



MEETING THE NEEDS OF YOUTH IN RINGWOOD

RINGWOOD INTER-CHURCH COUNCIL .. YOUTH ACTION COMMITTEE.

P U B L I C M E E T I N G .

1/4/71.

Chairman .. Councillor J.M. McRae.
The Mayor of Ringwood.

Speaker .. Mr. Ellery Hamilton-Smith.
Director Youth Services Planning Division
Victorian Association of Youth Clubs.

A G E N D A .

1. Chairman's opening remarks.
2. An explanation - J. U'Ren.
3. Chairman Introduce Speaker.
4. Presentation of the report - Mr. E. Hamilton-Smith.
"Meeting the needs of youth in Ringwood".
5. Discussion and Recommendations.
6. Vote of Thanks - Rev. D. Shinkfield.
Inter-Church Council.

INTRODUCTION

During 1968 discussion by the Ringwood Inter-Church Council revealed a concern that more adequate youth services should be developed within the City. It was decided that an approach should be made to Australian Frontier asking that a consultation should be held under the aegis of that organization. Accordingly, a Ringwood Committee of Australian Frontier (Appendix A) was established under the leadership of Mr. Ray Chambers, member of the Melbourne panel of Frontier, to further examine the need for such a consultation and if satisfied that a consultation was warranted to make the necessary arrangement for it to be held. This Committee made some preliminary enquiries within schools and youth organizations in the area and came to the conclusion that there was clearly need for further action.

Among the findings of their preliminary study of the situation, one notes that the Ringwood community was not aware of the full range of existing services for young people; that there were a significant number of young people who were disinterested in the present youth services; that most organizations felt there was a shortage of trained youth leaders; and that there was evidence of general community apathy towards the needs of young people.

After further discussion and planning it was decided that a consultation would be arranged and this was held on Friday, 3rd October and Sunday, 5th October, 1969 (Appendix B). A summary of the discussion on that occasion is included in this report (pages 1 - 13). The consultation resolved that an Action Committee, (Appendix C), should be appointed, the terms of reference of which appear on page 14.

This Committee made a submission to the Ringwood City Council, the text of which appears on pages 15 - 16. No specific action was taken by the Council as a result of this submission but the Youth Action Committee was authorized by the Council to carry out a more detailed survey of the needs of young people in the City. This survey was designed in consultation with the Youth Services Planning Division of the Victorian Association of Youth Clubs and was carried out during the latter part of 1970. Some concern was expressed by certain members of the community about various aspects of the survey but these generally seemed to be as a result of misunderstanding the nature and purpose of the survey.

The results of this survey are presented in full in this report on pages 17 - 27. They give additional support to the earlier contention that there is need for further action in the development of youth services in the City of Ringwood.

Accordingly, this report has been prepared for presentation to a further meeting of concerned citizens and to the Ringwood City Council in the hope that some action will be taken to ensure better services in the future.

J. U'REN
Convenor
Ringwood Youth Action Committee.

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Report of Ringwood Youth Consultation.

Theme: Meeting the Needs of Young People
in the City of Ringwood.

Friday, 3rd October, 1969.

Sunday, 5th October, 1969.

This Consultation held under the Chairmanship of Mr. A.E. Woodward, O.B.E., Q.C., was attended by a large number of people representing various organizations in Ringwood and by a number of Ringwood's own youth population. The names of those attending and participating in the programme of the seminar are listed in Appendix B.

On the Friday evening the Consultation was addressed by Dr. J.V. Ashburner on The Developmental Needs of Young People. This was followed by group discussion of the points raised by Dr. Ashburner. Summaries of these group discussions were prepared in writing and distributed to participants at the re-opening of the Consultation on the Sunday morning. Following some discussion of the reports which had come forward from the first discussion groups, the Consultation was then addressed by Mr. Elery Hamilton-Smith who discussed ways in which the community might organise itself to meet the needs of young people. The Consultation again formed itself into discussion groups and during the afternoon debated the implications of the total consultation. It was unanimously agreed that further action should be taken to improve the level of youth services in Ringwood and an Action Committee was established to try to ensure an effective follow-through of the Consultation.

Some Points from the Address by Dr. J.V. Ashburner.

Dr. Ashburner opened his address by outlining six of the key problems which confront young people in present day society. He sees these as being:

- (1) Some adults do not know enough about young people. Most of us tend to think about young people in terms of our own experience when we were young and because of the changes in society this is often not very relevant. We also tend to forget those aspects of our own growing-up which were distressing to us and so to forget the insecurity and uncertainty which we often faced ourselves as young people.
- (2) There are too many adults who think they know all about young people and who are willing to be dogmatic about the way in which young people should regulate their own lives.
- (3) Too many people are busy scaring parents about young people. A number of pronouncements through the mass media and elsewhere which purport to alert parents to the problems of the younger generation all too often result only in scaring parents and making them uncertain about their own role.
- (4) Most adults do not realise how much the world has changed since they were young. There is no doubt that the rate of social change has accelerated a great deal in recent years and it is often difficult for adults to appreciate this change.
- (5) Too many adults try to force young people into being polite, production-line models. There are many pressures to conform to in our society and yet a little reflection will show that most important things in our society are done by people who are not conforming to a middle-line mediocrity. The health of each individual citizen demands that each person should be able to develop according to their own potential and not to some uniform pattern.
- (6) There are too many mischief-makers telling silly stories about young people. They appear to gain some vicarious sensationalism from exaggeration about the behaviour of young people. Time and time again sensational stories about young peoples' behaviour can be shown to have little or no factual foundation.

Dr. Ashburner also referred to the increasing exploitation of young people by commercial and other interests. This makes them an undue focus of attention in society and increases the social pressures with which they must cope. He described the developmental tasks of the adolescent in that they must resolve for themselves the nature of their own identity. This means understanding the kind of person which they are and wish to become.

There is a natural process of testing out and sometimes rejecting the things of their earlier experience and their family influence and placing considerable reliance upon the opinions and values of people their own age. Young people must in particular come to terms with their own sexuality and this is for many an anxiety provoking experience occurring as it does in a society which has ambivalent views about sexuality. There is a need for society to accept the young person as a responsible individual, to give him the opportunities to test his own potential, to question and rebel, to be idealistic and to find group relationships with his or her own age group.

Dr. Ashburner also stressed the extent to which young people growing-up need effective relationships with adults not merely as parents or as teachers, but as friends who accept them and with whom they can communicate.

Summary of Points Raised by the First Series of Discussion Groups.

GROUP 1.

The various community organizations which exist maybe a cause of "resentment" in young people. Not only may they be not meeting needs, they may be a positive barrier. They tend to impose rules and are not flexible enough to allow young people to help make the rules or to change with the changing world. Youth wants self-expression, young people have the capacity for leadership, it is for existing organizations or new ones to give them the change.

New organizations are perhaps needed because existing ones cater for only a fraction of the numbers in the adolescent and youth age group. Apart from the organizations listed, there are such things as the weekly dance at the Town Hall, the Ringwood Bowl, etc. On the other hand, the large number who are not members of existing organizations may not need to be "organised" they may need less "a place to go", rather perhaps "people to be with" (e.g., car drives, etc.).

There are many broken homes in Ringwood. Organizations perhaps meet a need for security, acceptance. It is difficult, however, to run Clubs where membership rules are so often broken; perhaps the Young People should help make the rules by having their own Committee.

While some young people can look after themselves very well, others are perhaps lost, rootless, from homes which are unsatisfactory. They may need facilities (e.g., coffee clubs) where they can have the companionship of their peers. The community (Church and Civic Leaders) should build Community Centres, etc.

GROUP 2.

Youth seek a Forum to show a form of dissention.

Control of young 13 year olds, etc., at dance. A place to practice band music; hall to be cleaned up after.

Control of sounds.

Passing phases: Motor cars, bands; long hair; keeping pace with the Beatles, etc.

Youth comes to the dance as a result of friends, band groups.

Instead of looking, they are conforming to what the other people are doing.

Looking for something but can't make up mind.

We are catering for the youth in sport etc., but not in discussion.

This evening eventuated from the Methodist Church which had an open Club. The Youth had need for something but once again did not know what they wanted. A large number of Youth in the district who had a chip on their shoulder will not join an organised group.

One night of the week dance catering for a special group. Non-drinking group. Other amusement centres too dear.

People have organised amusement but ~~within~~ two years the places are wrecked.

Group organised in a park, within 12 months they broke up into own groups of own interest. Participants allowed to have boats, cars, etc., at discussion groups.

One need in Ringwood, an "open house" not run by the Church or other organization, e.g., Y.M.C.A., - too respectable. Hard drink, whether to allow or not at this establishment? Problem of outside influence breaking up established groups. Dance which is run on Saturday evening has caused a considerable drop in crime rate. A shop or something set aside and run by the groups themselves and not a Church or Scouts, etc. Set up deterrent such as good dress etc. Outside group outside the other groups - missing out. Person to be selected as a guide to seek out these groups and encourage them to join in other groups. Nothing for the over 17 years of age. Too young an age group attend the Saturday night.

GROUP 3.

Unanswered Questions

Do Church Clubs serve the Community or just the particular Church?

Do we cater with too much emphasis on the middle and upper class person?

Do we place too much emphasis on activities for boys as against girls?

What is the magnitude of the needs for pre-adolescence in Ringwood? Is it great?

Observations

Churches are reasonably active but of course only cater for a minority percentage.

Perhaps in too many organizations the older ones want to do too much - take over completely.

For the conformity groups, e.g., guides, brownies, parents want Clubs for their children but it is leaders which are needed to form the Clubs.

Whereas perhaps in general the community caters with too much emphasis on the "squares" when it comes to dancing perhaps the more stayer type of dancing is forgotten.

Present groups tend to be too conformist. There is probably a need for group activities on a more creative theme of activity - hobbies and the like. Perhaps more along the lines of the National Fitness holiday play centres where the activity centre is open to all without membership and without cost.

Where a person has the opportunity to try something out without committee or initial financial involvement. A need for community youth leadership training to promote and operate this type of activity.

Young People: GROUP I.

All groups recognized need for all individuals to express themselves - feel Ringwood does not cater for this need.

Present clubs are too specialized in religion, sport, etc., and exclude those young people who want to be themselves rather than waiting to identify with a club. When these latter people join a Church club, often the club disintegrates because the two sets of people cannot mix - when this happens invariably the "rough necks" get blamed.

The committee approach often inhibits members who do not really want to be forced into doing things. Often apathy in a club is the result of poor and too-controlled leadership.

The only dance - Picadilly - caters for 'Teenie-boppers' and is inadequate for 16-18 year olds.

A Group suggested a central place with bowls, billiards, coffee lounges, etc., as a good basis for beginning to meet the above need. Here young people need not feel bound to an organization. Those young people who don't really know what they want or how to express this can perhaps begin to 'be themselves' in this full environment.

Here not only leader-type people but others can blend in.

Some members doubted the practicability of such a venture but all agreed it should be investigated. The Wayside Chapel and the Council facilities at Footscray were quoted as examples of this form of recreation.

Guest speakers (impartial) on such subjects as astrology and would heighten interest and stimulation - otherwise people may become bored with it after a while.

Young People: GROUP 2.

General Remarks

The list of clubs might serve to indicate that there are a variety of things which young people can be involved in.

Perhaps they can follow parents club interests to find their own. These club activities in many cases more valuable than school.

How many clubs are orientated to young people?

Who wants to be organized?

Are we catering for the "hoods" or "drop out" youth?

What do they want? How can we find out?

There must be group recognition.

Needs

People want something to do just for the fun of it as a release. Is this idealistic? Can we realise needs in activities such as speedways etc., to cater for individual interests? We want something with the least financial and organizational pressure. We must realise that if we all sit around nothing will get done and that we can only get out of something what we give.

Some people feel Church groups and guides and scouts too moral and "good".

Need for a Saturday night dance with set age limit.

Need for a Picture Theatre and good films.

Need for more sporting facilities:

- Gymnasium
- Basketball (men and women's)
- Softball
- Hockey
- Archery

Swimming facilities that are clean and adequate.

Need for more small clubs for those who have left school but must be a difference between feeling of club commitment and the feeling of being able to come and go as you please.

The age groups should be controlled as much as possible.

Need for a guiding hand and general support for young people from older people in their clubs and organizations.

Need for something to bring club activities to the quiet ones who should be encouraged to participate.

Some Comments From the Address by Mr. Elery Hamilton-Smith.

Mr. Hamilton-Smith stressed that real services for young people were dependent upon people and the relationships between them rather than on buildings and other physical facilities which are of secondary importance.

He distinguished between the particular needs of pre-adolescents and those of adolescents in regard to the kind of people who best help them to grow-up in our society. Services for children who have not yet entered adolescence demand the work of people who like being with children; who enjoy their life and can help children find enjoyment in their life; who can accept limits in a completely acceptable way and who can help children develop their own skills and from this, their own self-confidence. He pointed out that far too many of our services for children are so organized that they tend to increase and develop the skills of those who already have adequate skills and self-confidence rather than focusing upon the need for particular attention to be given to those who have not yet found particular skills of their own.

Working with adolescents demands different qualities of the adults concerned. These include really accepting teenagers as responsible individuals; allowing the young people with whom one works to do things their own way even if this includes making mistakes because we all learn from our own mistakes far more efficiently than being told by others how to do things; who are sufficiently mature themselves not to need to prove themselves to the young people with whom they work; who are alive, growing and interesting, hence always open to new ideas and able to help others to grow in their own way; who believe in the potential of all young people; who know clearly their own values but have no need to try and impose these upon others; and, most importantly, who can help young people to make use of opportunities and give them real support in doing so.

The key problem in organizing a community for more effective services to young people is to find adults who can fill these requirements and make it possible for them to work face to face with groups of young people. This raises questions of how to select and recruit adults who will become workers with young people; how to train them and how to most effectively enable them to work with groups throughout the community.

Mr. Hamilton-Smith again stressed that buildings and similar facilities were of secondary importance and that it was urgent to make the best possible use of all existing facilities rather than focusing efforts upon raising money for major capital development which might well be achieved too late to meet the needs of a generation. He suggested that any community should establish particular organisational machinery to ensure overall development of its own youth services.

The focus of such a group should not be on "co-ordination" (co-ordination is no answer to a shortage of resources) but rather should focus all its energies on finding ways of developing new services and improving existing ones. He suggested that any such group must:

1. Have strong support from the power structure of the community e.g., from the Municipal Council.
2. Keep its goals clear.
3. Organise itself to obtain and use real knowledge in its efforts.
4. Be willing to undertake real work.
5. Include or be composed of young people.
6. Be sensitive to and communicate with the total community and not merely an elite section of it.

Summary of the Points Raised by the Second Series of Discussion Groups.

Where do the youth leaders come from?

They must be in this community and of this community, people who are prepared to open their own homes as much as use the community facilities. Maybe some of the parents whose children are "in trouble" could become leaders, but these are maybe in as much trouble as their children. (Some parents who have themselves made mistakes with their own children could well help other children.)

What are the qualities of a successful youth leader?

1. We questioned Mr. Hamilton-Smith's statement that he must allow young people to make their own mistakes. Are there no limits? What of the 100 m.p.h. crash of the young "hot rod" fanatics? Isn't this what will happen when young people are allowed to do as they like? It was said that the law needs to be understood, the consequences of their decision need to be understood, & they cannot just be told "you mustn't do it".
2. It was said that the youth leader must be capable of providing young people with "the right opportunities". What does this mean? He needs to be part of the group, he needs to understand them, he needs to "lead" less and influence more, he needs to cater more for group decision and make fewer decisions himself.

Are there limits to be placed on "sex orgies", "grog parties"? Parents should be there; gate crashers should be excluded. Leaders must have trust. There must be rules but these rules need to be set up and agreed on by the group. Rules, of course, must be consistent with the aims of the group, e.g., Hot Rod group might agree that dangerous driving whether at speed or not, is beyond the limit.
3. Youth leaders who are good with children should certainly not be pushed into administration; talents should be suited to the job done. Leaders must be dedicated. They will, of course, derive much personal benefit too from their work.
4. The problem of "communication" is a very real one. Too many are ignorant of the facilities available. The "Cazette" or "Mail" should have a column each week: "What's On?" (for young people), with addresses and phone numbers of organizations, etc.
5. Personality of leaders is more important than buildings.

We concluded by agreeing that the youth problems we have discussed are not youth problems only but family problems and community problems. We should be concerned about community health and community welfare.

GROUP 2.

Leadership:

Needed.

Opportunity to let young people learn.
Need to know resources and training will help, not to be a sound worker, but to know some resources.

Who are people needing help?

Young adults doing work, let them carry on with their groups.
We must face - station folk.
Not only them, but many others too are catered for.
Less family participation, (little family club), and family visiting, group family activity wanted.
Gap between those in youth clubs and the drop outs.

MUST.

Educate community to mix together and have more getting together.
Church clubs provide needs but youth do not want to be hypocrites.
Lack of family participation - is due to the changes of the time.
Cross section - some visit, some don't, depends Include everyone - parties appear open but aren't always, some shy.

DROP OUTS - sensitive to rules.

HOW CAN WE DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

1. Church groups supply need for some.
2. Scouts and Guides - Boys V Girls (not mixed - bad).
Uniforms costly - must go. Sometimes want to come and go as you please: Who pays? Who cares for it?
Is this selfish?

COMMUNITY CENTRES:

With different things to do.
Relaxing small part of youth work.
A purpose is needed if youths drawn together.
Learn by mixing together.
Need committee - Can everyone be catered for - some may be not.

1. Must have enough children to form a group.
2. Money - Youth may organise themselves to raise money.
3. Halls: Council and church halls could be used.
Say hall is available, would people come?

Need right people there.

1. Someone to communicate.
2. Some training in the work (core dynamics).

How can we tell people about training groups?

Youngsters in different groups will pass the word on.

Need more sophisticated approach.

1. Try working things out themselves.

Parents behind the children.

Youth column.

Some youth - Opportunity for service.

GROUP 3.

1. There is a need for the public to be made aware of existing youth facilities in Ringwood.
 - (a) Free Press - special supplement.
e.g., Caravan Supplement.
 - (b) All existing groups be asked to provide Council with details of organisation for this group, meeting times and places, secretaries, etc.
 - (c) Ringwood Citizens Advisory Service to have the above available for referral to enquirers - particularly parents and adults.
 - (d) We recognised the need for a referral service attractive to young people.
2. We suggest that young people at this Consultation be asked to form an action group, to further investigate gaps and initiate activities to fill these gaps and that they be given consultant help from adults whom they approach.
3. It is desirable that a report of the consultation be forwarded to the Council for their information.

GROUP 4.

All young people need freedom and belonging i.e., freedom of activity.

Group 4 concentrated on looking more specifically as to meet this need i.e., the need to congregate and socialise.

We considered 1. Programme, 2. People, 3. Property and 4. Planning.

PROGRAMME

A place in commercial centre of Ringwood is necessary which would serve as a meeting place where people could talk, drink coffee or play cards or indoor games. We'd also serve as a communication centre where other activities would be advertised and young people did plan programmes for themselves, e.g., go bowling - opportunity to discuss things with adults.

PEOPLE

Getting people to become active in the Youth Centre.

Three different groups of people needed:

- i. Management.
- ii. Backroom service i.e., serving coffee.
- iii. Adults working directly with young people.

i. & ii. could be recruited from suitable volunteers and existing organizations, e.g., Lions, Apex, Rotary, Jay-Cees.

iii. could be specially selected.

Young people to be represented on all levels.

How does one select suitable people for this type of work.

Noted: The problems of overlapping activities and over involvement of people.

PROPERTY

We need a neutral area - not in the home or in the church.
Should be comfortably furnished.

Problems of finding a place.

1. For reactions of community - envy of teenagers, dislike of gathered crowds. "We didn't do this when we were young".
ACTION GROUP. Would need to be prepared to influence community to accept the need for a 'place to go' i.e., a shop, or PARK e.g., Jubilee Park.
2. The problems of restrictions in the use of public property e.g., Jubilee Park.
3. Suitable place could be shop, or over a shop, in heart of Ringwood, or a vacant house.

PLANNING

Planning precedes buildings.

A start has to be made to prove the need.

ACTION COMMITTEE

- How do you select personnel?
- How should the press be used?
- How long should the planning take?

Urgent need is to get the plan off the ground.

This Consultation should take the initiative to start the formation of an action group.

Final Resolution of Consultation

It was resolved that an Action Committee should be formed and that its terms of reference should be to:

- (a) Consider ways and means of advertising to the community the range of services available to youth;
- (b) Give consideration to recruitment and training of youth leaders and effective utilization of their services within the community;
- (c) Conduct a survey to establish more clearly the needs of the various young people within the community with emphasis on establishing facts and arousing interest;
- (d) Consider in what ways the existing facilities in Ringwood may be more efficiently used;
- (e) Consider what other facilities should be established;
- (f) Do anything else as may be necessary to further meet the needs of young people in Ringwood;
- (g) Communicate the findings of the Consultation to Council and do everything possible to enlist the co-operation of this body and the community as a whole in meeting the needs of young people.

Approach to Ringwood City Council

The Action Committee appointed by the Consultation has found that its discussions with the Ringwood City Council, its attention to press publicity and the conduct of a survey have occupied its time very fully. An immediate brief report of the Consultation was made available to the Council and to the press and this was followed on 10th November, 1969, by presentation of the submission which appears below. Decision on this submission was deferred by Council to enable further information to be sought. The Council has been addressed by a Youth Officer from a neighbouring municipality and has suggested to the Action Committee that they might, in conjunction with two of the present youth organizations, put forward a further submission "as to the specific requirements for youth within the municipality".

Submission from the Action for Youth Committee to the Ringwood Council

We are here as representatives of the Action Committee formed after the Youth Consultation, which was held in October and attended by about 50 people. Copies of the report of this Consultation are available.

One of the instructions given to the Committee was to do all we could to enlist Council support in meeting the needs of young people in the area, and our first task is to place these needs before you. We fully recognise that a considerable amount is already being done for young people:

1. Scouts and Guides
2. Church Youth Groups
3. Sporting Clubs
4. Cultural Groups

These organizations meet needs of a considerable number of young people, but by no means all, and we would suggest that this is partly because of the following limitations:

- (a) they are largely adult run and organised
- (b) they appeal basically to a "conformist" group
- (c) most of them require uniforms
- (d) on the whole, they cater for a younger group -
below 16 years.

For the most part the older teenager is not provided for, nor is the non-conformist of any age considered.

Much teenage violence and extreme behaviour can be traced to the lack of occupation for the leisure time of these groups. If the problem adolescents of today are not to become the problem adults of tomorrow, but are to become useful citizens their energies and interests must be channelled into something worthwhile.

Already, in this young and growing community, there is a high proportion of people below the age of 21; in the next 5-10 years, this proportion will increase still further, and we would suggest that the community as a whole, and the Council as leaders of the community, should be conscious of this, and making plans to provide for the whole of the group.

Changing trends, different educational patterns, increased stresses, greater mobility and affluence, insistence on self-expression, all have their part to play in making it imperative that our attitudes to teenagers should change from those which were appropriate a few years ago; but much of the youth work being done follows conventional lines, doing little - or nothing - to supply the needs of many of our young people, and apparently not recognising changing patterns.

The Consultation saw as the most pressing requirement the provision of some building where young people could meet their friends, on neutral ground, without any conscious or obvious adult supervision, to talk, plan their evening's activities, play cards or other games, drink coffee, and so on. We do not feel that this should be a place simply where teenagers go to keep them "off the streets" - this is an inadequate and negative aim. We would envisage this as a place where young people can find meaning and fulfilment, where attitudes can be developed and shaped; in effect, providing for the developing needs of young people. However unobtrusive, the presence of interested and qualified adults is necessary, to provide help, guidance and counsel when required - but NOT to organise activities themselves, simply to suggest to organisers from among the young people themselves.

Other communities have already faced or are facing this problem - Croydon, Nunawading, Springvale, Broadmeadows, Sunshine, Greensborough, among others. It appears that there is a growing area of municipal activity, and an increasing investment by councils in youth work, and just providing sporting facilities is not enough.

The above is the responsibility of both Council and Community and we would like you to recognise this. We make the following suggestions for your consideration:

1. That a Committee be officially appointed, either by the council, or at a Public Meeting sponsored by the council; if possible, the Committee should have council representatives on it; in effect, it becomes the City of Ringwood Youth Committee. The Committee to be reappointed annually.
2. Such a Committee should advise and assist the council in developing a diversity of more effective youth services, reviewing regularly the requirements of young people in the city.
3. The Committee should develop a master-plan of activities to be brought into operation within certain set periods - to be agreed upon by council.
4. For future consideration, we would ask you to think of the feasibility of the provision of land and/or a building for a meeting place such as the one described above, and also of the eventual appointment of a Youth Services Officer, on the pattern of Croydon, Broadmeadows and Springvale.
5. The possibility of a Survey to determine and accurately assess the needs of youth in our community. Nunawading council are in the process of holding a Survey.

We feel strongly that the initiative for moves such as these must come from the council, not from a committee such as we represent which is, in a sense, the result of moves by a small section of the community only, not a total community involvement.

Report of Survey Conducted by the Action Committee

A social survey is always a complex and difficult task. The Action Committee has had to compile as much data as possible with very limited resources to undertake the work involved. A simple questionnaire was designed and submitted to a number of young people in the district, many secondary schools co-operated by administering the questionnaire to their students, while members of the Action Committee sought interviews with young people who had left school.

The questionnaire was directed particularly at the 15-19 years of age group. After eliminating those questionnaires which had been completed by young people resident outside of Ringwood, a total of 1,296 questionnaires completed by young residents of the city were available for analysis. The actual numbers in each age group are shown in Table I.

TABLE I

	<u>AGE GROUPS</u>	
	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>
Age 14	44	48
Age 15	149	199
Age 16	177	192
Age 17	140	145
Age 18	44	41
Age 19	65	38
Age 20	<u>10</u>	<u>4</u>
	<u>629</u>	<u>667</u>
	<u>TOTAL: 1,296</u>	

The fact that the Committee were forced to undertake this survey on an absolute shoe-string basis means that the young people polled by the questionnaire do not necessarily comprise a truly representative sample of the age group concerned and, in fact, those at school are represented in much larger numbers than those who have left school. This means one cannot say that the results obtained are necessarily applicable to the total population. However, the size of the sample is such that it is very clear that the findings are true of 45% of the total population in Ringwood. Furthermore because those still at school are over-represented in the sample there is no doubt that the survey has looked at the 45% most likely to be actively involved in youth organizations and sporting activities.

Because of the limited time available only certain of the key items of information have been fully analysed and presented here. These give adequate grounds for further discussion and action within the city.

Young people were asked to describe how they spent their time on each evening of the previous week and throughout the previous weekend. Not all such time slots were filled in by all respondents but the answers obtained have been fully analysed in Tables 2 and 3.

Each unit in these Tables represents one person-evening or in the case of weekend time, one person-halfday.

TABLE 2

Young People's Activities - Monday to Thursday Evenings

	<u>BOYS</u>	<u>GIRLS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Study, Work	511	270	781
Home - nothing specific	208	140	348
- television	308	220	528
- hobby, reading, entertaining friends	115	112	227
- housework, shopping, etc.	28	64	92
Out - nothing specific	49	31	80
- club, sport, etc.	259	199	458
- Church activities	31	44	75
- dancing, commercial entertainment	78	97	175
- hotel	25	6	31
- visiting frineds, party, informal social activities	74	102	176
- other	16	26	42
TOTAL POSSIBLE SCORE (n x 4)	<u>2,516</u>	<u>2,668</u>	<u>5,184</u>

TABLE 3

Young People's Activities - Friday Evening & Weekends

Study, Work	406	264	670
Home - nothing specific	282	263	545
- television	305	305	610
- hobby, reading, entertaining friends	134	187	321
- housework, shopping, etc.	71	181	252
- "sleeping in"	55	29	84
Out - nothing specific	146	72	218
- club, sport, etc.	377	231	608
- Church activities	89	152	241
- dancing, commercial entertainment	166	205	371
- hotel	48	6	54
- visiting friends, party, informal social activities	153	214	367
- other	25	16	41
TOTAL POSSIBLE SCORE (n x 7)	<u>4,403</u>	<u>4,669</u>	<u>9,072</u>

Various aspects of this tabulation will be discussed below but a few general comments may be useful at this point.

1. The large amount of time spent on work or study is, of course, not surprising. There is no question that young people today spend a great deal of time on study. However, although not fully analysed this survey showed the same patterns as is experienced throughout the world in that the young people who were spending most time on education were also the ones most likely to continue their involvement in youth organizations or sport. Those who left school early were most likely not to be involved in any form of community activity.

2. It is also striking that a very great amount of time is spent on "nothing specific" or watching television.
3. A relatively large proportion of time is spent on personal interests which include a wide range of hobbies or other special interests.
4. Although the figures show a considerable amount of time spent on attendance at clubs or participation at sport this must be placed against the three facts; that 1,296 young people were involved (and this only accounted for 458 person-evenings during the week); because school attenders are over-represented in the sample the result is weighted towards those who are most actively involved; and as in all similar surveys those who are involved in such activities generally spent three or more time slots each week in this way while the remainder spent no time upon activities of this kind.

Young people were also asked "What sort of place would you like to see available for you to spend your spare time"? The results of this are shown in Table 4 and again these will be further commented on below.

TABLE 4

Activity (Action or Type of Club)

	<u>GIRLS</u>	<u>BOYS</u>
A. A club or group programme - physical activity emphasis.	93	95
B. A club with focus on hobby, discussion, community service or similar interest.	79	53
C. A club with focus placed on social activity.	82	32
D. A social centre but not a club, where young people can drop in without the tie of membership.	334	165
E. Form of commercial entertainment, e.g., theatre, commercial dance, disco, restaurant.	290	188
F. Bowls, Ice Skating, Sports Centre, Gym.	80	68
G. Other	10	24

The part of the survey which provoked some controversy in the community was a series of statements with which young people were asked to express their agreement or otherwise. The full results of this are shown in Table 5. The significance of the attitudes expressed through this part of the questionnaire are discussed below and in many cases supported by quotations from comments written on the questionnaire-form by young people. It has obviously been impossible to reproduce these comments in full but many are repetitions of those selected to be reproduced here.

TABLE 5: Attitudes Questionnaire.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Agree	Strongly Disagree
1. Life is so short that having a good time is more important than anything else.	G.	55	188	159	47
	B.	78	167	170	46
2. The Ringwood City Council is very active.	G.	1	57	222	142
	B.	5	89	175	175
3. Young people can only really be free if they live away from home.	G.	29	70	227	113
	B.	63	95	229	87
4. A girl is usually looking for a man to marry rather than just sex.	G.	60	237	98	44
	B.	52	174	120	46
5. Public transport around here is quite handy, especially in the evenings.	G.	8	47	136	253
	B.	13	77	130	218
6. The Average person can live a good life without religion.	G.	84	217	98	42
	B.	141	225	79	38
7. A boy is usually looking for sex rather than marriage.	G.	77	156	155	33
	B.	86	163	144	45
8. The Church is the best authority to decide on what is right and what is wrong.	G.	12	62	202	178
	B.	16	45	103	174
9. Each person should decide for himself what is right or wrong.	G.	194	187	45	15
	B.	205	181	61	24
10. Sexual intercourse before marriage is alright for boys but not girls.	G.	39	53	148	202
	B.	52	84	178	143
11. Youth clubs are a waste of time.	G.	19	35	232	158
	B.	27	71	212	149
12. The Ringwood City Council provides no facilities for young people.	G.	117	144	143	33
	B.	134	145	155	27
13. It is best to have a goodtime before you are married because after that life is pretty dreary.	G.	33	75	198	140
	B.	70	101	205	88
14. Sexual intercourse before marriage is alright.	G.	36	115	151	138
	B.	86	183	122	57
15. I learn more from friends of my own age than I can from my parents.	G.	55	147	178	64
	B.	93	145	174	49
16. When it comes to sex, there is one standard for men and another for women.	G.	52	123	143	127
	B.	63	103	166	135

A Discussion on What the Survey Has to Say

..... : About Clubs and Organizations

The attitude questionnaire revealed that most young people were prepared to be positively inclined towards youth clubs in that only 152 agreed that they were a waste of time while 751 disagreed with this assertion. We have already commented above that although the analysis of the way in which young people spent their time appears to indicate a good proportion of this time being spent in clubs or participating in sport, when this time is in fact only spent by a minority of the individuals concerned. It is particularly informative to look further at some of the comments which young people have made.

"I think that the young people of Ringwood do have problems, the main one being the lack of a place where they can meet and discuss things over a cup of coffee. If this happens now, it is usually in a home and the young people feel restricted by the presence of parents. It is the same in Church and youth clubs as there is always an adult on hand to "guide and direct". This is not right; the young people should feel free to discuss anything they want to quite openly and at the moment this is very hard to do. I also believe that there should be recreation facilities in a place such as I am advocating. Items such as a record player would be necessary and it should be up to the people who use the place to decide what they want."

Boy 19.

"The sporting facilities are adequate, the facilities for social activities (particularly for those in the age 18-21 years) are very limited."

Boy 19.

"The only dance available in Ringwood is too rough and all types go! I know the Catholic Church has a type of youth club thing but that sounds pretty dead."

Girl 16.

"Yes, there are problems for young people in Ringwood. This is because of all the louts hanging around and they hang around because there are no facilities for the young. The problems are that the few facilities there are are not properly supervised."

Girl 16.

"I think young people should not only think of enjoying themselves but should organise some social activity in Ringwood. To set about and do something active. For example, in the Ringwood Parish there are organizations such as the Social Set. These organise coffee lounges and bus trips and dances every now and then."

Girl 15.

"There are a great deal of church clubs for youth and I feel I get all the enjoyment out of snow trips and camps, parties, barbeques, etc. If a young person like myself feels they are bored with life and can't make friends, they had better go to a youth club and just find how much fun it is. And if a picture theatre was existant, I am sure it's attendance would be very large."

Girl 16.

"I would like to say Ringwood is a dump for the teenager of today. There is nothing here for us." Girl 17.

"The older people in the community don't like the things which the youth of it like to do, e.g., going to disco's, bowling, etc. It is very hard to please both generations. I think that more people should be trained to help youth do something with their time." Girl 15.

"I have come out from England less than a year ago. I have noticed a very big contrast between Australia & U.K. for entertaining youths. The biggest thing I miss is a dance, a good dance. Sure we've got but what is it? I say its a dump. There are too many roughs. Its dangerous for girls to walk home or catch a train." Girl 16.

"I think that there is a very big problem for the youth around Ringwood. People complain that kids do nothing but vandalize the place and cause trouble but if we had a place where we could go and not be bossed around or organized all the time, it would be a great advantage to the community of Ringwood. The place that the teenagers really want is a big room with comfortable things, like carpet and chairs. They want snooker tables, machines for fun, juke boxes (loud), coffee machines, smokes available, and maybe drinking, if they behave themselves. Parents might not let their children go but if the drinking was restricted to the eighteens and over it would be alright. The kids want a place where the Fuzz aren't gunna come and book them for mucking around, or where they are going to get kicked out for doing things. They want a place they can call their own, a place where they can go to get away from their parents, teachers and problems. They want a place where they can say "This is mine. I belong here." Girl 15½.

"I don't think that there are too many problems for the young people of Ringwood. Really we are lucky to have the facilities we've got but it would be nice to have a few more." Girl 14.

It will be seen there are conflicting opinions about the situation in Ringwood but the general feeling which comes through after reading young people's comments is that they are not satisfied with what is currently available. They stress the development of social centres where there is a great deal more freedom than is traditional in youth organizations and this is supported very strongly by the data shown in Table 4. At the same time some of them have commented on the need for the involvement of understanding adults and upon the need for themselves to take responsibility in development of new kinds of facilities.

..... : About the Church

Again a minority of young people have shown themselves as having spent time in church activities as only 316 time slots were shown as being filled with church activity throughout the total sample of 1,296 young people and again those who were involved in church activity tended to have spent several segments of their available time in this way. The attitude questionnaire shows a much higher proportion felt that religion was important even though they had not necessarily been recently involved in church activity. A little over 1/3rd of those responding to the statement "The average person can live a good life without religion" disagreed with this. A lesser number (135) of people were even willing to agree with the statement "The church is the best authority to decide on what is right and what is wrong". It is doubtful whether an equivalent proportion of the clergy would in fact agree with this statement.

"Ringwood people are too inhibited! (Referring to previous question). Religion is how you live your life. If you see money as the main thing, then money (materialism) is your religion. The Church should be the best authority to decide on what is right and what is wrong but it is corrupt and ignores its own teachings."
Male 18½.

"There are no places that people can get together and talk, there is only the Church which for young people I don't see as the whole solution. Christianity yes but NOT RELIGIOUS POMPOSITY etc.
Female 17.

In summary, young people in Ringwood are inclined to be positive towards religion and its importance in their life but they are generally not heavily involved in church life and the attitudes expressed in the two comments reproduced above probably typify a relatively widespread cynicism about the organized church.

..... : Relationships Between the Sexes

Young people are all too realistic about the ambivalence which our own society shows towards any sexual matters and all too well aware of the sickness that this can produce in people.

"Ringwood Lake should be a place where you can go for peace, calm and commune with nature - but it is smelly and dangerous - a place to commune with nature but not natural nature - just rapes and naked men with hornrimmed glasses.

Ringwood Station is full of lousy, lazy indolent bums without anything to do but whistle and look stupid".
Female 17.

"With the changing attitudes of society, with far more sex and young marriages having to get married, there should be more talk on sex so as it is not looked on so badly. Why make sex dirty when it isn't. It is used wrongly more instruction about this subject so foolish girls don't get influenced by an experienced boy and get into trouble".
Female 17.8.

"It is a common thing to drive through Ringwood at night and see 13, 14 and 15 year old girls hanging around waiting for a pickup. It is no wonder so many young girls get pregnant. They probably tell their parents that they are going to a friend's place but do otherwise."
Female 18.

When our present patterns of morality have produced the unhealthy attitudes toward sex which characterize so much of our social life, it is little wonder that young people become confused and concerned. Equally it is not surprising that they should question traditional values and seek new ones particularly in view of the encouragement that they receive from the mass media to do this. However, although this seeking for new values is revealed in the attitude survey (almost 50% agreed that "sexual intercourse before marriage is alright") there is certainly not a complete retreat from tradition and all available evidence suggests that young people are handling the question of relationships to each other surprisingly well and responsibly. Although the general picture revealed by the attitude questionnaire could be argued at some length, the significant thing for concern is to seek ways in which young people can be helped to clarify and resolve their own confusion and uncertainties in this matter.

It is of particular interest to see that in spite of their question of tradition and their realism about society that 631 of those responding disagreed with the statement "It is best to have a good time before you are married because after that life is pretty dreary".

..... : About Family and Friends

"Parents don't keep enough tags on their children or keep too tight a tag and keep their kids tied to their apron strings."

Female 15.

Parents and family life are the target for all sorts of attack and criticism. This young lady's comment shows very clearly how parents are often placed in a "you can't win" situation. Although a number expressed their growing need for independence by agreeing with the statement "Young people can only really be free if they live away from home" a great number did not. Perhaps more significantly, over 50% disagreed with the statement "I learn more from friends of my own age than I can from my parents."

The teenager years are by nature and definition a period of growing away from one's family and achieving independence as an adult individual. This can sometimes be a painful process but the attitudes expressed by these young people again suggests that there is a high level of family loyalty. Some of the comments that have been quoted below also highlight the awareness of young people's concern for even better communication and relationships with the older generation.

..... : About Council and Local Civic Affairs

It is all too clear from the attitude questionnaire that young people do not have a high opinion either of the city council's performance or the local provision of public transport. 714 disagreed with the assertion that the "Ringwood City Council is very active" and 737 disagreed with the idea that "Public transport around here is quite handy especially in the evenings". This is a very strong expression of attitude and one which must be treated seriously.

"Maybe it's everywhere but youth is left to get on as best he can. Ringwood only seems to be bothered about business".

Male 18.

"Ringwood Youth has a problem in that the City Council prefers to build up its own revenue through helping to erect new shops, rather than cater for its own citizens and inhabitants. It is more concerned about what the next Shire or City is doing. Thinks of Ringwood as a "village" and acts accordingly - not prepared to acknowledge that Ringwood is a growing city with majority of young inhabitants."

Female 19.

"Ringwood is a good town and rapidly growing. So far the council has done very well on building or starting to build: a swimming pool, ice skating ring, bowling alley".

Female 16.

This expression of attitude suggests that in spite of the accomplishments of the Council in developing the city and providing facilities for the residents, the message about these accomplishments has not "got through" to the younger generation.

..... : About Some General Attitudes

"Actually I think that most of Ringwood's young people's problems are caused by themselves and their apathetic attitude. I feel there is very little the Council or a Youth Group could do that would be successful on a large scale."

Male 18.

"It's not just Ringwood that have problems, it's the world. If world problems could be solved, most other problems in Ringwood will be solved; but because of the tremendous population explosion and the high cost of living, youths of today are forced to live the way they do, probably hating their parents because its the parents of the world that make these problems. Time is the only thing that may help Ringwood, but now more places for teenagers should be built.

Female 15.

"There are too many louts!! that hang around Ringwood station, so that a girl is not safe travelling home after dark!

In Ringwood it is impossible for a girl to go anywhere unescorted (i.e. without a boyfriend or two). Nowhere in Ringwood to do anything much, so you have to go somewhere else to find entertainment. Need dances or general place for youth to do what they want."

Female 18.

"Young people have problems wherever they are. We want to have fun and enjoy ourselves but there doesn't seem to be any place we can. We don't know what we want to do so it is hard for other people to help us. We are sick of routine. And anything that is available, e.g., Dance on Saturday night, is always the same. It needs to be on every week but it always seems so boring."

Female 16.

"Most people today condemn youths on appearance. Also because one youth is sighted doing something wrong all youth are condemned.

Male 16.

"Although I haven't got time to do anything such as joining clubs, etc., I probably would have time if I was interested in something. It's just that at the moment I'm in a rut and everything is so boring that I waste time doing nothing. If youth could do things which are helpful to someone else, we would be much happier and satisfied. Local dances are alright for the 13-16 age group (tennyboppers) but for my age group we want something more interesting. There is no ways of meeting boys around here."

Female 16.

"There are problems as I think young people wish to meet other young people apart from the local kids that they have already come into contact with before. There seems to be little city pride. Young people are so often being knocked that they take the defensive all the time and those that are being praised are not the type of kids like the average kids. Most kids are too self-conscious to go to the clubs and places that are presently provided. If you aren't one of the sheep, you are completely out and it isn't much fun going to any of the provided places anyway."

Female 16.

"Young people in Ringwood have nowhere much to go. They suffer from usual prejudice against long hair and unusual clothing and are often treated with suspicion by older people ready to class anyone at all different to themselves as queer or bad. There is too little trust between young and old and too much classing everyone in the same category."

Female 16.

It seems almost superfluous to make the comment that many young people live in an atmosphere of fear and of lack of understanding between themselves and the older generation.

Final Summary of Points for Discussion and Action

We believe this report shows quite clearly:

1. There is a need for a greater diversity of services for young people. This is not just a question of providing more which are similar to those already in existence or of making existing organizations better known. It is clearly a matter of developing new kinds of activity and this report gives some clear leads as to the direction these might take.
2. There is a major task to be performed in establishing better understanding and closer relationships in civic affairs between the various generations. This will only be done if all citizens and organizations take these matters seriously and if an effective body is established to see that action is taken. This is too big a task to be placed in the hands of a completely voluntary committee no matter how active, energetic and competent such a committee may be. Committees of this kind will inevitably lack the resources to do the necessary work or an adequate position in the community to influence overall policy and thinking.

If Ringwood as a city wishes to adequately serve the needs of its young people those citizens must demand that their elected leaders - the city councillors - should take an active lead in this matter. Experience in many other municipalities shows that a committee to develop youth services in a city can only be effective if it has the active commitment and involvement of councillors and support of the city council as a whole. This report is not the place to deal with the details of developing such a committee or with the questions related to provision of adequate staff time, but there are precedents in other municipalities from which sound patterns can now be derived.

APPENDIX A

Mr. J. U'Ren
Rev. G. Pitt
Mrs. Marion Rogers
Miss Carmel Jenkins
Mrs. R. Sanderson
Mr. Ray Wilson
Miss Robyn Benton
Mr. Geof Shanks
Mr. Ed Fleming
Father Val Noone
Mrs. F. Hollingsworth
Mr. Ray Chambers
Mrs. G. Chambers

The above Committee were responsible for the original Consultation and were assisted during planning and at the Consultation by:

Miss M. Andrew (Institute of Social Welfare)
Mr. D. Davis (Y.M.C.A.)
Mrs. R. Nairn (Brotherhood of St. Laurence)
Mr. and Mrs. R. Patterson (V.A.Y.C.).

APPENDIX B

Attendance at the Consultation

Mr. John U'Ren
Rev. G. Pitt
Father V. Noone
Mr. G. Shanks
Mrs. M. Rogers
Mr. P. Norton
Mr. D. Lewellin
Mr. Suppan
Rev. D. Shinkfield
Mr. C. Tonkin
Mr. J.N. Webster
Mrs. C. Howarth
Mrs. P. Greig
Mr. M.L. Sorensen
Mrs. E. Jack
Mr. G.H. Douglas
Miss Lorraine Mitchell
Mr. Michael Beale
Mr. Stuart Ord
Mr. Leigh Aherne
Miss Margaret Grima
Mr. John Clancy
Miss Leslie Anderson
Miss Megan Curlewis

Miss Carmel Jenkins
Miss R. Benton
Mr. E. Fleming
Mrs. R. Sanderson
Mr. R. Chambers
Mr. D. Millar
Mr. R. Gallacher
Mr. R.H. Cording
Mr. W.P. Hegarty
Mrs. E. Nichol
Councillor P.E. Palmer
Mrs. W.M. Tester
Mrs. A. Mathews
Mr. R. Cleator
Mr. W.C. Oke
Mrs. E.C. Dungey
Mr. Ian Cassells
Mr. Ross Maggs
Mr. Lewis Clayton
Miss Annette Douglas
Mr. Michael Coll
Mr. Norm Gale
Miss Pam Creed
Mr. Ashley Buckle

APPENDIX C

Youth Action Committee

The following were the active members of the Youth Action Committee:

Mr. J. J'Ren (Convenor)
Miss Carmel Jenkins (Chairman)
Miss Pam Creed
Mr. Michael Beale
Councillor P. Palmer
Mr. A. Cleator
Miss Robyn Benton

APPENDIX D

RINGWOOD YOUTH CONSULTATION

3rd & 5th October, 1969.

Statement of Receipts and Payments

Expenses

Printing and Postage	5.00
Stationary	22.16
Publicity	1.90
Honorariums	100.00
Catering	11.00
Hire of Halls	29.00
Cost of Survey	12.00
Cheque fees	1.00
Miscellaneous Expenses	.80

Receipts

Consultation Subscriptions	155.80
Grant - Australian Frontier	20.00
Bank Interest	47
Net Loss	6.79

\$182.86

\$182.86

Audited and found correct.

T.C. Ward, A.A.S.A.

Bank Reconciliation

Consultation fees banked	138.80
Grant Australian Frontier	20.00
Bank interest	<u>47</u>

\$159.27

Amounts withdrawn to pay:

Expenses	\$159.27
Balance as at 18.3.71	NIL

Balance as per pass book No. S 23288 - NIL.

Cash Receipts

Cash receipts not banked	\$16.80
Expenses paid by cash	\$23.59
Out of pocket expenses - Treasurer	6.79

T.C. Ward, A.A.S.A.

