drug use, domestic violence, robbery and motor vehicle theft. This is not surprising as rates of property crime such as this generally tend to be higher than do rates of the more physical crimes. Closer examination of each of these types of crimes reveals that of those who indicated that they had witnessed an assault some 51.9% were adults as opposed to 48.1% who were students. This difference is significant  $H_2(1) = 23.07, p < 0.001$ . Examination of the table also shows that although the majority of those who had witnessed an assault were adults, only 13.4% of adults had witnessed an assault, as opposed to 17.5% of students who stated that they had witnessed an assault occurring in the last 12 months. Further analysis indicated that students were significantly more likely to have witnessed a bag snatching than were adults  $H_2(1) = 20.86, p < 0.001$ . Adults however, were more likely to have witnessed a break and enter than were students. Of those who had witnessed a break and enter, some 61.5% were adults. This difference was statistically significant  $H_2(1) = 31.49, p < 0.001$ . It is interesting to note the high levels of witnessing of break and enter, with some 57.2% of adults indicated that they had seen a break and enter whereas some 50.5% of students indicated that they had witnessed a break and enter in the last twelve months. Results indicate that business related crimes were generally more likely to be witnessed by adults than by students  $H_2(1) = 48.43, p < 0.001$ . Of those who indicated that they had witnessed a business related crime 68.6% were adults. In contrast to this it is students rather than adults who indicate that they had witnessed drug related crimes  $H_2(1) = 170.98, p < 0.001$ . Of those who indicated that they had witnessed drug related crime, 54.1% were students. It is also interesting that of the total student population sampled, 34.8% indicated that they had witnessed a drug related crime as opposed to only 20.9% of the total adult population who indicated that they had witnessed drug related crime in the last twelve months. No significant differences were detected in the rates at which adults and students reported having witnessed domestic violence  $H_2(1) = 2.35, p = n.s.$ ; having witnessed no crimes at all  $H_2(1) = 0.24, p = n.s.$ ; or having witnessed vandalism  $H_2(1) = 0.67, p = n.s.$  Significant differences were detected however in the rate at which people reported having witnessed other types of crimes not listed on the survey  $H_2(1) = 25.42, p < 0.001$ . 53.2% of those who indicated that they had witnessed some other form of crime were students - 7.7% of the total student population indicated that they had witnessed other types of crime as opposed to only 4.8% of the total adult population surveyed. Students were also more likely than

adults to report that they had witnessed rape in the last twelve months  $H_2(1) = 70.11, p < 0.001$ . Of those who indicated that they had witnessed a rape 58.0% were students. It is startling that of the total student population surveyed some 11.3% indicated that they had witnessed a rape occurring in the past twelve months as opposed to 5.8% of the total adult population. Students were also more likely than were adults, to indicate that they had witnessed stalking occurring in the last twelve months  $H_2(1) = 52.39, p < 0.001$ . Whilst 5.5% of the total adult population indicated that they had witnessed stalking some 10.1% of the students indicated that they had seen this crime occurring. Adults however, were more likely to report having witnessed motor vehicle theft occurring in the last twelve months  $H_2(1) = 33.09, p < 0.001$ . Again however, rates at which respondents reported having witnessed this crime were relatively high with 21.5% of adults claiming to have witnessed the crime in the last twelve months and 16.1% of students. The final difference obtained on this variable was for the rates at which adults and students witnessed robberies  $H_2(1) = 29.59, p < 0.001$ . Of those who indicated that they had witnessed a robbery in the last twelve months, 52.4% were adults. However this represents only 19.1% of all adults surveyed as opposed to the 24.4% of all students surveyed who indicated that they had witnessed a robbery occurring in the previous twelve months.

Comparisons between males and females failed to detect any significant differences in the rate at which they recorded having witnessed the various types of crimes considered in this survey, with the exception of break and enter  $H_2(1) = 3.81, p < 0.005$ , motor vehicle theft  $H_2(1) = 8.98, p < 0.01$ , and vandalism  $H_2(1) = 4.4, p < 0.05$ . Interestingly on each of these three variables it is females rather than males who are more likely to indicate that they have witnessed each of these crimes occurring. Examination of percentages revealed, however, that whilst these results are significant, the differences are not particularly large with 55.4% of all females surveyed; witnessing break and enter as opposed to 53% of all males surveyed, 20.3% of all females surveyed witnessing a motor vehicle theft compared to 17.4% of all males; and 38.7% of all females witnessing vandalism as opposed to 36.2% of all males. Comparisons between the six adult age categories considered in this survey failed to detect any differences in the rates at which each of the age categories reported having witnessed any of the crimes considered in this survey.

These results indicate that significant numbers of people are reporting that they have witnessed crimes being commissioned. The question must be asked: If the crimes were witnessed, were they reported? A quick glance at the official Police statistics regarding the number of crimes reported would indicate that many of the crimes which people state that they have witnessed are not being reported.

As a community we must accept some responsibility for ensuring not just our own safety but also that of fellow citizens. Part of this must surely include the provision of support and assistance in times of need. Few would argue that few situations exist during which an individual's need for assistance is greater than it is whilst they are being the victim of crime.

**Strategies must be developed which examine why people are not reporting crimes as they are being commissioned and how this trend may be redressed to create a more caring community and possibly one in which the incidence of crime is reduced in light of the fact that perpetrators realise that if spotted, their actions will be reported.**

### **Contributors to Crime**

Several statements were made on this survey to which respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement. These questions surrounded issues which have previously been reported to be linked to crime. For example the first of these statements was: "The use of Marijuana leads to crime". Of those surveyed some 21.1% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. An additional 21.2% agreed, 24.5% were unsure and the remaining 29.8% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. This result indicates that respondents on our survey generally felt there was some relationship between marijuana usage and crime. We failed to detect any significant differences between males and females on their responses to this question  $H_2(4) = 3.84, p = n.s.$  There were significant differences, however in the responses between adults and students  $H_2(4) = 209.17, p < 0.001$ . Of those who indicated that they strongly agreed with this statement 70.5% were adults, of those who indicated that they agreed with this statement 64.8% were adults, whereas 27.3% of all adults surveyed either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, i.e. did not feel that marijuana use was related to crime. Clearly adult respondents in this Survey were more certain of a link between marijuana usage and crime than were students. Some 36% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

The second contributor to crime considered was the use of hard drugs. Of those surveyed some 54.6% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement that "Use of hard drugs (for example Heroin and Cocaine) leads to crime". 24.3% agreed with the statement and only 4.7% disagreed

or strongly disagreed with the statement. Although trends for both adults and students were similar on this variable with the vast majority of both age categories agreeing that the use of hard drugs led to crime, adults were more likely than were students to strongly agree with the statement  $H_2(4) = 654.96, p < 0.001$ . There were no differences between the beliefs of males and females with regard to the use of drugs and crime.

The third issue being considered was the rate at which unemployment was related to crime. Again we failed to detect any significant differences between the rates at which males and females indicated that they believed crime to be related to unemployment  $H_2(4) = 6.98, p = n.s.$  There were however, significant differences between the beliefs of adults and students  $H_2(4) = 544.18, p < 0.001$ . Again the pattern of responding was the same for adults and students with the majority of both adults and students agreeing with the statement. Adults were however, more likely than students to strongly agree with this statement. Overall 25.2% of total respondents strongly agreed with the statement that unemployment leads to crime, 47.4% agreed, 18.9% weren't sure and only 4.8% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The next issue to be considered was the relationship between increased tourism and crime in the Cairns/Mulgrave area. Some 16.6% of people indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement that crime had increased as a result of tourism. An additional 35.3% indicated that they agreed with the statement, 28.5% were unsure and 14.6% indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Again there are significant differences between the beliefs of adults and students  $H_2(4) = 150.34, p < 0.001$ . Whereas adults were most inclined to agree with this statement, the majority of students indicated that they were unsure. Again there were no differences between males and females in their beliefs about the relationship between tourism and crime. Interestingly we also failed to detect any differences in respondents beliefs about the relationship between crime and tourism as a function of the length of time that they had lived in Cairns/Mulgrave area, that is, short term and long term residents did not differ in their views on this variable.

The next statement of interest was "Excessive use of Alcohol leads to crime". 31.1% of the total population surveyed strongly agreed with this statement, an additional 35.7% agreed and only 19.1% were unsure, the remaining 10.8% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Again we failed to detect any differences between males and females on their beliefs about the relationship between excessive alcohol use and crime. We did however, detect a significant difference between the beliefs of adults and students  $H_2(4) = 318.06, p < 0.001$ . Again the responding patterns of adults and students were highly similar with the majority indicating in the affirmative. The adults, however, tended to respond more dramatically, ie, by answering agree and strongly agree, whereas the students tended to hover more to the moderate end, to the disagree, unsure, agree.

When asked about their beliefs between the relationship between crime and intolerance only 12.3% indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement that intolerance leads to crime. 32.9% agreed with the statement, 38.8% were unsure and only 11% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Again there were significant differences between the beliefs of adults and students  $H_2(4) = 226.47, p < 0.001$ . This result however, is tempered by the fact that students were significantly more likely to report being unsure on this variable, in that 51.6% of students indicated that they were unsure of the relationship between intolerance and crime. Again there were no significant differences between the responses of males and females  $H_2(4) = 5.31, p = n.s.$

The final variable of interest on this "contributors to crimes issues" was racial intolerance. Of those surveyed 12.3% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement that racial intolerance leads to crime, 37.2% agreed with the statement, 29.8% were unsure and 26.4% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. There were no differences between males and females with regard to their beliefs on racial intolerance. There were however significant differences between the beliefs of adults and students  $H_2(4) = 154.39, p < 0.001$ . Again the general pattern of beliefs across adults and students was highly similar however students were more likely to report being unsure of the relationship between racial intolerance and crime than were adults.

***Generally respondents in this sample seem confident they understand that behaviours such as drug and alcohol use and social difficulties such as unemployment are related to crime issues. What seems unclear to people are the links between tourism and intolerance and crime with students being more uncertain than adults. It may be of merit to consider these issues more clearly as both are relevant to the population in the Mulgrave region. The Final Report will consider this matter in more depth, making comparisons between high and low growth suburbs, between tourist and non-tourist dominated suburbs etc.***

### **Beliefs About Crime**

When presented with the statement "The media accurately portrays the level of crime in the community", only 4.3% of respondents indicated that they strongly agreed with this statement; 20.7% agreed; 36.5% were unsure; 24.1% disagreed and 9.9% strongly disagreed. Thus the majority of the population surveyed was unsure as to the accuracy or otherwise of the media presentation of crime. It is also significant that more people disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the statement than did agree or strongly agree. When considering the responses of residents according to the length of time that they had resided in the Cairns/Mulgrave area this pattern remains stable, however significant differences were detected according to a

persons response to this question according to how long they had lived in the Cairns/Mulgrave area  $H_2(12) = 27.83, p < .005$ . Of those who strongly agreed with this statement 67% had lived in the Cairns/Mulgrave area for longer than five years; 14.5% had lived in the area for three to five years; 11.2% had lived in the area for one to three years; and only 7.3% of people who indicated that they strongly agreed that the media accurately portrayed the level of crime in a community had lived in Cairns for less than one year. It is to be noted that those who lived in Cairns for longer than five years or for three to five years scored significantly higher on all of the categories however. This is due to the larger representation of these groups in our sample population. Where differences appear to emerge is for those who have lived in the area for one year or less. These people tend to feel less confident of the accuracy of the media with 37.8% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Again we failed to detect any significant differences through the responses presented by males and females or in the responses presented by people in the various age categories given for the adults. We did, however, again detect significant differences between the responses of adults and students  $H_2(4) = 98.83, p < .0001$ . 44.9% of all students surveyed indicated that they were unsure as to the accuracy or otherwise of media representations of crime in our community. Apart from this difference the responses of the students mirrored the overall response pattern presented in the data for the entire survey population.

***These results are extremely disconcerting as the population relies heavily upon the media for ongoing education and comment on current social issues such as crime. The***

***media must be made aware of the lack of faith placed in it by respondents. Pressure needs to be applied and maintained to ensure the accuracy of crime reporting.***

When presented with the statement "It is young people (under twenty-four years) who commit most crime" 10.2% of survey respondents strongly agreed with this statement; 30.9% agreed; 36.8% were unsure; 14% disagreed and 3.6% strongly disagreed with the statement. Responses to the statement that young people are more likely to be the offenders were also considered according to grade. There was no significant difference however, in the beliefs of the different grades considered. There was however a difference between the schools  $H_2(28) = 46.52$   $p < .05$ . Again the responses received from each of the high schools surveyed tended to cluster around the disagree, unsure or agree categories, with basic percentages for each being highly similar. It is interesting to note that of those who strongly agreed with the statement that it is young people who commit most crime, some 20.8% came from the Kewarra Beach campus of Trinity Anglican School, 14.2% came from Trinity Anglican School, 13.1% from Gordonvale State High School and 13.0% from St Mary's. Comparisons across the different adult age categories utilised for this survey failed to detect any significant differences in the rate at which the age categories reported their beliefs about young people as committing offences. We also failed to detect any sex differences.

The difference between adults and students in the rate at which they reported believing young people to be the primary perpetrators of crime was however highly significant  $H_2(4) = 36.42$   $p < .001$ . The general trend was for both adults and students to agree with this statement. Adults were more likely to be unsure than were students and students were more likely however to disagree or strongly disagree than were adults. In this instance respondents beliefs seem reasonably accurate. Most previous research indicates that it is young males who commit most offences. When considering the statement "young people (under twenty-four years) are more likely than other to be the victims of crime", 3.1% strongly agreed with the statement, 12.7% agreed, 41.1% were unsure, 34.3% disagreed and 4.6% strongly disagreed. Again there was a significant difference between the perceptions of adults and students in the way in which they responded to this statement  $H_2(4) = 231.68$   $p < .001$ . Whilst over 80% of all adults surveyed either disagreed or were unsure as to whether or not youths were more likely to be victims of crime, only 27.2% of students disagreed, 45.4% were unsure and 18.6% agreed. Again the trends between adults and students were very similar, however it was youth who were more likely to strongly agree with the statement or agreed with the statement that youths were more likely to be victims of crime. Again there were no significant sex effects on this variable. Nor did we detect any difference in response patterns across the seven adult age categories utilised for the survey. Results of the current review ( refer previously ) and that conducted by other authors generally tends to indicate that youth are more likely to be the victim. Merit may be derived from conveying this point to the population.

Survey respondents were also presented with the statement that "Elderly people are more likely than others to be the victims of crime". Responses on this variable tended to indicate that the majority of people agreed with this statement: 18.5% strongly agreed, 40.5% agreed, 23.9% were unsure, 12.1% disagreed and 1.7%

strongly disagreed. There were no detectable differences in the patterns of responding to this question across the different age categories utilised for the adults questioned in this survey. Nor did we detect any differences in the response patterns of males and females, though again there was a significant difference

between the responses of adults and students  $H_2(4) = 37.43$   $p < .001$ . Again the response pattern for adults and students on this variable was highly similar with the majority answering in

the affirmative, however responses of adults tended to be more strongly positive than were those of the students. Results of the current research and that of others generally tends to refute this belief ie. the elderly are not more likely to be the victim of crime. This point needs to be conveyed to ensure unacceptable levels of fear do not develop in this group (though the present research did not detect such a trend).

Of those surveyed for this research 5.1% of respondents strongly agreed that "Crime was a problem in their suburb" - 18.6% agreed with this statement, 34.0% were unsure, 30.3% disagreed and 7.7% strongly disagreed (refer Table 14). Thus it can be seen that a small majority of residents do not believe crime to be a problem in their suburb. Additional analysis conducted on this variable failed to detect any differences in the perceptions of males and females with regard to whether or not crime was a problem in their suburb. We did however, detect again, differences between the beliefs of adults and students  $H_2(4) = 144.88$   $p < .001$ . Whilst 5% of adults strongly disagreed with this statement, 12.4% of students strongly disagreed with the statement that crime was a problem in their suburb. 33.1% of adults disagreed and 29.5% of student disagreed that crime was a problem in their suburb. Adults and students reported highly similar percentages with regard to those who were unsure as to whether or not crime was an issue in their suburb. When it came to those who agreed that crime was a problem 20.7% of all adults surveyed felt that this was an issue, whereas only 17.4% of all students surveyed considered it to be an issue; 4.5% of adults and 6.5% of students strongly agreed that crime was a problem in their suburb. As we can see the pattern here is not particularly clear and it is probably most significant that adults and students generally tend to feel fairly similar. Again significant suburb effects were found on this variable, however, again due to the small number of samples received from some suburbs and the resulting empty cells, these results shall not be interpreted. They should however, be reported elsewhere in more complex designs. The length of time that a person had lived in the Cairns/Mulgrave area was also examined in an attempt to detect any impact upon how strongly residents believed that crime was a problem in their suburbs. We did not detect any differences, however, across the four resident time frames that we considered. That is those who had lived in the region for longer periods of time were no more or less likely to indicate that crime was a problem in their suburb than others. We also failed to detect any significant differences across the seven adult age categories considered in their responses to this question.

In addition to considering suburbs, students were also asked whether or not they believed that crime was a problem in their school. 6.1% of students strongly agreed with this statement that "Crime was a problem at my school", 21% agreed with the statement; 34.9% were unsure; 27.9% disagreed and 10.2% strongly disagreed with the statement. We did not detect any differences in the rates at which males and females either agreed or disagreed with the statement that crime was a problem in their school. We did however detect significant differences between the grades  $H_2(16) = 32.36$ ,  $p < .01$ . Again patterns across each of the grades were fairly similar with the majority of all students being unsure, followed by those who disagree, followed by those who agree. 28.4% of grade 9's either agreed or strongly agreed that crime was a problem in their school. 26.3% of grade 8's reported that crime was a problem, followed by 24.4% of year 12's, 23.1% of grade 11's and 22.1% of grade 10's.

Respondents were asked which three crimes they believed to be most common in Mulgrave Shire. The most common responses were issues with regard to break and enter followed by crimes regarding theft including motor vehicle theft, robbery, bag snatchings and so on, followed by crimes of personal violence such as assault, domestic violence, rape, bashings, muggings and the like, followed by vandalism, drug related offences and other types of crime. Both adults and students reported these crimes in a similar order. That is, the majority of adults some 56.2% reported break and enter to be one of the most common crimes, this compares with

some 44.3% of students who reported it as the most common crime. For adults some 40.6% reported theft as being one of the most common crimes which relates to the figure of 36.6% obtained from students and so on. There were no significant differences between whether or not adults or students mentioned crimes of assault  $H_2(1) = 0.003$ ,  $p = n.s.$  There were however, significant differences with regard to break and enter with significantly more adults reporting break and enter to be one of the more common crimes than did students  $H_2(1) = 97.13$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Significant differences were also detected with regard to whether or not adults and students mentioned drug related crimes as being one of the three most common crimes in Mulgrave  $H_2(1) = 20.43$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . In this case however, it is the students who are more likely to mention drug related crime as being most common in Mulgrave than were adults. Adults were significantly more likely to raise other types of crime than those listed in our codes than were students  $H_2(1) = 13.98$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Additional research would need to be conducted to re-examine adults responses to this category in order to determine what differences adults perceived to be crimes as opposed to students. We also

detected significant differences between the responses of adults and students as to whether or not they rated crimes regarding theft as being one of the most common in Mulgrave  $H_2(1) = 11.21$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . In this instance slightly higher percentages of adults were inclined to mention theft than were students. We also detected significant differences in whether or not adults or students raised issues in regard to vandalism  $H_2(1) = 13.17$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Again in this instance a larger percentage of all adults surveyed indicated vandalism to be one of the more common problems than did students. Whilst this differences existed it is important to remember that the differences were relatively small and that again both students and adults tended to think along very, very similar lines, rating break and enter, theft and crimes of violence as being the three most common crimes in Mulgrave.

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement that: "Crime has a negative effect on the lifestyle of people in Mulgrave". Of all respondents some 23.4% strongly agreed with this statement 36.7% agreed; 23.8% were unsure; 8.8% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed. This indicates that generally people tended to believe that crime is negatively impacting upon the lifestyle of people in this region. This pattern was relatively stable across the responses of both adults and students although some significant differences did exist  $H_2(4) = 307.13$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . The most obvious differences between the responses of adults and students were with regard to those strongly agreeing. 28.9% of all adults surveyed indicated that they strongly agreed that crime had a negative impact on the residents in Mulgrave Shire, this compares with only 18.1% of students who indicated that they strongly agreed with this statement. The other major difference between adults and students was the rate at which they responded that they were unsure of the impact that crime had on the lifestyle in Mulgrave Shire. Whilst only 17.7% of adults responded that they were unsure, some 35.5% of students indicated that they were not clear on the impact of crime on the lifestyle of Mulgrave Shire residents. We did not detect any significant differences between the responses of males and females on this statement  $H_2(4) = 5.65$ ,  $p = n.s.$ , nor did we detect any differences to peoples responses to this statement as a result of how long they had lived in the area  $H_2(12) = 5.08$ ,  $p = n.s.$  We did however, detect differences between the various adult age categories considered  $H_2(24) = 50.06$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Our results indicate that respondents in the 25-34 year age category were more likely than any other age category to indicate that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Respondents in the 18-24 year age category were more likely to indicate than any other group considered that they were unsure or the effect on crime and the lifestyle or Mulgrave Shire residents. Examination of this variable was also considered across the three victimisation categories, ie. those people who had been victims of property crime, those people

who had been the victim of violent crime, and those people who had been a victim of both a violent and a property related offence. This analysis however, did not detect any significant differences across the three categories to responses to this question  $H_2(8) = 4.16, p=n.s.$  Similarly whether or not a person had been a victim of a property related crime did not seem to impact upon their response to this statement  $H_2(4) = 6.75, p=n.s.$  That is, both people who had been a victim of a property related crime and those who had not tended to respond in a highly similar way to this question. We also failed to detect any differences between those who had been a victim of a violent crime and those who had not in their response patterns to this statement  $H_2(4) = 1.56, p=n.s.$

When considering respondents statement with regard to whether or not they believed that violent crime had increased in Mulgrave Shire in the last three years however we did detect differences between those who had been victims and those who had not. Those people who had been a victim of a violent or personal assault type of a crime were more likely to respond that they believed that crime had increased, or the incidence of violent crime had increased in Mulgrave in the last 3 years  $H_2(1) = 33.02, p < 0.001.$  Responses to this question were also considered according to whether or not the respondent had been the victim of a property related crime, a violent crime or a victim of both a property and a violent crime. Results of this analysis did detect significant differences  $H_2(2) = 19.42, p < 0.001.$  Examination of responses indicated that of those people who had been a victim of a property or a violent crime some 78-79% indicated that they believed that violent crime had increased in Mulgrave in the last three years. This compared with the responses of those who had been a victim of both a property and a violent related crime of whom some 85.4% of respondents indicated that they believed that the incidents of violent crime had increased in Mulgrave in the last three years. Examination of responses received from adults and students to this question again detected significant differences  $H_2(1) = 64.95, p < 0.001.$  Of the entire adult population sampled some 80.8% indicated that they believed that the incidence of violent crime had increased in the past three years. This compared with the response rate of students of whom 72.1% believed that violent crime had increased in Mulgrave Shire in the past three years.

When asked whether or not respondents believed that property crime had increased in Mulgrave in the last three years we again detected significant differences between the response rates of adults and students  $H_2(1) = 166.83, p < 0.001.$  Of the entire adult population surveyed some 89.2% indicated that they believed that the rate of property crime had increased in Mulgrave in the last three years. This compares with the response rate of students of whom 77.1% indicated that they believed that the incidence of property related crime had increased in the last three years. We failed to detect any significant differences however, in the response rates obtained from the various adult age categories  $H_2(6) = 9.92, p=n.s.$  Again however, consideration of those who had been victims of crime and those who had not again detected differences in response patterns  $H_2(1) = 61.73, p < 0.001.$  Of those people sampled in this research who indicated that they had been a victim of a property related crime some 88.2% stated that they believed that the incidence of property related crime had increased in Mulgrave in the last three years. This compares with the 80.9 % of respondents who had never been a victim of a property related crime who indicated that they felt that property crime had increased in Mulgrave. No significant differences were detected in the response rate of victims of property related crime, violent crime and victims of both property and violent  $H_2(2) = 4.23, p=n.s.$

Given that respondents generally tended to indicate that crime impacted upon the lifestyle of residents and that people believe that the incidence of both violent crime and property related crime was on the increase, we then asked respondents to indicate who they believe to be the most likely victims of crime in Mulgrave, ie. tourists or locals. Significant differences were

detected on this variable between the responses of adults and students  $H_2(1) = 490.70, p < 0.001$ . Results indicate that of the entire adult population surveyed some 73.5% indicated that they felt that locals were the most likely to become victims of crime in Mulgrave Shire. Of the students surveyed however, only 45.4% indicated that they felt locals were the most likely victims with the remaining 54.6% indicating that they felt tourist would be the most likely victims of crime in Mulgrave Shire. This is significant in that all previous analyses conducted indicated that students felt safer from crime than adults. It is possible however, that they are basing their perceptions of safety on somewhat misguided information or perception that it is the tourists who will become victims of crime and not locals. Again differences were detected in the response rates of respondents in the various adult age categories considered  $H_2(6) = 15.62, p < 0.05$ . Interestingly it is the younger adult age category, ie. those respondents in the 18-24 year age category who are a little more divided on the issue as to whether or not locals or tourist are the most likely victims of crime. Of the respondents considered in the 18-24 year age category some 63.7% indicated that they felt that locals were the most likely victims, with the remaining 36.3% indicating that it was the tourists who would be the most likely victims of crime in Mulgrave Shire. Across all other age categories in excess of 70% of respondents believed that locals would be the most likely victim. We failed to detect any differences in the responses to this statement according to how long a person had lived in Mulgrave Shire  $H_2(3) = 1.10, p=n.s.$  That is, the length of time that a person had lived in the area did not seem to taint their belief as to who would be the most likely victim of crime.

Given previous research which has shown lighting to be a significant factor in peoples perceptions of safety and crime we asked respondents whether or not they believed that their neighbourhood had badly lit areas which were regularly used where crime might occur. 48.1% of respondents indicated that they believed that their neighbourhood did have badly lit areas which were regularly used, where crime might occur. We failed to detect any differences in the response rate across the various age categories  $H_2(6) = 1.46, p=n.s.$ , or across the different gender categories considered  $H_2(1) = 2.82, p=n.s.$  We did however, again encounter differences in the response rates of adults and students  $H_2(1) = 32.66, p < 0.001$ . Of the total adult population surveyed some 51% indicated in the affirmative to this statement as compared to only 43.8% of students.

Again previous research has indicated that the visible presence of groups of teenagers in suburbs has sometimes been found to be related to increase levels of fear. Consequently we asked respondents whether or not they believed that their neighbourhood had groups of unsupervised youth which were getting together at night. 45.2% of all respondents indicated in the affirmative to this question. We detected significant differences between the response rates of adults and students however  $H_2(1) = 13.76, p < 0.001$ . Whilst 52.8% of the total adult population samples indicated that they believed that their neighbourhood had groups of youth getting together at night, only 48.1% of students indicated in the affirmative to this statement. Whilst this difference is significant it is not particularly large which is quite interesting. Examination of the response patterns across the different adult age categories considered failed to detect any significant difference  $H_2(6) = 17.20, p=n.s.$

Given current media focus in the region on the incidents of a number of rapes and assaults on women we also decide to ask respondents whether or not they believed that females in Mulgrave were more at risk of violent crime (including domestic violence) than males in Mulgrave. 64% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, 28.8% were unsure, and the remaining 6.9% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. This was highly disconcerting in that the general population tended to believe

that females were more at risk than were males. We failed to detect any differences in the response patterns across the different adult age categories  $H_2(24) = 30.48$ ,  $p = n.s.$ , between the genders  $H_2(4) = 4.95$ ,  $p = n.s.$ , or between the different grades of students  $H_2(16) = 18.35$ ,  $p = n.s.$  This later analysis was conducted given the vast number of students reporting rape to be one of the more common crimes in Mulgrave. Again we detected differences in the responses of adults and students  $H_2(4) = 24.26$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . However none of these differences were greater than 3% or 4%. That is, whilst 64.6% of all students surveyed strongly agreed or agreed with this statement that females were more at risk of violent crime in Mulgrave than were males some 64% of adults also strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. Similarly 2.4% of students strongly disagreed with this statement and 1.1% of adults strongly disagreed.

Having considered what respondents believed with regard to crime in Mulgrave Shire we then proceeded to consider the types of issues which respondents believed would make them feel safer. Consequently we asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the statement "increased police street patrols would help me feel safer". Some 74.5% of all respondents indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, only 15.5% of respondents were unsure with the remaining 10.2% indicating that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. We failed to detect any significant differences between the response rates of the various adult age categories to this statement  $H_2(24) = 26.88$ ,  $p = n.s.$  We did however detect differences between the various school grades considered  $H_2(16) = 27.33$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Responses indicated that whilst the general trend across all of the grade patterns was highly similar to that obtained by the total sample, student respondents from grade 11 tended to be more inclined to agree or strongly agree with the statement than did any of the other age categories considered, with respondents in the grade 8 category being the least likely. We failed to detect any differences in the response patterns according to the length of time that the respondent had lived in the Cairns/Mulgrave area  $H_2(12) = 12.08$ ,  $p = n.s.$ , or across the different genders  $H_2(4) = 3.7$ ,  $p = n.s.$  We did however, again detect differences between the responses of adults and student  $H_2(4) = 269.76$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Whereas 81.5% of all adults surveyed indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that increased police street patrols would help them to feel safer, only 64.5% of the total student population surveyed indicated in the affirmative to this statement.

One of the other means of increasing safety considered was the use of Neighbourhood Watch. Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they believed that Neighbourhood Watch type programs and other similar services were effective in combating crime in the Mulgrave area. 70.7 % of respondents indicated that they believed that Neighbourhood Watch type programs were effective in combating crime. Significant differences were obtained however, in the belief in the effectiveness across the different adult age categories  $H_2(6) = 41.02$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . In this instance it seems most likely that it is the youngest and oldest age categories which are most different from the rest. Whereas 65.3% of adults in the 18-24 year age category indicated that they believed Neighbourhood Watch to be effective 70.6% of those in the 75 year plus category indicated that they believed Neighbourhood Watch to be effective. Responses across all other adult age categories were higher than 77%. We also detected significant differences between the response rates of adults and students  $H_2(1) = 289.87$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Again significantly more of the adults surveyed indicated that they believed that neighbourhood watch was effective that is 78.6% of the total adult population surveyed believed Neighbourhood Watch to be effective as compared to only 59% of the total student population surveyed. This was surprising given the trend noted for students to raise Neighbourhood Watch as a step which would make them feel safer. It may be that students believe that whilst Neighbourhood Watch is not necessarily effective in its present form that it has some role to play in making them feel safer. Consideration may need to be given as to how to improve or to alter the services delivered by Neighbourhood Watch so that it does tend to be perceived to be effective

in combating crime and also to be effective in combating crime and to live up to the faith placed in it by the students and the population in general as a service which makes them feel safer in the community. Differences were also detected between victims of crime as to whether or not they were likely to state that Neighbourhood Watch type programs were effective in combating crime  $H_2(2) = 10.06, p < 0.01$ . Our results indicated that whilst those people who had been the victim of both a personal and a property crime were still likely to indicate Neighbourhood Watch to be effective, they did so less frequently than did victims of violent crime or property crime. That is, while 63.8% of victims of both personal and property related crime indicated that Neighbourhood Watch was effective, 67.4% of victims of violent crime indicated it to be effective and 69.8% of victims of a property related crime indicated that Neighbourhood Watch type programs were effective in combating crime. Given the trend for students to show interest in Neighbourhood Watch programs as a means of increasing their safety we examined responses to this statement across the various schools considered. At each of the schools in

which this research was conducted more than 50% of students indicated that Neighbourhood Watch and other such type programs were effective in combating crime. The percentage of students indicating that they believed Neighbourhood Watch was effective however, was highest at Cairns Christian College, with 70.4% of student believing it to be effective, at St. Marys it was 64.3% felt the Neighbourhood Watch type programs were effective and Woree State High School where 61.9% felt that Neighbourhood Watch was effective in combating crime. It seems that faith in Neighbourhood Watch programs was lowest at Gordonvale State High School where some 53.4% of students indicated that they felt that Neighbourhood Watch and other similar services were effective in combating crime in Mulgrave. We also detected significant differences between each of the grades considered  $H_2(4) = 14.28, p < 0.01$ . Again for each of the grades considered in excess of 55% of all students for each year level indicated that they felt Neighbourhood Watch to be effective. The response rate was highest from the year 9's of whom some 63.8% indicated that they felt Neighbourhood Watch was effective and lowest for the grade 8's of whom only 55.1% felt Neighbourhood Watch type programs would be effective in combating crime in Mulgrave Shire.

We next chose to consider respondents attitudes to issues which occurred after crime had been committed. We asked people to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "I believe that prisoners should do programs that seek to change their offending behaviour whilst in prison". Some 83.1% of the total population considered either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, only 9.6% were unsure and only 3.7% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Significant differences were detected however, in the belief of adults and students  $H_2(4) = 193.49, p < 0.001$ . These differences indicate that adults tended to respond more positively to this statement than did students. That is 90.4% of all adults surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement as compared with only 79.8% of all students surveyed. A persons experience of victimisation did not however, seem to affect the rate at which they agreed or disagreed with this statement, ie. victims of property crime did not differ from people who had not been victims of property crime in their responses  $H_2(4) = 7.19, p = n.s.$ , nor did victims and non victims of violent crimes  $H_2(4) = 3.55, p = n.s.$  We also failed to detect any differences in the attitudes towards prisoner rehabilitation from those who had been a victim of property crime compared with those who had been a victim of violent crime, or those who had been a victim of both a property and a violent crime  $H_2(8) = 5.15, p = n.s.$  This result is consistent with other research conducted by the ABS which found that generally victims of crime were not seeking retribution from their offenders.

This survey also considered the experience of victims of crime and we asked respondents whether or not they believed that sufficient effort was being made to assist those people who had been a victim of crime. Some 46.3% of all respondents either disagreed or strongly

disagreed with this statement; 35.4% were unsure; and 13.8% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. It seems likely that the high number of people indicating that they were unsure is a result of the fact that many people had not been a victim of crime and consequently are not aware of the services for the follow up procedures for victims and consequently do not feel sufficiently informed to make any comment. This compares with peoples attitudes to rehabilitation and prisoner issues. Rehabilitation and reform programs tend to be much in the media limelight and consequently many people may feel more inclined to make comment on this issue even though they will generally have even less experience with the prison system than they do with victimisation. Significant differences were detected on this variable between adults and students  $H_2(4) = 606.06, p < 0.001$ . Of the entire adult population surveyed some 10.6% agreed or strongly agreed that sufficient effort was being made to assist victims of crime, as compared to only 20.4% of students who agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement. Again it seems likely that students have even fewer experiences of victimisation through the court system than do adults, as borne out by the fact that 48.4% of students indicated that they were unsure as compared with 29.4% of adults. Of those who strongly disagreed with the statement, some 80.5% were adults and only 19.5% were students. Across the total adult population sampled 30.5% of all adults surveyed strongly disagreed with this statement as compared with only 10.9% of all students surveyed. Consideration of prior victimisation, failed to detect any differences in the response pattern to this statement across three crime categories considered, ie. the responses of those who have been the victim of a property related crime did not differ significantly from the response patterns of those who had been the victim of a violent crime or those who had been a victim of both a property and violent crime  $H_2(8) = 5.53, p=n.s$ . Similarly the response pattern of those people who had been a victim of a violent crime did not differ significantly from those who had never been a victim of a violent crime  $H_2(4) = 1.09, p=n.s$ . A small significant difference was detected however, between the responses of those respondents who had previously been a victim of property related crime and those who had not  $H_2(4) = 11.97, p < 0.05$ . Both these differences were small, but they were significant, whereas 13.7% of respondents who had previously been a victim of a property crime indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that sufficient

effort was being made to assist victims of crime, some 14.7% of those who had never been a victim agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Of those people who had previously been a victim of property related crime 50.9% either strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement, as compared with 46.9% of respondents who had never previously been a victim of a property related crime.

Given the significant amount of time that students spend at school we also considered it appropriate to ask students whether or not they believed their school had areas where they did not feel safe. 22.5% of all students surveyed indicated that their school did have areas where they did not feel safe.

Given the previous focus on race issues in Cairns by both the media and local government politicians, we also asked respondents whether or not they believe themselves to be racist. Only 9.1% of the total population surveyed either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "I do not consider myself to be racist", thus indicating that they were in fact racist. 11.3% of respondents indicated that they were unsure as to whether or not they were racist, with the remaining 75.7% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement that they did not consider themselves to be racist. If these results are to be trusted we are clearly living in a more tolerant community here in Mulgrave than certain elements would have us believe. Significant differences were detected between adults and students in their response patterns to this statement  $H_2(4) = 98.49, p < 0.001$ . Examination of this variable indicates that adults tended to be more emphatic in their denial of any racist tendencies than did students, with 80.3% either

agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement and only 10.5% being unsure, this compares with the response by students with 77.1% agreeing or strongly agreeing and 14% being unsure. We also detected significant differences between the genders on this statement  $H_2(4) = 17.65$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . In this instance it seems that females are more definite in their beliefs that they are not racist than were males with 80.7% of all females surveyed either agreeing or strongly agreeing and only 10.6% being unsure as compared with only 78.0% of males agreeing or strongly agreeing and 13.5% indicating that they were unsure as to whether or not they considered themselves to be racist. These results indicate that people residing in the region are highly tolerant which augers well for the future "whole of community" approach to reduce friction within the community. We failed to detect any differences however, according to the length of time that a person had resided in the Cairns/Mulgrave area  $H_2(12) = 9.56$ ,  $p = n.s.$ , according to the various age categories for adults considered  $H_2(24) = 29.62$ ,  $p = n.s.$  or between the different grades of high school student  $H_2(16) = 20.07$ ,  $p = n.s.$  We also asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: " I do not object to any person being on the esplanade provided that they are not drunk and mind their own business". 83% of the total population agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, 7.5% were unsure and only 5.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Again clearly the population seems to be more tolerant than other sectors would have us believe. There were however, significant differences between adults and students  $H_2(4) = 167.43$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Again it is the adults who are more emphatic with their beliefs on this issue with some 90.3% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement and only 4.9% reporting that they were unsure. This compares with the students responses of whom 80.8% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, however some 12.5% indicated that they were unsure. This may reflect more of a tendency for the youth to take more of the issues from the media on board and try to work through them and consequently being a little unsure as to the accuracy or otherwise of media representation. We also detected significant differences between the various adult age categories sampled  $H_2(24) = 41.60$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . In this instance it is the older adult age categories who are more in favour of this statement with responses from all adult age group from 45 years onwards being in excess of 90% of adults agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. It is those in the 18-24 who are slightly less likely than all other age categories to agree or strongly agree with the statement with some 84.4% either agreeing or strongly agreeing and some 10.9% indicating that they were unsure. We failed to detect any significant differences between residents who had been in Cairns for less than 1 year, for 1-3 years, for 3-5 years or for longer than 5 year in their response to the statement that "I do not object to any person being on the esplanade provided that they are not drunk and mind their own business"  $H_2(12) = 10.99$ ,  $p = n.s.$

We also asked respondents to consider their attitude to homelessness by asking them to indicate their level of agreement with the statement " I think there should be better accommodation services for all homeless persons". 68.6% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 17.4% were unsure and 10.4% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. We failed to detect any significant differences between the response patterns of the various adult age categories considered. We did however, detect differences between adults and students  $H_2(4) = 119.83$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Whereas 69.3% of the adults either agreed or strongly agreed that we required better accommodation services for homeless persons in the region 74.5% of students either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

### **Respondents Beliefs about Increased Safety**

Respondents were asked to identify three changes which would help them or their family feel safer in their own community. Responses were coded into six pre-determined codes (refer Methodology). Results indicated that 37.5% of all respondents felt that some form of change to policing would help them feel safer or their families to feel safer. Responses obtained included

increasing police numbers, increasing the hours in which police stations are staffed, increasing police power, increasing police on the beat rather than just based in offices or police stations, greater number of Aboriginals and Islander police officers and so on. The next most common response from respondents was to improve or increase street lighting and transport to which 26.6% of respondents indicated would make some impact upon their level of safety. The issues raised on this question included increased public transport services, particularly at night, greater street lighting, removal of trees and bushes away from street lights etc.

The next most common response to which 24.6% of respondents answered was an "other" category. The reason that this is so high is likely to be due to the vast number of respondents who indicated that improving Neighbourhood Watch Services would increase their safety. This response rate was particularly high amongst the school students surveyed. The next most common response by respondents was to change law and order issues, 14.4% of respondents indicated that this would make them feel safer. Issues raised by respondents included: truth in sentencing issues; harsher penalties for offenders; curfews for juveniles; stricter sentencing for first time young offenders. 9.0% indicated that some form of youth services would help them feel safer. The issues included under this category included: the provision of youth services; making parents more accountable for their childrens behaviour; general diversionary centres or activities for students to keep them off the street and out of trouble of an evening etc. In addition to this some 6.5% of respondents raised issues which were not crime related but which they believed would make them feel safer. Issues to be raised in this section included: mosquito and weed eradication programs; controlled burning of hill slopes and greater access to ambulance and fire services. Significant differences were detected in the rates at which adults and students indicated that improved lighting and transport would increase their safety  $H_2(1) = 12.38, p < 0.001$ . 28.1% of adults indicated that increased lighting would help them feel safer as compared with 24.4% of students.

Whilst this difference is significant it is relatively small and indicates that it is a reasonably strong priority for both age categories. Interestingly there was no significant difference between the rate at which males and females responded that improved lighting would increase their safety  $H_2(1) = 1.05, p = n.s.$  When considering the different adult age categories we did detect significant differences in the rate at which respondents indicated that improved lighting and transport would make them feel safer.  $H_2(6) = 16.08, p < 0.01$ . Respondents in the 55-64 year age categories were most likely to indicate that improved lighting would make them feel safer with 31.5% of all those people in this age category surveyed indicating that it would make them feel safer. Those least likely to identify this as an issue were those in the 18-24 age year category of whom only 20.9% indicated that improved lighting would make them feel safer. Significant differences were detected in the rate at which different members of the various adult age categories indicated that increased police number or improved police services would make them feel safer  $H_2(6) = 15.39, p < 0.05$ . Of those in the 18-24 year age category some 33.4% indicated that changes to police services would make them feel safer, this was the lowest percentage obtained across any of the age groups as in all of the other adult age categories at least 42% or more indicated that changes in police services would make them feel safer with the highest number of responses in this category again going to those in the 55-64 year age category of whom some 45.3% indicated that changes in police service would make them feel safer. Again we did not detect any differences between the rates at which males and females reported that improving police services would make them feel safer  $H_2(1) = 2.81, p = n.s.$  There were however, significant differences between adults and students  $H_2(1) = 169.03, p < 0.001$ . Whereas 43.6% of adults identified some form of changes to the police service to increase their safety only 28.5% of students indicated that these types of steps would make them feel safer. Again we detected significant suburb differences, however, these statistical tests are unreliable

given the small return rates obtained for some suburbs. These results would be better analysed using analysis based on police district (refer elsewhere).

Examination of those respondents who indicated that some other form of measure would make them feel safer failed to detect any differences between the adult age category considered on the rate at which respondents indicated in the affirmative to this statement  $H_2(6) = 8.26$ ,  $p=n.s.$  Again we did not detect any differences between the rates at which members of either gender responded to this statement  $H_2(1) = 0.06$ ,  $p=n.s.$  Interestingly, we failed to detect any differences in the rate at which adults and students indicated other types of measures to improve their safety  $H_2(1) = 1$ ,  $p=n.s.$  24.2% of adults responded that other forms of action would improve their safety as compared with 25.2%. What is most likely however, though which would need additional testing is that the "other" measures raised by students were more consistent, ie. students were more inclined to talk about Neighbourhood Watch than were adults, with adults raising a range of issues as opposed to the students who generally tended to speak primarily of Neighbourhood Watch. We failed to detect any significant suburb differences on this response  $H_2(27) = 35.51$ ,  $p=n.s.$

When considering the various adult age categories we failed to detect any differences in response patterns in these age categories according to the rate that they indicated that some form of change to the criminal justice system or to law and order issues would make them feel safer  $H_2(6) = 6.87$ ,  $p=n.s.$  Again we did not detect any significant differences between responses for males and females on this issue  $H_2(1) = 2.73$ ,  $p=n.s.$  We did however, detect differences between response rates for adults and students on this statement  $H_2(1) = 99.96$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Of the entire adult population surveyed some 18% indicated that changes to the law and order issues would make them feel safer, this compares with only 9.5% of students who indicated that this form of change would make them feel safer.

When considering the rate at which respondents indicated that increasing youth activities or the provision of youth services would make them feel safer we did detect significant differences between the responses for adults and students  $H_2(1) = 131.87$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Interestingly, however, it was the adults as opposed to students who were most likely to indicate the affirmative to this statement with 12.3% of adults stating that increased youth services would make them feel safer as compared with only 4.4% of students. Again we did not detect any sex differences on this question  $H_2(1) = 3.64$ ,  $p=n.s.$  We did however, detect differences between the adult age categories  $H_2(6) = 18.50$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . 14.8% of all the 65-74 year old respondents to our survey indicated that improving youth services would make them feel safer as did 14.1% of all 55-64 year old age respondents. This may indicate that it is people in these age categories who feel that it is the youth that are committing the majority of crimes and therefore feel that such provision of some service would help to alleviate the crime problem and consequently make them feel safer. Only 7.2% of all 18-24 year olds surveyed indicated that the provision of youth services would make them feel safer from crime. We failed to detect any differences between the suburbs in the rate at which the respondents raised issues which were not crime related but which they felt would increase their feelings of safety. We did however, detect differences in the rates at which adults and students non crime related issues  $H_2(1) = 74.52$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Of those adults surveyed 8.6% raised issues which were not related to crime but which they felt would somehow, make them feel safer as compared with only 3.5% of students who raised these types of issues. Again we failed to detect any significant differences between genders  $H_2(1) = 2.85$ ,  $p=n.s.$  We did however, detect a significant difference between the various adult age categories considered  $H_2(6) = 15.12$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . The major difference between the age categories seems to be between the 45-54 year age group of whom some 10.4% raised non crime related issues, when compared with the 18-24 year group of whom only 3.7% raised issues which were not related to crime but which they thought would increase their feelings of

safety.

### **Issues of Importance in the next three years**

One of the other goals of this research was to identify priorities as expressed by constituents for increased or improved services in Mulgrave Shire. Respondents were asked to indicate which issues on a list presented they felt would be most significant to Mulgrave Shire in the next three years. Consideration of each issue according to suburb is also contained in Table 16. Table 17 compared the priorities for adult and student respondents on our survey. As can be seen there is reasonable consensus between adults and students however, there are some differences as would be expected, for example, students tended to rate child care issues as a relatively low priority, ie. It ranks number 9 as compared with adults for whom it ranked at number 6. Students also placed far greater emphasis on the importance of tourism in the next three years and it was ranked number two for student priorities as compared to a ranking of number five for adults. Interestingly racism was ranked more highly for students as an issue of concern, ie. at number five than it was by adults for whom it was only the eighth most reported issue to be of concern.

### **Services to be Improved**

Respondents were also asked to indicate which services of those provided on a list could be improved in their neighbourhood. Respondents were encouraged to indicate as many of the services as were appropriate. The number of responses received for each of the items on a list was tallied and rank ordered. Table 18 shows the breakdown of the importance of each of the services according to adult and students. Table 19 gives a breakdown for each of the suburbs considered in the survey. As can be seen the four most commonly reported services to be improved by both adults and students were the same with both categories reporting transport to be the most important followed by police services, recreation services and parks. Government and local government services did not receive high priority by either category of respondents and various answers to this statement as to whether or not these services needed to be improved.

### **Problems to be Addressed by Mulgrave Shire Council**

Respondents were also asked to indicate what in their opinion were the three most important problems that Mulgrave Council is or should be addressing. Answers to these questions were open ended, however, were coded according to the procedure raised in the methodology. The responses of adults and students varied quite significantly on this issue. Again the number of people who indicated one of the issues to be of significance were considered. For students 29.3% indicated that the most significant problem for Council to be addressing was that of community safety or crime prevention. The second most common response for students was to increase community services followed by other issues, transport issues, development issues and roads and traffic issues. For adults however, 33.4% indicated that Council should be addressing other types of issues, this is likely to vary according to suburb with residents in Babinda raising issues of water chlorination, residents in Redlynch and Bayview talking of hill slope protection and so on. The second most commonly raised issues for adults was again community services, followed by transport, development, community safety and roads and traffic. Obviously the most significant difference between adults and students in this instance was the emphasis placed on crime prevention and community safety strategies. It is unsure at this stage whether or not students really do perceive this to be a more significant issue or whether their response to this was prompted by their focus on issues raised during the preceding questions on the questionnaire. Table 20 shows suburb breakdowns for each of

these problems as raised by respondents. Table 21 presents the difference between adults and students.

## **Leisure**

The final matter of interest to certain councillors was the issue of leisure and whether or not various constituents were actually enjoying their leisure time. Significantly of the adult population surveyed some 41.3% indicated that nothing prevented them from enjoying their leisure time, that they were satisfied with their leisure time. Again respondents were asked to indicate multiple responses where necessary so the percentage of respondents indicating any one issue were calculated and rank ordered, the second most frequently cited response was that cost prevented people from enjoying their leisure with 34.9% of adults indicating that this was an issue for them. The third most frequently cited issue which prevented people from enjoying their leisure was that of transport, followed by the lack of venues or poor venues for example, sporting clubs, followed by a general lack or organised activities in their area. Some 7.7% of adults indicated that a lack of freedom or too many restrictive rules prevented them from enjoying their leisure time, and only 4.6% reported that a lack of input into activities prevented them from enjoying their leisure time. For students however, the vast majority, that is, 46.5% indicated that cost issues prevented them from enjoying their leisure time. The next most common response for students was transport issues with 35.9% indicating that transport problem prevented them from enjoying their leisure time. Other priorities for students was a lack of venues raised by 29% of students, the lack or freedom or the excessive existence of rules raised by 22.8% of students, a general lack of organised activities, such as aerobics raised by 13.4% of students and a lack of input into the development of activities which was raised by 8.5% of students. Some 24.4% of the total student population surveyed indicated that nothing prevented them from enjoying their leisure time. Clearly students are more likely to raise issues of accessibility to leisure activities via prohibitive costs, lack of transportation, poor venues and so on than are adults as things that prevent them enjoying their leisure time. Consideration must be given to low cost accessible types of leisure activities for youths to become engaged in. Table 22 shows the responses received for each of these statement from each of the suburbs considered. Differences between adults and students are shown in Table 23.

## **Comparison Between Local Government Electoral Divisions**

As has been raised previously we received vastly discrepant numbers of responses from each of the different suburbs which made reliable comparisons between suburbs difficult. In order to combat this and to make some meaningful comparison between geographical areas in Mulgrave Shire we combined different suburbs into the four electoral divisions used by Mulgrave Shire Council. The following analysis give comparisons across each of these Divisions. Whilst it is acknowledged that these Divisions are not the most current being used by the Mulgrave Shire they are the ones that make most sense given the suburb division which we initially incorporated into the survey. Information provided by respondents who indicated that they lived in a suburb other than the ones considered on this list, ie. ticked the final box which stated "other", could not be considered in these analyses. We failed to detect any significant differences between the response patterns across the four different local government electoral division on any of the seven safety variables, with the exception of "I feel safe from crime whilst shopping in centres at night". For this variable it seems that respondents from Division 4 were more likely to indicate that they felt safe in shopping centres at night than were any other of the three divisions considered. Whereas 42.4% of respondents from Division 4 indicated that they felt safe from crime in shopping centres at night, the other three divisions ranged from 33% - 36.2% of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. This is significant in that Division 4 has a large major shopping centre in its midst, ie. Smithfield Shopping Centre. Some consideration between differences in shopping centres in the Cairns/Mulgrave area could consider what it is about Smithfield Shopping Centre that makes people feel safer than

elsewhere. Comparisons between the four different electoral divisions failed to detect any significant difference between respondents as to whether or not they believed that increased street police patrols would help them to feel safer  $H_2(12) = 7.33$ ,  $p = n.s.$ , nor did we determine any significant difference in the rate at which respondents from each of the four electoral divisions believe that crime had impacted upon the lifestyle of respondents in the region  $H_2(12) = 14.72$ ,  $p = n.s.$  We did however, detect differences across the divisions in the rate at which respondents believed crime to be a problem in their suburb  $H_2(12) = 24.33$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Closer examination of this variable indicated that respondents in Division 2 which encompassed Gordonvale and Alloomba were more likely than those from any other division to indicate to either agree or strongly agree to the statement that crime was a problem in their suburb, with some 30.5% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing. This compares with the response rates across the other divisions, with 24.5% of respondents in Division 1, 24.1% of respondents in Division 4 and 25.8% of respondents in Division 3 indicating that crime was a problem in their suburb. In spite of the fact that respondents from Division 2 were more likely to indicate that crime was a problem in their suburb, examination of the reports across each of the divisions of victimisation failed to lend any significant weight to this statement. That is, we found no significant differences between the proportions of respondents from each of the divisions who indicated that they had been the victim of a property crime  $H_2(3) = 3.51$ ,  $p = n.s.$ , who had been a victim of a violent or personal crime  $H_2(3) = 5.13$ ,  $p = n.s.$  or for those who had been a victim of both a violent and a property related crime  $H_2(6) = 5.78$ ,  $p = n.s.$  That is, although respondents in one area believed crime was more of a problem than did others, the actual rates (as reported by respondents) of crime which had occurred in this area failed to lend weight to this belief. As was raised earlier the issue of lighting is one that is frequently cited in previous research as a variable which strongly impacts upon the residents perception of safety whilst in their own community. We failed to detect any significant differences across each of the four divisions with regard to the likelihood of respondents indicating that their suburb had areas which were poorly lit where crime might occur  $H_2(3) = 3.7$ ,  $p = n.s.$  That is, no one suburb or division seems to be any more problematic in this respect than any of the others. As was discussed in the introduction the existence of groups of youth who are highly visible in a given area may significantly impact upon peoples perception of safety within their community. Consequently we examined responses across each of the four electoral divisions with regard to whether or not respondents indicated that their suburb had large groups of youth who were getting together at night. We did detect significant differences between the division  $H_2(3) = 7.77$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Small differences were detected between the responses from residents living in Division 1 and 2 of whom 49.8% and 47.6% respectively indicated that their suburbs had groups of youth getting together at night and those respondents from Division 3 and 4 of whom some 52.7% and 52.9% respectively indicated that their suburb had groups of youth getting together at night. It is interesting however, to note that although more respondents from division three and four indicate a higher presence of youth out on the streets at night, respondents from these divisions do not also report higher levels of fear.

### **Police Division Comparisons**

As was raised above it was very difficult to analyse some questions due to the small number of responses received from a suburb. Whilst one way of alleviating this problem was to compare or combine suburbs into electoral divisions another which is more meaningful for certain of the questions raised is to combine suburbs according to police divisions. It is important to note when considering statistics for the Cairns Police Division, only those suburbs contained within Mulgrave Shire were considered. Consequently results for this division will not be representative of the Division as a whole as many of the Suburbs within the division were not considered. Again respondents who indicated that they live in the "other" suburb not listed on our survey were deleted from these analysis. Table 24 shows the number of respondents to our survey

who indicated that they have been a victim of the various types of crime listed on the survey by police division. Table 25 shows those respondents who indicated that they had witnessed the various types of crime listed on the survey according to police division. We failed to detect any differences between responses from residents living in the five different police divisions and their responses as to whether or not they felt that increased police street patrols would make them feel safer from crime  $H_2(16) = 7.33$ ,  $p = n.s.$  We also considered the rates of victimisation as reported on the survey across each of the police five divisions, again we failed to detect any differences in the reporting of property crime  $H_2(4) = 3.25$ ,  $p = n.s.$ , for the reporting of violent crime  $H_2(4) = 3.77$ ,  $p = n.s.$ , or according to the rate at which people reported having been the victim of both a property and a violent crime  $H_2(8) = 2.19$ ,  $p = n.s.$  across each of the five police divisions. That is, it seems that the incidence of crime seems to be reasonable equally spread across the community and it does not seem that any one division is reporting greater or lower numbers of crime than are any others. For those people who indicated that they had been a victim of crime however, there were significant differences according to whether or not the crime was reported  $H_2(4) = 11.19$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Whereas the reporting rate for Edmonton, Cairns, Smithfield and Babinda were all in excess of 63% of victims that reported their crime. Those detected for Gordonvale were only 57.8% of victims indicated that they had reported the crime to the police. Caution needs to be undertaken however, in that respondents were asked had they ever been the victim of a property or a violent related crime or both, and if so had they reported the matter to the police, consequently the crime which occurred may not have occurred whilst they were living in one of the five division outlined above. That is, people may report having been a victim of crime 20 years ago when they were not living in this region. Given however, that most respondents indicated that they had lived in the Cairns/Mulgrave region for greater than five years, these results are still of interest. Of those who indicated that they had reported an incident of crime to the police, we failed to detect any differences between the five police divisions as to whether or not the police had taken any action  $H_2(4) = 1.91$ ,  $p = n.s.$  That is if we assume that crimes reported were commissioned in the five divisions, there was no difference according to the efficiency or otherwise with which police from each of the five divisions acted upon the reports of crime. Similarly we failed to detect any difference between the respondents across the five divisions according to whether or not they were happy with police actions once the crime had been reported  $H_2(4) = 3.94$ ,  $p = n.s.$  Again it seems that all five stations are equally efficient or otherwise in addressing the needs of complainants.

## **DISCUSSION**

As was discussed in the Methodology section, this research was designed to provide exploratory information only. As such it has achieved its goal by providing the Mulgrave Shire Council with information on the priorities for residents and a series of strategies for addressing the fear of crime within this Community. It is important to note however, that the statistical analyses conducted within this research were not particularly sophisticated. In spite of this several issues were detected which may warrant additional research utilising more specialised survey questions and more elaborate and sophisticated research designs and analyses. One issue which could be pursued elsewhere is the role our beliefs about crime play in predicting our fear of crime. It seems highly likely that if we believe crime to be a problem, to be increasing or to be out of control we will be more fearful than if we believe that the actual crime rates are not escalating and that we are not becoming increasingly at risk. Preliminary analyses conducted in the present research have provided initial support for this premise.

As was raised in the Introduction, the crime rate in Australia has remained relatively stable for many years for the majority of crimes. Where increases have been identified (eg. domestic violence and drug-related crimes) it is likely that they have resulted from increased reporting rather than increased incidence. If our beliefs about crime are so important, it is vital that they be accurate. Of our sample, some 84.2% of respondents indicated that they believed property

crimes had increased in the last three years and some 77.1% indicated that they believed that the incidence of violent crime had increased.

If we examine the Police Statistics for the Region provided by the Regional Research and Statistics Officer it is noted that whilst Major crime within Queensland is increasing at approximately 6%, it is predicted that if the current trends in the Far Northern Region continue the Region will actually record a small decrease in major crime offences by the end of 1993/94. This will be the first decrease in Major Crimes reported since before 1979/80. This tends to indicate that Major Crime in the Region is far from "out of control". As has been mentioned earlier however, the Far Northern Region is extremely large and covers a diverse range of Communities. So what of the crime rate within Mulgrave Shire? Unfortunately, the boundaries previously utilised by the Queensland Police Service to define Police Districts and Divisions do not correspond with Local Government boundaries. This matter is being addressed and will facilitate the compilation and comparing of information collected by a variety of bodies.

***It is recommended that Government Departments and Agencies be lobbied to pursue a task of standardising the discrete areas overseen by Regional Departments and Offices. The uniformity of definition of geographical area will facilitate information sharing and reduce much duplication of effort.***

Under the "old" system, six suburbs captured within the Mulgrave Shire Council area are located within the Cairns Police Division. Unfortunately the current recording systems utilised by the Police Service meant that Police Staff were unable to identify which crimes committed within the Cairns Police Division were committed within any of the six Mulgrave Shire suburbs. It is hoped that the introduction of a new computerised reporting system will improve the ability of Police Staff to access crime information in future. The remaining suburbs and townships from Mulgrave Shire correspond to the Babinda, Gordonvale, Edmonton and Smithfield Police Divisions which are all located within the Cairns Police District (which also includes the Cairns Division, Kuranda, the Aboriginal Communities in the Cape and Thursday Island).

When considering the Cairns District as a whole (including the Aboriginal Communities in the Cape) the Cairns Division accounted for 68% of all Major Crime reported and 59% of all Other Offences detected within the District reported between July 1993 and May 1994. When considering just the Cairns, Edmonton, Gordonvale, Babinda and Smithfield Divisions (1992/93 figures) the Cairns Division accounted for 87.56% of all Major Crimes reported, 82.41% of reported Offences Against the Person, 88.19% of Offences Against Property and 77.91% of reported Other Offences. Thus;

i) Major Crimes in the Region account for only 6% of those reported in Queensland and are decreasing

ii) of this 6%, 68% occur within the Cairns District

iii) of this 68% only 12.44% of reported Major Crimes occurred within the four Police Divisions within Mulgrave Shire.

Whilst it is acknowledged that 6 of the 20 suburbs/townships which comprise Mulgrave Shire are counted within the Cairns Police Division, it must be recognised that the crime rate within Mulgrave Shire is, on a comparative basis extremely low. Whilst the crime rate within the Cairns Division is far greater than that experienced within the Police Divisions within Mulgrave Shire, it is important to note that even here, the number of Major Crimes reported has decreased by 4%.

Thus, in spite of the extremely low crime rates experienced within Mulgrave Shire, the residents within the Shire still experience significant levels of fear regarding crime in certain situations.

We must understand how these fears and beliefs about crime are determined so that we may determine effective strategies to provide information which is accurate and non-sensationalised in an endeavour to counteract the increasing levels of fear being experienced within the Community. If our fear of crime is not mediated via the actual experience of crime as is indicated in this research and in others (eg Warr, 1982 & Baba & Austin, 1989) what other factors play a role? How do we formulate our beliefs about crime? Two likely responses are via the media and via social contact. Additional research must focus on the type of information being provided via these channels and the relative importance given to it by respondents. This becomes doubly important if we accept, as is indicated by respondents in this Survey that the population is unsure of the accuracy of the media yet continues to rely upon it for information about crime and other important social and political information. If this link were to be established very clear messages could be delivered to law makers throughout this country and others to force the media to be more accurate and less sensationalist and to lobby against the concentration of ownership of media outlets.

Another issue to be considered in future research is the definitions of crime held by people within the Community. The rates of victimisation and witnessing of crime reported in our sample are extremely high, particularly amongst students. Whilst it is possible that victims are over-represented amongst the adults surveyed via a process of self-selection in which people who have been a victim feel that issues related to crime are more salient to them and are consequently more likely to complete and return a survey regarding safety and victimisation than are non-victims, this explanation is not valid amongst students as all students participated. The current research project did not offer a definition for crime as it was considered that attitudes to crime would be shaped by beliefs about crime as defined by respondents as much as by any strict Police definition. Possibly as a result of this however we have students reporting being the victim of domestic violence, business-related crime and motor vehicle theft. Whilst it is possible that some students have been the primary victims of these crimes, it seems likely that in some of the cases, the crime reported by students on this survey may have been perpetrated against a student's family or close contact. Secondary victimisation of crime can also be extremely traumatic and may play an extremely important role in determining the feelings of safety held by secondary victims and their definitions of crime. Unfortunately however, the current research does not permit us to untangle the primary and secondary victims. It does however provide interesting and somewhat alarming information regarding victimisation particularly amongst students and the rates of crimes witnessed by respondents. Future research providing respondents with accurate Police definitions of the various crimes of interest may help to clarify our understanding on these issues by giving further consideration to the number of crimes being witnessed, how they are witnessed (eg. heard Vs heard of), why these crimes are not being reported, differences between societal (adult and student) definitions of crimes such as assault, robbery and domestic violence and those utilised by the Police, the relative importance of either "lay" or personal definitions and Police definitions in determining levels of fear and the feelings of safety held by primary and secondary victims of crime. Having obtained the initial exploratory information, refinement of purpose, definition, time frames to be considered (eg victimisation in the last 12 months, 2 years, lifetime etc) and sample selection technique (to ensure the representativeness of the sample) should now prove somewhat clearer for future researchers.

Consideration of respondents replies on the seven safety questions indicate that most people feel safe during the day, when travelling and in their own homes. Strategies should be developed however which target those sections of the Community identified as feeling less safe.

These include women and people living on their own or with one other person. Fewer people in larger households indicated that they felt unsafe within their own home. It seems that ready access to other people may buffer people from feelings of threat and fear particularly at certain times such as when a person hears noises seemingly in their home at night.

***It is recommended that strategies be developed to increase the social support available to people in smaller households. Strategies for consideration may include lobbying body corporate managers to provide some on-call service for residents who have concerns for their safety and the expansion of programs such as Neighbourhood Watch and Link a Friend to include a social support role at crisis times such as when a person suspects an intruder is present within their home.***

***It is recommended that the Community Safety Officer liaise with the Queensland Police service in developing an information kit available to women which would include a broad range of information pertaining to simple steps which may be taken to increase general safety.***

***It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee publish available information from this research, from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Queensland Police Service and others which highlights that whilst women, 45-64 year olds and people living in small households feel less safe, the available statistics indicate that their rates of victimisation are likely to be lower than others within the Community. The provision of accurate information may help to reduce feelings of fear and vulnerability.***

Whilst people generally reported feeling safe within their neighbourhood (and only 23.7% believes that crime was a problem in their suburb) , there were places and situations identified by respondents in which they felt less safe. These included at night, when approached by strangers, at Shopping Centres at night and in the Cairns City Place. When asked which three things would make respondents feel safer within the Community, the three most common responses were; some form of changes to the Police Service, improved street lighting and public transport and "other" issues such as Neighbourhood Watch, an improved sense of Community and public cohesion, education, access to low cost security screens and other such devices, increased employment options and combating racism. This last category whilst encompassing a diverse range of issues has a common thread and that is that the vast majority of the issues mentioned again involve residents or the community taking responsibility for their own safety. This use of social factors to increase safety is discussed elsewhere. It must be noted that an extra ordinarily high level of consistency existed between respondents. When considering beliefs and perceptions we detected very few if any differences between males and females, between the different age categories of adults surveyed or between residents based on the length of time they had lived in the Cairns/Mulgrave Region. Whilst many differences were detected between the beliefs of adults and students, these differences tended to be differences of degree rather than differences of opinion. This consistency and cohesiveness displayed across the population needs to be emphasised in endeavours to draw the Community together in strategies to target crime prevention.

Both adult and youth respondents significantly raised Neighbourhood Watch as a vehicle to improve their safety and combat crime in the region. As the concept of Neighbourhood Watch was not defined by the researchers, it is somewhat unclear as to what respondents specifically meant in nominating the Project as effective. Given the high profile of the Program it is likely that respondents did understand its fundamental philosophy.

The faith placed in Neighbourhood Watch by citizens is of concern, particularly with respect to its current focus and the difficulty for police to "drive" the Program.

Neighbourhood Watch is a concept which is most probably the best known of police crime prevention initiatives. There has been a proliferation of Neighbourhood Watch schemes although the most significant growth for this development has been in areas of least deprivation ie. in relatively low crime rate areas. Research in the United Kingdom indicates that Neighbourhood Watch (NW) is more popular in areas of owner occupation, than in areas of council or cluster housing (Osborne and Bright, 1989). This same research suggests that in some owner occupied areas Neighbourhood Watch has led to a reduction in crime. The concept of NW has received a great deal of popular support in jurisdictions throughout the world. What has become evident however, is that the NW Scheme requires a significant commitment on the part of the police. The Scheme is still regarded to be a police "owned" initiative and this of itself creates a significant limitation to the effectiveness of the program. The police have expressed concerns about the resource demands of NW. A United Kingdom police review claims that "the increasing numbers of Neighbourhood Watch schemes will undoubtedly place extreme pressure on the force in the future. They could slow down the introduction of other schemes and create a reduced service". A further problem for the police has been that in those areas where Neighbourhood Watch has been initially successful, problems have been experienced in maintaining public interest and there are serious concerns about whether the schemes can ever be self supporting. In these circumstances existing schemes could be consolidated and growth limited. The proliferation of NW has meant that many more schemes have been set up than were originally anticipated. This is a particularly potent problem in the United Kingdom, where requests for the development of new schemes are being recorded at the rate of twenty-five per week (Husain and Bright, 1990).

In their publication titled **Neighbourhood Watch and the Police** (1990) Husain and Bright cite comments from chief constables (sourced from the Chief Constables' Annual Reports, 1988) which indicate a degree of disquiet by the police force in that jurisdiction about the work load involved with administration of NW. Some comments quoted include: "public expectation of police involvement in the running of schemes far exceeds that which the force is able to provide" (Kent); "the increase in the number of schemes has required considerable amounts of police resources" (South Yorkshire); "through lack of funding and paucity of paid permanent officials, its vast potential for community work and crime prevention may be dissipated" (Lancashire). Not surprisingly many forces throughout the world are reviewing NW policies particularly as expansion of the program seems inevitable. It is the view of Husain and Bright that some forces have deliberately, though not publicly, put a break on new scheme formation. It is clear nonetheless that successful NW will depend on continuing support in the form of guidance, help, information and - more particularly - contact with the police. Few forces therefore can afford to ignore the demands that NW is making - or will continue to make in the future - on their resources.

Without some deliberate strategies and resources that involve a range of other government and community organisations the continuing growth of Neighbourhood Watch schemes is likely to result in the diversion of police resources from those high crime areas where Neighbourhood Watch has been unsuccessful and where crime prevention and community safety measures are arguably most urgently needed.

There is no doubt of the effectiveness of NW. Research at Southampton University indicated that an analysis of recorded crime in six NW areas and six control areas showed a *relative* reduction in burglary in three NW areas following the scheme formation (Husain, 1990). Similar results were reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (April 1994) who claimed that:

"Households who were members of neighbourhood (or rural)watch programs recorded a lower victimisation rate (7.3%) than non-members (8.5%), but households who did not know whether they were a member had the highest victimisation rate (9.9%)" (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1993)

Ivey (1989) studied 19,500 household insurance policies which indicated that claims arising from burglary declined significantly once schemes were started, with the greatest benefit occurring in low crime areas. It is problematic that in most Neighbourhood Watch areas, crimes do not occur frequently and people will soon tire of watching out for potential offenders.

A Home Secure Project which is a Project to assist elderly and disabled people on home security operated by ACRO in the Northern Suburbs of Brisbane (ACRO Annual Report, 1993) has recently begun to involve the local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in the machinations of the Project. Initial discussions indicate that the NW Scheme is anxious for involvement. Such involvements by NW could well be expanded upon to capture ACRO's mission (for Home Secure) to "Build a Safer Community through participation, co-operation, support and assistance" whilst meeting the similar goals for NW. With the flawed belief that the elderly are likely victims (as disclosed by 59% of respondents) and the resultant development of fear for this group of citizens, such involvements would seem to be logical and imperative.

It would seem logical that in order that Neighbourhood Watch can survive, schemes may need to address other community concerns as well as crime prevention. A more proactive dynamic may be introduced that sustains the community interconnectedness developed as a result of Neighbourhood Watch formation.

It is important that Neighbourhood Watch should become reoriented in the foreseeable future. The deficit of resourcing available through the police service needs to be urgently augmented by resourcing from other levels of community involvement including local government (from which a senior designated, paid and dedicated officer should liaise with the various linkages of NW), the business community (which should provide corporate private funding to maintain the level of involvement for NW), other State and Federal government departments (which should make available infrastructure support [eg. printing consultancy]) and community organisations to provide volunteer resourcing and other forms of advice and funding.

It is a reasonable conclusion that the support for involvement in NW by residents would make the transition from police ownership of the Project possible and desirable. The police service (together with other significant government departments) could provide valuable guidance and resource for a dramatically expanded

NW, which adopted community "problem solving" mechanisms at a local level, driven by residents themselves.

***It is recommended that the Neighbourhood Watch Program be restructured to incorporate a more effective partnership model involving the range of Local State and Federal Government agencies with a stake in community safety. Such agencies should include housing, employment, education, health, community services and others. It is further recommended that the Police Service should not be the principal agency to coordinate Neighbourhood Watch but should be a significant consultative resource to the Project.***

***It is recommended that financial and human resourcing of the Neighbourhood Watch Program should be a shared responsibility between the beforementioned agencies as well as the corporate sector.***

***It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee auspiced by the Mulgrave Shire Council should become the co-ordinating body for the future operation of Neighbourhood Watch.***

***It is recommended that the mandate for Neighbourhood Watch be significantly expanded to assist in the operation of such programs as Home Secure, Home Assist, the Healthier Communities Program, YACCA and any other existing projects within the various State and Federal Government departments.***

***It is recommended that a restructured Neighbourhood Watch monitored by the Community Safety Committee give due regard to a representation by youth and the concerns expressed by youth.***

***It is recommended that strategies to reduce fear within the community be devised by the community which take into consideration the impact of reporting within the media about crime.***

***It is recommended that strategies be devised to create more effective community networks particularly the elderly and those living alone.***

Whilst the available research provides little support for the notion that increased Police numbers will actually reduce or prevent crime (refer Introduction) it is conceivable that the visible presence of the Police within discrete areas (particularly those which have been declared to be "unsafe", "shabby" or "crime hotspots") may increase residents feelings of safety if not their actual safety. Research from the United States and the United Kingdom have both determined that in certain circumstances, improved lighting can reduce crime levels, which in turn should impact upon the levels of fear. Caution is needed however, as whilst careful use of lighting can deny anonymity to potential offenders and make them feel exposed, intense floodlighting could also facilitate crime if the lit areas are not overseen or people are not prepared to intervene. The Partnership Policing Scheme established in Merton, London has seen Council allocate 300000(pounds) for lighting in response to joint Police and Council initiatives which have indicated that much crime is related to poor lighting. Additional research suggests that about 40% of night time street crime takes place where lighting levels are at 5 lux or below, 30% when lighting levels are between 5-10 lux and only 3% when the level of lighting is about 20 lux. This evidence suggests that levels of lighting should be not less than 5 lux for most side streets and not less than 15 lux for most estates.

The issue of crime reduction through the implementation of situational interventions and co-ordinated town planning has gained considerable momentum in overseas jurisdictions, particularly the United Kingdom. Many of these interventions are not solely linked to the availability of locks and security devices. For example, situational prevention is an important element in the design of Estate and Cluster Housing having regard to a balance between a need for maximum utilisation of available land for development purposes and the needs of the consumer residents to a lifestyle which is relatively crime and fear free. Accordingly any Strategy developed by Government on housing should look to input from town planners, urban designers and the range of other personnel involved in town planning and development. Regard should also be given to available research in relation to design and factors that are known to be contributory to the commissioning of crime.

It is significant to note that a concern for social issues was consistently raised by respondents in the Survey. For example 72.% of respondents believed that unemployment was related to crime and in excess of 60% of respondents stated that unemployment was an issue of vital concern to the region.

In a Study on Crime Prevention (1990) by HEUNI (Helsinki Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations) it is argued that social crime prevention policies need to have regard for a range of other social policies that have a bearing on crime:

relationships between the provision of housing and other services, especially transport and the location of employment;

Employment policy and in particular policies relating to unemployment and the creation of employment opportunities;

Education Policy, including policies affecting pre-school children;

Family Policy;

Youth Policy, including policies on recreation, leisure and culture;

Health Policy and in particular policies on drug and alcohol abuse".

The Institute report that social crime prevention initiatives characteristically:

Focus primarily on young people as they are the principle recipients of socialisation;

Differ at different stages of social development eg. family based strategies will be different for families with infants as opposed to teenagers and the style of preventative programs that may be useful in primary schools and;

Social crime prevention cannot easily be tested through project based, short term initiatives. It is a more long term program based approach and is difficult to evaluate in terms of a direct impact on crime levels.

Municipalities are strategically placed to bring together those who can change the conditions that generate crime, but other levels of government must provide financial and technical support:

. Comprehensive crime prevention must give priority to partnerships that find better solutions to problems of child poverty, youth, schooling, housing, policing and justice and;

. Crime prevention must involve longterm action that is responsive to shortterm needs.

It is important to recognise the need for a balance between situational prevention (bringing town planning, transport, lighting and other such matters to the fore in local strategic planning) and social prevention (which requires a cohesive nationally and state based strategy in dealing with employment, child care, housing and other such social conditions). The Survey results tend to support the communities view that such a balance is necessary. Both aspects of intervention received equal attention. Respondents acknowledged that accommodation services for homeless people, employment creation initiatives, child care and other such social issues have as important a part to play in the regions future development as does town planning and

infrastructure development. Importantly community services consistently ranked above other "traditional" areas of involvement for Local government attention. Of great importance is the view held by the young people of Mulgrave that community safety should be the highest priority for the Local Council to be considering.

***It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee:***

- 1. Further investigate those matters of concern for respondents in relation to lighting, transport and other issues and make recommendation to Council on these issues;***
- 2. Conduct, in consultation with those neighbourhoods expressing concerns about "hot spots" for crime, Safety Audits with recommendations for consideration by Local and State authorities;***
- 3. Create a Community Safety Development checklist for any future developments proposed for the region which will be uniformly applied by Council in town planning, consent use and other applications before it.***

The disconcerting trend in the current research was the number of students reporting that they had been the victim of a violent or personal crime. Whilst alarming, this trend is also consistent with other research such as that conducted by the ABS (1993) which indicated that victimisation rates are highest amongst people aged between 15 and 24 years.

Of those who had experienced victimisation, reporting rates were very low particularly amongst students. This trend is consistent with that identified by the ABS which describes reporting rates ranging from 25% (sexual assault) to 93.7% (motor vehicle theft) depending upon the nature of the crime. Students seemed disinclined to report matters to the Police but also to report matters of victimisation occurring whilst at school to the School administration.

This trend to not report seems even stronger for those who have witnessed crimes occurring. Very little seems to have been written on the witnessing of crime and so no comparisons were possible in this present research to gauge the representativeness of the present sample. This is an area which must be followed up however as it may lend much to the notion of attitude formation as the rates detected by the present sample were extremely high.

60.1% of respondents agreed that crime had a negative impact upon the lifestyle of residents in Mulgrave Shire. It is imperative that crime prevention become a Community issue. In order to achieve this all residents must accept responsibility for reporting crimes which they are victims of and also crimes which they witness. This offers vital support to other victims and also sends a very clear message to offenders and would-be offenders that their criminal behaviour will not be tolerated. Only through consistency of purpose and full-community involvement can we reduce the stigma attached to crime reporting and any consequent fear of reprisal.

***It is recommended that one of the messages to be addressed via the Youth Action panels is that criminal victimisation need not be tolerated as a "natural" part of being a teenager and something to put up with. Students must be encouraged to report incidents of victimisation occurring within schools to the school administration. Crimes occurring outside of the school grounds must be reported to the Police. Equally importantly for the long-term crime prevention goal however, is that students must also be encouraged to become involved in youth owned and driven Crime Prevention Strategies such as the Youth Action Panels.***

***It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee target Crime Reporting via its regular editorials in an endeavour to encourage the Community in general to become more involved and to encourage the reporting of crimes that they are victims of and that they witness.***

Respondents indicated that the most common crimes within the Shire were Break and Enter, theft, assault, vandalism, drug use and "other". In considering Police Statistics for the twelve months ending May 1994, the most common crimes in Mulgrave were - theft, Break and Enter, drug related crime, assault and vandalism. Thus the general population seems reasonably clear on the most common crimes within the region. Interestingly however, it is students who are most accurate in ordering these crimes as students placed less priority on Break and Enter and vandalism and more students mentioned drug related crime than adults.

***It is recommended that the notion of Safety Houses be carefully revisited and contemporised for a teenage population. Rather than have particular houses assigned for the purpose, it is recommended that venues such as video stores and other such places frequented by youth at night be approached and the support of staff enlisted to improve feelings of safety for young people.***

Of the total student population sample surveyed 22.5% indicated that their school had areas where they did not feel safe, 35.4% had been victimised or bullied at school, 40.1% had been a victim of some form of criminal offence in the past 12 months (not necessarily at school), 27.1% indicated that crime was a problem in their school and 29.3% identified Community Safety and Crime Prevention as an issue to be addressed by the Mulgrave Shire Council. Crime and safety is clearly a high priority for youth within this Region and justifiably so in light of the victimisation rates recorded. Whilst much commonality existed within student responses, some school-based differences were identified.

***It is recommended that school-based summaries highlighting the issues of importance for a particular school be prepared and presented to the Principal of the participating school. It is further recommended that the Community Safety Officer also present a school-based list of recommendations along with the summary to facilitate the implementation of crime prevention***

strategies within the schools. This process of implementation could be monitored and assisted by ***the Community Safety Committee and the Community Safety Officer.***

***It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee be responsible for monitoring and evaluating, or maintaining evaluation information obtained by others, of all strategies implemented as a result of recommendations from this report.***

Respondents provided extremely clear information regarding priorities for future service development for Mulgrave Shire Council. Interestingly, in most instances, the services, issues and problems given the highest priorities were social issues pertaining to overall quality of life. This has not traditionally been considered the role for Local Government whose mandate was traditionally infrastructure-based. Initiatives such as the current research however, show that Councils can and should become involved in other social issues within their Shires. Local Government initiatives can be effective given their proximity to the people, however equally importantly, as is borne out by the present research, the people perceive it to be appropriate and important and will support the initiatives.

***It is recommended that Local Governments throughout Queensland be encouraged and supported in any endeavours they may undertake to expand their mandate to effectively and rationally deal with social issues of relevance within their communities.***

Many issues were raised repeatedly on several questions by respondents and are worthy of comment. The issues raised most frequently were those relating to Public Transport, Development, Tourism Lighting (refer above) and Police (refer above). It is also significant that 51.9% of respondents stated that they believed that crime had increased as a result of tourism.

***It is recommended that Mulgrave Shire Council lobby the Department of Transport to improve the availability, affordability and accessibility of public transport within the Shire.***

***It is recommended that each Councillor upon the Mulgrave Shire Council carefully study the Tables provided within this report to ascertain which issues are perceived to be of most importance to residents within their Division. Once these issues are identified, Councillors should approach the Community Safety Committee for assistance in implementing strategies to meet the identified needs of the constituents. Where appropriate, information may also be utilised to lobby State and Federal Government to improve service provision within the Shire.***

***It is recommended that Mulgrave Shire Council make constituents aware of Tourism and Development issues within the Shire and where possible involve them in the decision and policy making process as these were both given high priority by respondents.***

When considering constituents use of leisure time, the issues which were most prohibitive to the enjoyment of leisure were issues relating to accessibility including cost, transport, venues and a lack of activities. These issues were most salient for the youth sampled.

***It is recommended that emphasis be placed upon the provision of structured and non-structured recreational activities which are accessible, appropriate and affordable in the planning for any new residential development within the Shire.***

***It is recommended that Council consider ways of implementing recreational activities in Suburbs which express greater than average difficulties in accessing activities, particularly if as a result of a lack of activities or transport to access activities in neighbouring suburbs.***

We asked respondents whether they believed that "prisoners should do programs that seek to change their offending behaviour whilst in prison", in order to test the general perception of the purpose for imprisonment to "rehabilitate" and contribute to community safety.

As has been discussed earlier imprisonment has been historically based upon the principles of deterrence and retribution (see Introduction). There is no evidence to show that imprisonment does act as a deterrent, although the case for retribution appears established.

A conference convened jointly by Penal Reform International and the Netherlands Ministry of Justice (1991) involving experts in corrections from 28 countries conclude that:

"Prisons do not prevent crime. In fact they are often schools of crime, creating more criminality. Prisons are also very expensive, wasting scarce resources that could be used to combat crime more constructively".

They argued that alternative sanctions in the community should be developed such as community service consisting of unpaid work, day detention and victim restitution. The use of such sanctions are, however, not uniformly applied across international jurisdictions.

The Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 (Queensland) emphasises a greater focus across the whole of the criminal justice system for non-custodial, community based responses for the management of offenders.

The implementation of the Queensland Corrective Services Commission philosophy clearly demonstrates the benefit in using alternative strategies to imprisonment. The Commission reports that the cost of community supervision of offenders in Queensland is about \$1000 per offender. This figure is less than 7% of the cost of the cheapest form of custodial supervision. The Commission noted that increased use of alternative sanctions has reduced the average number of prisoners in prison for five years in succession (1988-1993). Furthermore the Commission asserts that the rate of re-offence has fallen from 47.7% in 1992 to 46.2% in 1993 (compared with the national average of 58.9%). There is indeed a compelling argument in favour of non-custodial based sanctions (Queensland Corrective Services Commission Annual Report, 1993).

This view is shared by the residents of Mulgrave, with 90.4% of adult respondents and 79.8% of youth respondents (averaged at 83.1%) either agreeing or strongly agreeing that programs based corrections will contribute to a safer community by addressing offending behaviour. This result is consistent with attitudes of people in other jurisdictions and is a clear signpost to correctional administrators in the development of strategies for those in prison and, more importantly, for governments who would seek to propose "truth in sentencing" and other such measures designed to increase the amount of time an offender spends incarcerated.

In a study titled "**New Public Opinion Poll Cites Support for Intermediate Punishment Programs**" by Neil F Tilow in *Perspectives*, Winter, 1992; (based on a survey of 1,009 Americans conducted by The V Wirthlin Group in September 1991):

"Four out of five Americans favoured community corrections programs over prison for criminal offenders who are not dangerous;

35% were "strongly in favour" and 45% "somewhat in favour" of intermediate sanctions in which non dangerous offenders are required to hold a job, perform community service, pay restitution to their victims and receive counselling;

Only one in five of the respondents opposed the community corrections programs, stating that criminals belong in prison and that such programs pose a risk (10% were "strongly against", 9% "somewhat against").

The Crime Victims Survey conducted by the Criminal Justice Commission (Brisbane, 1991) revealed that 40% of victims of attacks or assaults would like the offender to be warned or cautioned by police or courts. A further 25% indicated that they would like no action to be taken. In the same Survey prison was favoured by only 12% of the victims with other options such as community service and fines being preferred. Similar responses to threats were registered (45% opting for a warning; 20% not wanting any action taken) and in the case of theft about 50% of respondents specified compensation as the preferred option with a third favouring community service.

The views of respondents in Mulgrave in relation to correctional initiatives are consistent with others elsewhere. This would suggest that community based options for various types of offenders and programs for offenders in prison will be supported by the general population. Programs such as Rose Blank House in

Cairns which is a community based and managed correctional facility operated by ACRO and which has successfully operated in Cairns for the past four years should be extended, given the high level of tolerance to such projects indicated from this Survey.

***It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee actively support correctional initiatives whose objectives are to reduce rates of reoffence by offenders and which promote the restorative justice model.***

Respondents tended to agree that increased services for youth would increase their feeling of safety. This was particularly the case for adults, almost 50% of whom were concerned about unsupervised youth congregating in their neighbourhoods at night.

Policies generated for a reduction in criminal behaviour particularly amongst youth should be developed which:

- . incorporate the full range of problems confronting young people which may involve the provision of educational, training, recreational and employment opportunities together with a level of support that may be otherwise absent from their lives. Long term, as opposed to ad hoc, projects which are resourced and coordinated should be given the highest priority;

- . recognise that it is not only the attitudes of the young that need to change. Young people have an enormous amount to contribute provided that they are given the forum for contribution and respect afforded. A positive attitude towards youth by the adult community is considered prerequisite to effective crime prevention in dealings with youth;

- . accept that change is not the unique responsibility for young people the police and other local agencies (youth services, housing etc.) may also need to modify their approach and/or the way in which they provide services.

- . accept that youth have ownership of the process for program design and implementation

A realistic approach to juvenile crime issues must be addressed within the environment in which the problem exists, and should be managed by the class for whom the problem exists.

An effective Juvenile Crime Prevention Strategy is dependant upon the evolution of an interagency group based upon the needs of youth (after consultation with the affected group) rather than the consultation emerging from a group formed for the purpose of consultation. If an interagency group is empowered to control a detached worker and the process of consultation in the first instance, there is a danger that preconceived outcomes by adult interagency members may pollute the actual needs exposed by juveniles.

The success of this style of approach can be measured against crime statistics for the regions in which an action strategy has been implemented in various parts of the United Kingdom. In the case of the Junior Youth Project Milton Keynes (as reported by **Crime Concern**) a significant reduction in crime activity has been registered comparing a preprogram set of data (1986) with 1988 statistics (eg. all auto crime [18%]; shop theft [25%]; criminal damage [7%]; burglary [36%]; all crime [25%]). In the case of the **Top End Youth Action Group Paisley** comparing

crime statistics for the years 1985 and 1988, the rates of reduction in crime activity is highly significant (Vandalism/Malicious Damage [22%]; Petty Assault [32%]; Reckless/Wilful fireraising [55%]; **Supply/Possession of Drugs [100%]**; Total Selected Crimes [30%]; All Crimes [5%]).

Juvenile Crime Prevention Strategies that have been successful in the United Kingdom (Crime Concern) appear to have the same characteristics which may best be summarised as an social action approach involving:

1. discussing problems with young people (consultation);
2. enabling them to identify problems;
3. facilitation (offering options and helping to find solutions);
4. assisting them to bring about change.

Various consultations have occurred throughout the United Kingdom seeking out the views of juveniles from across a range of social and economic backgrounds. The following comments in relation to these surveys are raised :

- . Most young people perceived themselves as potential victims, rather than potential offenders;
- . Major concerns expressed centred upon physical safety and well being;
- . the most promising crime prevention target is likely to be potential occasional offenders who are capable of being influenced;
- . Generally young people believe that services are imposed upon them rather than viewing themselves as customers of the services;
- . The recurring challenge appears to be to find the ways to involve young people in the **design and execution** of community safety strategies;
- . Young people should be perceived by adults as valuable customers of services rather than victims of them (United Nations, 1991).

It is highly significant that only 15.8% of Survey respondents believed that young people were the most likely victim of crime, with 41.1% believing them to be the likely perpetrators. As discussed earlier (see Introduction), this group represent by far the largest group of citizens who are victims of crime. Furthermore when young people are offenders, they tend to victimise each other and not elderly or other groups of citizens. Clearly research does not support these victimisation beliefs.

***It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee secure funds from State and Federal sources to develop meaningful strategies for young people not in the school environment. It is further recommended that any proposals be designed by affected young people with any programs commenced managed by young people.***

***It is recommended that the proposed Community Safety Committee give particular regard to strategies that diminish the gap that exists between younger and older members of the community and devise mentor programs that will develop linkages between both groups.***

The Mulgrave Shire appears to be a typical Australian community, albeit the growth of the region is higher than that for other communities. It is a tolerant community which places a premium on positive "common sense" approaches to personal and community safety. Some of its attitudes appear to be patterned or governed by factors that are outside the realm of the current investigation. With better information and a balanced view, many of the less informed opinions within the community could reasonably be replaced. It is in the interest of the broader community to explore further the nature of this patterning so that the illogical crime of fear can be reduced. It is important that the lifestyle and quality of life for citizens be improved, particularly for those who have fallen victim to disinformation. The Mulgrave Shire Council and community are to be congratulated for its involvement in this Project and the resolve shown towards tackling the important business of community safety at a community level in a positive manner. This process sets a precedent for others across the country to follow.

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