

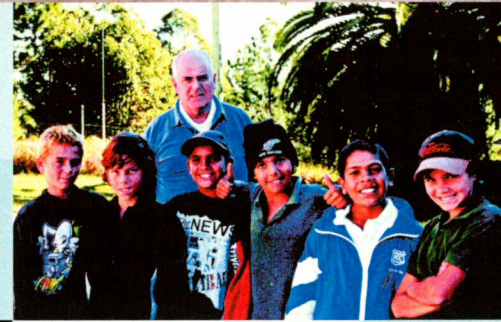
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Area Assistance Scheme Success Stories

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A benefit-cost analysis of funded projects

PREPARED BY AUSTRALIA STREET COMPANY AND MORRIS CONSULTANTS



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Area Assistance Scheme Success Stories

A benefit-cost analysis of funded projects

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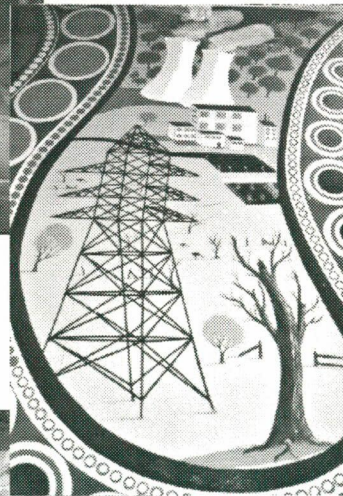
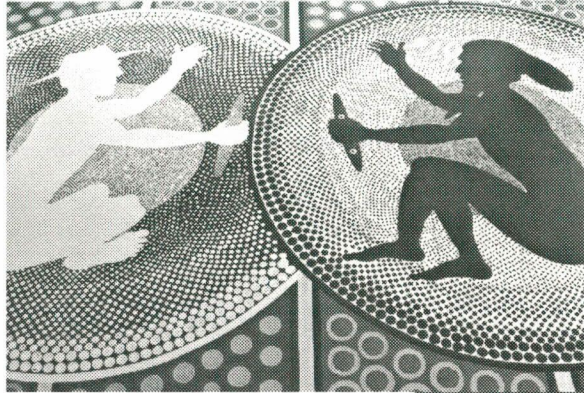
Printed November 2002
ISBN 0 7347 0339 2
2002/83

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Contents

Part 1. Benefit-cost analysis of the NSW Area Assistance Scheme	1
Introduction	3
Value for money	7
Benefits of the AAS	9
Costs of the AAS	13
Analysis	17
Part 2. Case studies of 8 AAS projects	19
Case study 1. A lifeline for the Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Cultural Centre	21
Case study 2. New opportunities for children with a disability and their families	25
Case Study 3. Year 6 connects via the Goori Youth Website	25
Case Study 4. Video production helps invigorate a rural community	27
Case Study 5. Norla — life change: volunteering and new options	31
Case Study 6. Support, advice and new friends for new parents	33
Case Study 7. From out of sight to visible — achievements of the Aboriginal Liaison Committee	35
Case Study 8. Warhammer, camps and homework	37
Part 3. Detailed benefit-cost analysis of the South Bankstown Youth Project	41
South Bankstown Youth Project	43
Assessment of benefits	45
Timing of benefits	49
Benefit-cost analysis	51

Part 1. Benefit-cost analysis of the NSW Area Assistance Scheme



Introduction

Background

The Area Assistance Scheme (AAS) provides grants to not-for-profit community organisations and local councils for projects that improve community infrastructure. The AAS targets areas that are experiencing significant social and economic stress and change, and funds programs that deliver real change to vulnerable communities. The AAS focuses on the following three outcomes:

- connecting communities through partnerships
- building community leadership and capacity
- promoting safe communities.

How the AAS operates

The AAS currently operates within a two-tier assessment process:

- submissions are initially ranked by Local Ranking Committees — there is one committee in each of 52 local government areas the AAS covers
- submissions are then further assessed and recommended for funding by a Regional Advisory Committee in each region.

These committees rank projects based on local and regional needs assessment and identification of priorities.

The AAS is supported by a Community Project Officer (CPO) in each local council in the regions in which the AAS operates. These CPOs' salaries are partially funded by the AAS. The CPOs are supported by one AAS Regional Coordinator in each PlanningNSW regional office. PlanningNSW is establishing a Community Infrastructure Unit (CIU) to manage the AAS. This will comprise a Director, Senior Project Officer and two administrative staff.

AAS objectives

The objectives of the AAS are to:

- identify community issues
- develop and implement programs that help prevent problems related to social stress or urban growth and change
- develop new and innovative ways of addressing identified priority needs and issues
- promote coordination between government agencies, councils, community organisations and, in some cases, the private sector to:
 - plan for and address changing community needs
 - improve the quality of and access to existing services and resources
- improve the capacity of, and opportunities for, local communities to:
 - identify their needs and issues
 - plan for social programs that address their needs
 - develop, implement and manage programs that address their needs.

About this analysis

The most recent independent AAS Triennial Review, undertaken in 2000 by Alison Ziller of Australia Street Company, included a benefit-cost analysis. This analysis compared the contribution made by the community, local government and other contributors to the AAS with the level of NSW Government funding. It concluded that 'for every dollar spent by the NSW government, \$2 is contributed by the community'. The review also made general conclusions about the non-financial benefits of the program.

This benefit-cost analysis follows on from and further develops the initial analysis, providing:

- a more detailed account of the benefits of the AAS
- a greater insight into the concept of community infrastructure in terms of benefits to individuals and communities
- highlights of some of the many AAS success stories
- a close examination of one of these success stories.

This analysis is divided into three parts:

Part 1 contains the original benefit-cost analysis conducted as part of the Triennial Review. It is derived from the further work of the Australia Street Company, the consultants who undertook the Triennial Review.

Part 2 contains **8 case studies** that tell stories about individual projects, highlighting the direct and indirect benefits to individuals, groups and local communities of participating in the AAS. Alison Ziller also wrote this section.

Part 3 contains a **detailed analysis of the Revesby Youth Group project**, which quantifies the cost and benefits of this project, in particular the cost savings to the government and the community. The amount of funding invested by the government in this project and the longer-term benefits accrued as a result of this funding are identified. PlanningNSW commissioned Jeremy Morris of Morris Consultants to write this section.

This analysis is on PlanningNSW's website — www.planning.nsw.gov.au/aas

Disclaimer

The status of projects in this report vary. Some are currently operating while others may have already finished or are continuing under pick up arrangements (i.e. have been permanently taken over by another government department). In addition, the nature of projects funded at the time this document was commissioned may have changed and no longer meet current AAS outcomes. Therefore, organisations interested in applying for funding are required to discuss their project ideas in advance with their local Community Project Officer or Regional Coordinator after reading carefully through the funding guidelines.

More information

For more information about this benefit cost analysis or any AAS projects, contact the Community Infrastructure Unit on 9762 8074 or visit www.planning.nsw.gov.au/aas

Value for money

All government programs, including the AAS, need to deliver value for money.

The benefit-cost analysis for the AAS has shown that benefits justify costs, or in many cases, benefits dwarf costs.

The cost benefit matrix

The following matrix has been used to prepare the analysis.

Cost benefit matrix¹

	Non-financial benefits of AAS	Financial benefits of AAS	Non-financial costs of AAS	Financial costs of AAS
Costs and benefits to the individual				
Costs and benefits to local communities and NSW				

The advantage of this matrix is that it directs attention to the full range of costs and benefits that accrue from the AAS. In particular it allows financial costs and benefits and non-financial costs and benefits to be considered.

The matrix enables costs and benefits for individuals to be considered as well as for local communities and for NSW. It ensures, for example, that the financial and non-financial contributions that individuals make to the running of AAS projects are taken into account.

In addition, the financial costs to the government can be seen in the context of financial costs incurred by other public agencies such as councils, and by community groups, private organisations and companies. As well, financial and non-financial benefits of the AAS can be shown to accrue to local communities and NSW as well as to individuals.

The following cost-benefit analysis has been compiled using:

¹ © the Public Sector Research Centre and Australia Street Company

- qualitative material gathered during the assessment of relevant reports and the consultations for the 1999–2000 Triennial Review
- quantitative material from questionnaires completed by 134 currently funded organisations. These organisations represent 45% of all funded organisations in 1999–2000.

Benefits of the AAS

Non-financial benefits

Non-financial benefits to individuals

AAS projects benefit individuals by:

- meeting shortfalls in community service provision in high growth areas, so people can, for example:
 - get transport to hospital
 - get support and counselling
 - obtain information and referral
 - obtain advice and assistance they would otherwise not be able to access
- helping people establish social/support/mutual aid networks to improve mental health, for example:
 - promoting social interaction
 - providing people with someone to talk to
 - fostering self-esteem and self confidence
 - helping overcome isolation
 - promoting a sense of belonging
- helping people who perceive a need in their community to develop locally-based responses to that need
- offering individuals opportunities for skills development either through project-related administration and management requirements, or through participation as a client of a project — projects can, for example:
 - act as a stepping stone to further education
 - help members of minority groups access mainstream programs
 - encourage self development and self empowerment
- providing opportunities for people to develop creative/artistic skills and enjoy leisure activities and cultural programs, for example, providing time out for parents through leisure and creative activities and through child minding
- promoting non-judgemental acceptance and a sense of validation in the community of individuals with special needs or who are members of minority groups.

Non-financial benefits to local communities and to the state

The wide range of individual benefits accumulate as benefits to the community through:

- providing a structured and consistent opportunity for community self-help which:
 - encourages local organisations to review local needs and priorities in a collaborative process
 - improves the skills and knowledge base of the community, and enhances its sense of a capacity to act
- providing a basic social and community infrastructure in towns, villages and neighbourhoods which would otherwise not develop for many years
- harnessing the capacity of a neighbourhood, town or local government area to generate local solutions to local problems using local resources such as volunteer time, skills, networks and fund raising capacities
- developing the capacity of councils to work with local community organisations by:
 - sharing information
 - developing a shared understanding of the needs and priorities of a local area
 - achieving an agreement about priorities for the improvement of social wellbeing in council areas and regions
- helping to create healthier communities by providing locally-based programs which meet people's social, economic and health needs and encourage a sense of inclusion
- providing an opportunity to deal with local social issues before crisis point, for example, by providing desperate carers and parents with time out, respite and a safe place to go to share a problem, to get a better perspective and to obtain advice, support and referral
- helping reduce instances of domestic violence, child abuse, youth suicide, crime and vandalism in local communities through support, inclusion, referral and time out — also improving levels of care given to homes and gardens
- increasing communication by distributing information, for example, information on tenancy, tax help, and Department of Housing and Centrelink services.

Financial benefits

Financial benefits to individuals

Many AAS programs offer people free or inexpensive access to such things as:

- child health services
- parenting advice
- women's clinics
- tax return assistance
- advice and referral of all kinds
- self-help support meetings (for example, Gamblers Anonymous, Deaf Support Group)
- domestic violence prevention groups

- computer use and internet access
- food and emergency relief.

AAS finances contribute to neighbourhood/community centres that offer individuals access to low cost TAFE courses, other education courses, small business start-up courses, support services, leisure and creative activities, child care and child minding and playgroups.

Financial benefits to local communities and to the state

The regions covered by the AAS experience several financial benefits from receipt of AAS grants. Based on questionnaire data collected for the Triennial Review, these can be identified as follows:

- The AAS funds 80 full-time and 318 part-time jobs at a financial benefit to local communities of some **\$11,040,000** per annum.
- The number of volunteer hours contributed each year through AAS projects is about 320,208 per annum which at \$15 per hour amounts to **\$6,187,680** worth of donated time made available to the state.
- In addition, volunteer time on AAS management committees is conservatively estimated at 76,000 per annum which at \$15 per hour amounts to **\$1,140,000** worth of donated time.
- The number of volunteer hours contributed annually on Local Ranking Committees and Regional Advisory Committees is, conservatively, 5000 per annum which at \$15 per hour amounts to **\$75,000**.
- AAS projects often also bring in other government, council or private sector contributions. Research for this analysis estimates other grant inputs to current funded projects as some **\$2,132,264** from state and commonwealth governments. Many of the grants are recurrent. Fundraising, fees and charges and private sector sponsorship contributions amount to some **\$471,730**. In addition, the AAS has encouraged the 52 local councils covered by the AAS to make donations to currently funded projects in the order of **\$287,614** per annum. In many cases these donations represent a redirection of expenditure to community services which would not otherwise have occurred. The total of these grants and sponsorships amounts, some **\$2,891,608** is in effect additional public monies entering local communities.
- Some AAS projects generate employment and small business development through:
 - employment of local tradespeople and cleaners
 - the purchase of goods locally
 - the provision of free advertising space in newsletters to small business/micro enterprise
 - work for tutors/course leaders
 - skills development for volunteers
 - providing start up opportunities/skills practice for some small businesses, for example, child care
 - providing events businesses with opportunities for work.

Even if these benefits were only to amount to \$200 per funded project, this adds another **\$600,000** to the annual financial benefits of the AAS.

- Conservatively, the sum of these direct financial benefits to local communities is therefore $\$11,040,000 + \$6,187,680 + \$1,140,000 + \$600,000 + \$75,000 + \$2,891,608 = \mathbf{\$21,934,288}$. This figure relates to AAS projects currently funded and administered by PlanningNSW as no information about jobs or volunteer hours is available for projects which have been 'picked up'.²
- In addition, both local communities and the state benefit from the effective financial donation in unreimbursed costs incurred by paid and unpaid workers for petrol, telephone, wear and tear on private motor vehicles or catering contributions.
- The presence of a basic social infrastructure funded over the years by the AAS helps to give places an attractive lifestyle, promotes local pride and sense of identity and helps market the area to tourists and intending new residents.
- Money is also saved when AAS projects produce a stop gap in terms of basic community networks and services. There are savings in the costs of dealing with the impacts on the community of mental and physical ill health, crime, educational under-achievement, lost employment and business opportunities, and low-income levels.
- There are financial benefits to the state from AAS project intervention in matters such as dealing with depression, aggravation, conflict and confrontation arising from people's desperation or ill health or from people with no ready, structured or safe outlet for the issues they want to express. These matters, when not dealt with, can create serious social problems which the state must then deal with through various departments such as Health, Child Protection, and Aged and Disability. Few studies have sought to quantify the nature of these benefits in dollar terms because of the complexity of the relationships involved and the analysis required. However, it seems safe to say that these costs are substantial and the costs of prevention are less than the costs of repair — some suggest that the saving is in the order of \$7 for every \$1 spent.

² i.e. taken over permanently by a council or a government department

Costs of the AAS

Financial costs

Financial costs to communities and to the state

The financial costs to the state are the costs of the fund itself, which were:

- \$9.5 million in 1998–1999
- \$9.2 million in 1999–2000
- \$10.5 million in 2000–2001

as well as the costs of grants provided by other NSW Government departments and agencies.

The financial costs to local communities are those of contributions made by organisations matching AAS contributions or adding a financial contribution to a project through sponsorship.

For example, some councils and non-government organisations (NGOs) contribute to AAS projects in one or more of the following areas:

- building construction and maintenance
- grounds maintenance
- garbage collection
- provision of utilities
- cleaning services
- wages
- administration/office supplies
- provision of printing facilities and paper
- insurance — building/contents/workers compensation/public liability; audit costs.

Some NGOs also contribute to the AAS through:

- funding administrative services
- developmental advice and assistance for project staff
- providing use of a car or other transport.

Financial costs to individuals

Some participants in AAS programs incur financial costs such as:

- fees and charges to attend activities
- for public transport, petrol and childcare so they can attend a service or program
- contributions to the program through membership fees, supporting fundraising events and donations.

Paid and unpaid workers can incur personal unreimbursed costs for:

- use of their private telephones and motor vehicles
- stationery, computer and internet use and photocopying
- catering, fundraising and childcare expenses
- money spent at fundraising events, for example, buying their own raffle tickets.

These unreimbursed expenses cannot be claimed as tax deductions.

Paid workers also incur financial costs of unpaid overtime, medical costs due to stress and self-financed training.

Non-financial costs

Non-financial costs to communities and the state

The non-financial costs to local communities are those of effort and endeavour. Concerted effort, sustained endeavour and continuing goodwill are needed to:

- provide leadership and support to identify and prioritise local community needs
- develop and sustain a bank of volunteers, including those taking on roles such as honorary treasurer and secretary of incorporated community associations
- provide the leadership that will encourage community support for projects and programs that meet needs which are hidden, or not obvious to most group members.

In some cases maintaining the agenda for community benefit requires courage to confront local vested interests, derision, apathy and the weight of past decisions. It could mean, for example, that an organisation such as a council has to set more time aside to think through difficult issues, deal with interest-holders and find a way forward that will have broad local acceptance.

Non-financial costs to individuals

Many non-financial costs are borne by the paid staff of AAS projects, as the competition for AAS funds means applicants make their budgets as small as possible. Regarding staffing, applicants will use the lowest end of relevant salary scales, minimum or no allowance for annual increments, and minimum or no allowance for the administration

of the project. Many paid staff are employed part-time and are under-employed. These staff may experience:

- pressure to give unpaid time to the project, and undertake professional self development and keep up-to-date with advice and referral issues in unpaid time
- stress from the personal toll of dealing with people's personal problems for much of their working day, especially when this is only one responsibility of their job
- pressure to make the project a success on a very tight budget and to do more with less because salaries and other sources of funds are not keeping pace with the cost of living, and do not necessarily rise when project attendance and activity rises — even though these are indicators of success
- pressure due to taking other part-time work to make ends meet, or from the stress of worrying about how to make ends meet
- stress from feeling that the work they do is undervalued and their job is insecure
- among those who are front line workers, stress and frustration when other agencies cannot respond to requests for urgent referral, counselling and assistance.

At the same time, AAS requirements for accountability and reporting must be dealt with in paid hours, while work to find funding for follow-on projects or for a new application has to take place in unpaid hours. Stress takes its toll on the individual's health and family life.

Some volunteers also experience similar non-financial costs.

Analysis

While it is not possible to arrive at a definitive ratio, it is clear in weighing up the benefits and costs of the AAS that the benefits are substantial and the costs relatively contained. It can be shown that the **\$9.5 million** expended by PlanningNSW in 1998–99 generated **\$21,934,288** of direct financial benefits to local communities. The state saves money through the prevention impacts of the AAS and gains more from this and from the positive benefits of improved community functioning than it expends financially.

The benefits of the AAS to local communities, and cumulatively to the state, far outweigh the costs to either local communities or the state.

This benefit-cost analysis also demonstrates that the contributions made by the state to various community service and community development projects are different to the contributions made in the recipient community, for example:

- while the state contributes the equivalent of 6.6 full-time positions to manage the AAS, community organisations contribute in terms of time and unreimbursed costs
- the financial contribution of the state to the AAS is a tiny portion of its annual budget — expenditure of \$9.2 million on the AAS for 1999–2000 was a mere 0.034% of the state's total recurrent expenditure for that year. From the point of view of many recipient communities, however, the amount received is a significant portion of contributions to their social services.

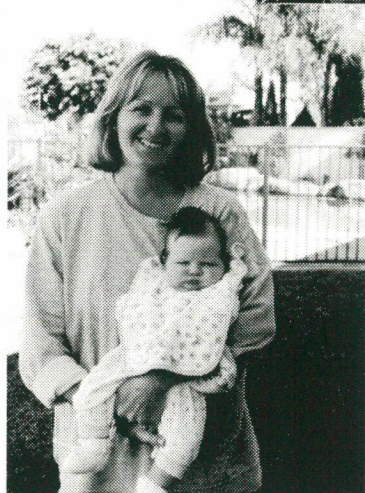
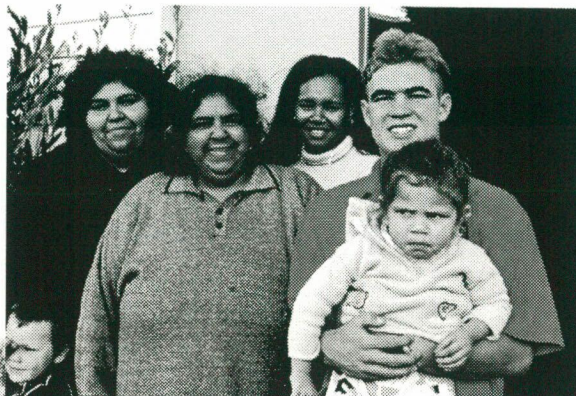
The same kinds of contrasts exist in the benefits accrued. The state benefits from impacts of AAS projects such as savings to other government agencies in welfare and policing and re-invigoration of local economies, the extent of which are difficult to measure.

Local communities, on the other hand, experience a reduction in helplessness and frustration, a shift from waiting for service provision which never seems to arrive to the much more empowering experience of doing something about it. That this impact is also difficult to quantify does not make it any the less real. Everyone is aware, for example, of the difference which leadership makes to the economy, race relations, and cultural vitality. The same impacts are felt locally.

This difference in the order of costs and benefits for the state and for local communities is not merely a difference in perspective. It is a difference of size, relative importance and personally felt impact.

The eight case studies in Part 2 provide an insight into the types of projects the AAS funds and the benefits it delivers.

Part 2. Case studies of 8 AAS projects



Case study 1. A lifeline for the Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Cultural Centre

'The AAS grant has enabled us to realise our vision for a cultural centre which integrates ecology and art'.

Lorraine Brown, Artist, Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Cultural Centre

The Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Cultural Centre (CUACC) is a one-room hall on the Kemblawarra Reserve close to Coomaditchie Lagoon. For many decades this hall has been at the heart of the nearby Koori community — most Aboriginal people in the area come to the centre when they need help.

CUACC is also a cultural organisation. Artists such as Lorraine Brown, whose work can be found throughout Wollongong, have integrated themes of environmental care and bush regeneration with traditional and modern cultural themes. CUACC also:

- is used for weddings, meetings and other events
- offers assistance to people in need by putting them in touch with local and government agencies
- is an outreach classroom for the local TAFE, running courses in bush regeneration and art.

Over the last decade the local community has used new skills and knowledge to clear the lantana and bitou bush on the reserve and replant it with native trees that provide bush tucker. They have constructed a trail through the reserve with works of art laid into the concrete and planted the lagoon with reeds.

Through the CUACC, the local community has also supported some work programs under the Community Development Employment Program in partnership with TAFE, some local industries, the council, the botanic gardens in Wollongong, and the Federal Department of Employment and Education. Partners provided financial contributions linked to the work programs which then ceased when the programs finished.

For two years, CUACC had no funding and functioned due to the voluntary efforts of a few key people who worked from home.

In 2000, the AAS provided a four-year grant for two part-time salaries and some administrative costs and equipment. Through the grant, the CUACC will:

- develop cultural, bush regeneration and bush tucker projects
- upgrade and provide information, support and referral services
- pursue other funding and support possibilities.

Joanne Pollard of the Illawarra Forum (an AAS-funded group which provides management skills support to the CUACC) says 'the whole feel of the organisation has changed now that the two workers have been employed. Already they have attracted additional funds from DoCs [Department of Community Services] and they now have opportunities to develop the centre and seek other funding for ongoing programs.' For people working at the centre, such as Lorraine Brown, Donna Thomas and Narelle Thomas, the AAS grant has made a big difference. Lorraine says it has enabled her to realise her vision for 'a cultural centre which integrates ecology and art'.

Cost benefit elements

	Non-financial benefits of AAS	Financial benefits of AAS	Non-financial costs of AAS	Financial costs of AAS
Costs and benefits to the individual	<p>The AAS grant has made the difference between having an idea and having the opportunity to achieve it. Young people have acquired skills and some work experience through the CUACC.</p> <p>The flourishing art of the centre, and its display in public places throughout the region, has engendered pride and self-confidence in the community.</p>	<p>There may have been some financial benefits for people who used skills gained at the centre to help them get work.</p> <p>Possibly royalties were paid for art works used in postcards and posters.</p>	<p>Several key volunteers have been keeping the centre going through their own efforts including allowing their phones to be used for incoming calls so various agencies could be kept in touch with the local Aboriginal community</p>	<p>Volunteers unreimbursed costs.</p>
Costs and benefits to local communities and the state	<p>The CUACC provides government and local agencies with an Aboriginal organisation they can use to contact and work with the local Aboriginal community.</p> <p>The efforts of the CUACC have led to short-term partnerships with government and local agencies as well as the restoration of the reserve (once a tip).</p> <p>The AAS, by also funding the Illawarra Forum has fostered a working partnership between CUACC and other community organisations in the region.</p> <p>The bush tucker trees provide the potential for continuing projects and educational opportunities.</p> <p>The centre's artists have provided works for public art throughout the region.</p>	<p>In the past, CUACC attracted some funding, particularly directed to bush regeneration and the activities of individual artists.</p> <p>The AAS grant will bring in \$202,810 in NSW government funding over a four-year period and will provide the centre with continuity and stability likely to result in longer-term projects attracting additional funding.</p>	<p>The absence of a properly funded community centre for the Aboriginal community at Coomaditchie will have had costs in terms of opportunities lost for that community. These are likely to be also represented in adverse health and education impacts.</p>	<p>The AAS grant will cost the NSW Government \$202,810 over four years.</p> <p>There will be health, crime and other costs arising from failures of provision in past years.</p>

Project details

Project Name: Coomaditchie Aboriginal Cultural Centre
Sponsor/Auspice: Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation
Contact: 02 4274 0899
Duration: 4 years
Commencement: 2000
Funding Amount: \$202,810
Location: Illawarra Region

Case study 2. New opportunities for children with a disability and their families

'What began as a program for disabled young people and a respite for parents developed into a series of support networks that inspired new projects.'

Sports/Recreational Access for Disabled Project, Illawarra

Most children and young people in the Illawarra enter the disabilities services system through therapy or education. Often they or their parents know about the services they are enrolled in but not the full range of disability services available to them. Services for people with a disability do not always connect and some needed services are not funded by any agency. The AAS-funded project, which provided access to sport and recreation for children and teenagers with a disability aimed to provide such a needed service. It gave disabled young people new skills in sporting activities and access to sport and recreational services. It also enabled them to get involved in arts activities that children with disabilities normally find difficult to access.

The project fostered normalisation, friendships and social skills. It also had huge benefits for parents who developed ongoing support networks.

The project was funded for two years in 1998 and when the funding ran out, it was picked up by the Ageing and Disability Department (now Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care).

What began as a program for disabled young people and a respite for parents developed into a series of support networks that inspired new projects. For example, parents of disabled young people who met when they took their children to basketball ended up booking an area of the Wollongong basketball stadium for all the local team's home games. These events benefited parents, children and local organisations. They were:

- social events for the families
- a return benefit for the Illawarra Basketball Association which had provided coaches, equipment and venues for the AAS project
- events that helped older boys make friends — parents arranged for the children to visit each other and go on outings, such as to the movies
- events where parents were introduced to *RecIllawarra*, an adult disability recreation program run by the Illawarra Disability Trust, through which parents could get information about other services.

This AAS project bridged gaps between the usual funding priorities of the disability agencies and the sport and recreation agencies. It not only functioned as a link between services and a generator of parental support networks, but also set up new partnerships with local sporting associations, Theatre South, Kiama Leisure Centre and the Blackbutt Youth Centre. The program will continue to run in association with a newly AAS-funded Sibling Support Program which provides support to siblings of disabled children and young people.

Cost benefit elements

	Non-financial benefits of AAS	Financial benefits of AAS	Non-financial costs of AAS	Financial costs of AAS
Costs and benefits to the individual	<p>Respite and social networks for parents.</p> <p>Access to informal support for parents and to other disability services in the region.</p> <p>Sporting and arts skills for disabled children.</p> <p>Social skills and normalisation for disabled children.</p>	<p>Affordable access to organised recreational opportunities, including coaching and use of venues and equipment.</p>	<p>Parents had to commit the time and effort to enrol their children and take them to the program, to organise group attendance at basketball games, to foster friendships and arrange outings.</p>	<p>Any fees, fares, petrol costs, telephone costs to families associated with attending the programs and building social networks.</p>
Costs and benefits to local communities and the state	<p>Provided a vehicle for harnessing existing sporting and recreational resources in the region for the benefit of disabled children.</p> <p>Generated new networks for informal support among parents and families.</p> <p>The recreational opportunities for disabled children and the respite and support to parents are likely to result in less stress on families with benefits in terms of health and wellbeing and for government expenditure in these areas.</p> <p>Improved efficiencies in information distribution to families with disabled children.</p>	<p>The project brought \$63,076 of AAS funding into the community and provided for a part-time worker.</p> <p>Probably a saving in health costs to local and regional services.</p> <p>Potential financial benefits to children whose social and other skills learnt will later help them to find work.</p>	<p>Volunteer time and effort on the part of sporting, cultural and youth groups.</p> <p>Wear and tear on equipment and other resources.</p>	<p>Cost of the AAS grant to the NSW Government.</p> <p>Any unreimbursed costs of the Illawarra Disability Trust or participating sporting bodies.</p>

Project details

Project Name:	Sports/Recreational Access for Disabled
Sponsor/Auspice:	Recreation Illawarra
Contact:	02 422 8340
Duration:	2 years
Commencement:	1998
Funding Amount:	\$62,358
Location:	Illawarra Region

Case Study 3. Year 6 connects via the Goori Youth Website³

'Since the Goori Youth Website was established, there has been a huge increase in the children's self-esteem and their literacy skills'.

Goori Youth Website, Bowraville, Nambucca, North Coast

Michael and Aden are Year 6 boys at St Mary's School, Bowraville. Using Microsoft PowerPoint and the internet they are adding animation and sound effects to stories of the Gumbaynggirr people that they have written and typed as part of their schoolwork. These stories will go on the school's new Goori Youth Website. Michael and Aden are creating their own take home readers, just one of the many interactions which the website is helping to create between the school and the local Gumbaynggirr community and between that community and the resources of the internet.

'Looking things up for school projects' is only one use Michael and Aden have found for their new internet skills. They also like the cartoons, games and music they have found on the web.

The AAS-funded Youth Development Officer at Nambucca Shire Council applied for funding to the Commonwealth Government's Networking the Nation program to develop a website schoolchildren and the local community could use. She worked in partnership with St Mary's School, the Bowraville Local Aboriginal Land Council and the Catholic Education Office in Lismore. Networking the Nation donated \$134,5000 to the website project. This is a significant financial contribution for this isolated town where there are almost no employment opportunities. Funds have been spent on eight computers, a scanner, three digital printers, a video camera and CD burner. These are housed in an old classroom on the school site used as the project's centre. Funds have also been spent on a part-time coordinator⁴ who works at the centre the two days it is open.

The website also:

- forms a link between the school and the local Gumbaynggirr community
- has enabled the Gumbaynggirr community to learn more about the internet — community elders are recording their stories and language and reproducing photos on the website
- gives the children a valued recreational outlet in a town where there is little to do
- provides opportunities for children and adults to develop new skills including sharing access to an important community resource and confidence in learning, searching and problem solving
- puts the Aboriginal people in Bowraville in touch with cutting edge technology and the latest information and resources on the internet.

³ Recently renamed by Networking the Nation as Nambucca Indigenous Community Online Access Project.

⁴ Claire Mellon, the project's coordinator, is on leave from her position as a school principal and brings invaluable skills and sense of direction to the project.

Since the Goori Youth Website was established, truancy has virtually ceased at the school, broken school windows and other vandalism no longer occur, violence and aggression in the playground and classroom have dramatically diminished and there has been a huge increase in the children's self-esteem and their literacy skills.

Cost benefit elements

	Non-financial benefits of AAS	Financial benefits of AAS	Non-financial costs of AAS	Financial costs of AAS
Costs and benefits to the individual	<p>Literacy, problem solving, computer search and writing skills.</p> <p>Skills in the management of shared use of a community resource.</p> <p>Huge increase in self-esteem and self-confidence.</p> <p>Opportunities for individuals to create their own works and record family and cultural history/skills in video production.</p>	<p>Future work opportunities for young people acquiring job-related skills and achieving access to further education through their experience with the website.</p> <p>Individuals can save money by searching for things on the web rather than, for example, travelling to a local library.</p>	<p>The project coordinator and the project partners are now having to work to keep their skills up-to-date and on a par with those of the young people.</p> <p>Effort and persistence on the part of the children and young people.</p>	<p>Unreimbursed financial costs to part-time staff and volunteers associated with the project such as vehicle wear and tear, telephone costs.</p>
Costs and benefits to local communities and the state	<p>Improvements in children's and adult literacy.</p> <p>Lower crime rates.</p> <p>Improvements in health due to self-esteem and nutritional programs.</p> <p>Cultural benefits: the Bowraville Aboriginal community is proposing to use the website to provide local elders with opportunities to record archival material including stories, language and photos and to develop interviewing skills so that they can work with young people who have learned how to use the video camera.</p>	<p>The website project has attracted \$134,5000 to date in Commonwealth funding.</p> <p>The partners in the project have other funding applications in preparation which build on the presence of the website.</p> <p>Direct savings to the community due to reduced police attendance, fewer building repairs, less stress among staff at the school.</p>	<p>The Partnership has to maintain accountability for the project and also identify ways in which the project can develop and sustain the interest and enthusiasm of young people, continue to involve older people in the Aboriginal community and encourage the use of the centre by non-Aboriginal people in Bowraville.</p> <p>This substantial agenda will require volunteer time, persistence and leadership.</p>	<p>Cost to the Federal Government through its Networking the Nation program of \$134,500 to date.</p> <p>Cost to the NSW Government of the AAS grant, which supports the position of Youth Development Officer at Nambucca Council.</p> <p>Cost of future successful funding applications.</p>

Project Details

Project Name:	Youth Development Officer — Nambucca
Sponsor/Auspice:	Nambucca Shire Council
Contact:	02 6568 2555
Duration:	6 years, to ongoing
Commencement:	1996
Funding Amount:	\$164,886
Location:	North Coast Region

Case Study 4. Video production helps invigorate a rural community

'My involvement in the Upper Hunter Arts Development Program has been my lifeline. It has given me a sense of involvement in the community and helped my own artistic expression.'

Mark, Arts Development Officer, Upper Hunter Arts Development Program

When Mark moved to the Upper Hunter in the mid-1990s, he already had a background in video, film and television from his work in Sydney. Soon after arriving he was asked to take the voluntary position of Promotions and Sponsorship Officer for the Festival of the Fleeces, which he did for one year. His involvement in the festival, for which he produced a promotional video, introduced him to the Upper Hunter Arts Development Program funded by the AAS. Through the program Mark was able to utilise his video production skills to contribute to several program activities including:

- tutoring young people in video production
- working with young people to produce a 10-minute video
- producing a promotional video for the Upper Hunter Arts Development Program
- participating in the development of a multimedia theatrical performance piece. This theatrical piece examined the decline of rural communities, and its performance at the Festival in June 2000 included local children in key roles. Students at a local TAFE college have since used the video as part of an adult education program.

As a result of these experiences, Mark has identified new opportunities for community arts projects involving video production. With a local community-based committee, he has developed a proposal for a Suicide and Depression Prevention Video for which the committee is currently seeking funding from the AAS and the Casino Community Benefit Fund. In addition, he has sought funding from the Australia Council for the production of a live concert, combining live and pre-recorded video and theatre, using local artists and young people, to be performed at the opening of a reconciliation mural commissioned by Muswellbrook Shire Council.

Mark believes that the arts sustain community life in rural areas. 'I am very concerned with the arts, and the arts in rural communities has both personal and social value to me. I want to increase the level of arts activity in the local community to generate interest and support from funding bodies and businesses in the region.'

Mark's videos have inspired other works and are records of arts events in the community. They also enable the local community to showcase its cultural products and articulate its need for support. Local community organisations are now more aware of the role videos can play in community development and are starting to develop them themselves. Recently Muswellbrook Shire Council engaged Mark to video their drug action forum.

Cost benefit elements

	Non-financial benefits of AAS	Financial benefits of AAS	Non-financial costs of AAS	Financial costs of AAS
Costs and benefits to the individual	<p>For Mark: sense of involvement in and contribution to the cultural life of the community and the opportunity to create works with local artists and young people.</p> <p>Benefits to the young people involved in video production including skills development, opportunity for creative expression, increased self-esteem.</p>	<p>Long-term possibility of financial benefits arising from increased use of video technology and the skills development of local young people.</p> <p>Increased exposure of Mark's work in community organisations may flow on to his video production business in the longer term.</p>	<p>Sustained effort on the part of individuals required to identify and obtain the funding for video projects.</p> <p>Participation in fund raising efforts.</p>	<p>Unreimbursed costs to individuals of participating in community arts projects such as transport costs, vehicle wear and tear, use of telephone, postage, items for fundraising products.</p>
Costs and benefits to local communities and the state	<p>Local community has a record of some local cultural events.</p> <p>Local community organisations have promotional videos to assist their fundraising efforts.</p> <p>Involvement in the arts has health benefits for the community.</p> <p>Community use of new media integrates community arts activities with new technology.</p> <p>New networks are established to support video initiatives and funding applications.</p>	<p>Thriving community arts program attracts other grant funds.</p> <p>Specific video projects now seeking grant funding may be successful.</p> <p>Promotional videos may assist grant applications and may encourage greater social investment by local and regional businesses.</p> <p>Community wellbeing in rural areas creates savings in health costs.</p>	<p>Leadership by community organisations.</p> <p>Establishment of new community committees and networks requires community effort.</p> <p>Grant applications require coordination of contributions from individual stakeholders as well as local councils and other agencies.</p>	<p>Cost of grant funding by the AAS and other funding bodies.</p> <p>Costs born by sponsoring agencies such as councils, such as costs of marketing, operational costs in support of festival activities.</p>

Project Details

Project Name:	Arts Development Officer
Sponsor/Auspice:	Murrurundi Shire Council
Contact:	02 6546 6205
Duration:	2 years
Commencement:	1998
Funding Amount:	\$62,286
Location:	Hunter Region

Case Study 5. Norla — life change: volunteering and new options

'It felt wonderful that all these people were looking for someone like me; it was terrific suddenly to have a choice'.

Norla, Volunteer, Central Coast Volunteer Referral Agency

AAS's grant to the Central Coast Volunteer Referral Agency Inc funds an outreach service which has helped many people, including Norla.

Norla gave up her job in Sydney when she moved to San Remo when her husband retired three years ago. At first she enjoyed the new house and was happy to have some time not working. As well, she was confident that when she was ready she would be able to find work on the Central Coast.

After about six months, when she started to apply for jobs, she discovered that finding work was not going to be easy. Norla received many rejection slips and frequently got no reply to her job applications. The only job she was offered was for five hours a week in Sydney and she did not accept this position because it would have required four hours travel to do the five hours of work.

As time went by, Norla felt that looking for work was hopeless. She felt bored and depressed and had nothing to do all day. She had not met anyone in the local area, she stopped going for daily walks and spent most of her time watching television. She put on a lot of weight.

Norla says 'When I moved to San Remo I thought I would be able to cope. I didn't realise the effect that not being able to work would have on me. But after about two years of this I realised that for my own sake I had to get out and do something.'

In February 2001, Norla saw the Central Coast Volunteer Referral Agency's advertisement in the local paper calling for volunteers. 'I thought about it for 3-4 weeks before I rang up.' Norla chose to work two days a week as a volunteer office worker at the San Remo Neighbourhood Centre. She can walk to work, which is important as she does not drive. At the centre, Norla answers telephones and inquiries, provides information and refers people to a wide range of services. She also makes bookings for counselling services at the centre (grief, personal and financial counselling), takes bookings for the after school care services and the playgroup and refers people looking for long day care.

In just four months, Norla says 'I've come alive again. It's been the best thing I've ever done. The day goes really quickly now and it's given me back my confidence in me.' Norla has met a lot of people in her area in the last four months and is starting to get to know other volunteers at the centre. She also feels that she now has an understanding of the problems facing people on low incomes. 'I get a lot of satisfaction from being able to help people and make a difference.' Norla has completed a computing course at TAFE in the first term of the year and has now enrolled to do a three-day Tax Help Course with the Australian Taxation Office so she can help people on low incomes complete their tax returns.

Cost benefit elements

	Non-financial benefits of AAS	Financial benefits of AAS	Non-financial costs of AAS	Financial costs of AAS
Costs and benefits to the individual	For Norla: increased self-esteem improved health new skills more energy a sense of optimism new opportunities to meet people and make friends.	Potential savings in health costs.	Effort and determination to acquire new skills and to sustain commitment to voluntary work.	Costs associated with attending courses and acquiring new skills.
Costs and benefits to local communities and the state	<p>Volunteer time keeps the San Remo neighbourhood centre open for more hours so it can provide a service to more people.</p> <p>The volunteers at the centre form a local network with the potential to take on new activities for the area.</p> <p>The Central Coast Volunteer Referral Agency comprises a larger network giving many local residents opportunities to contribute to social enterprises in their area and providing a wide range of organisations with access to a volunteer workforce.</p> <p>These networks have the potential to generate social capital on the Central Coast.</p>	<p>Norla's volunteer work contributes some \$7,800 per annum to Wyong Council's costs in managing the San Remo Neighbourhood Centre (10 hours a week @\$15 per hour).</p> <p>When Norla has qualified as a Tax Helper, her work will have a financial benefit to the ATO — both in terms of tax revenue received and in terms of the value of her time.</p> <p>Social capital benefits to the Central Coast will also have financial benefits such as improved health outcomes in the local population.</p> <p>The outreach service provides financial benefits to many organisations who are assisted by unpaid/volunteer workers.</p>	Leadership on the part of the Central Coast Volunteer Referral Agency and other key agencies such as the local council and activities undertaken to recognise the contribution of volunteers.	AAS's grant to the Central Coast Volunteer Referral Agency Inc funds the outreach service provided by that agency.

Project Details

Project Name:	Staff member for Community Outreach Volunteer Referral Program
Sponsor/Auspice:	Central Coast Referral Agency Inc
Contact:	4329 7177
Duration:	6 years
Commencement:	1996
Funding Amount:	\$143,602
Location:	Central Coast Region

Case Study 6. Support, advice and new friends for new parents

'I don't know what my life would have been like without the Mums and Bubs group. All the topics were relevant and helpful and the group gave me a first point of contact for any queries about my son's health or wellbeing.'

Sue, new mother, Camden, Macarthur

AAS funded a Children's Services Development Worker sponsored by the Camden Area Community Resource Centre for two years in 1998. The worker advised and supported new parents and advised them of services available to help them. Sue was relatively new to the Mount Annan area when her son was born at Camden Hospital. Sue was given a leaflet about the Mums and Bubs group run by the worker in the postnatal ward at the hospital and decided to participate.

The Mums and Bubs group had about 20 mothers with new babies and met for eight weeks, for two hours a week. The group had presentations from a community nurse on baby care and discussed their experiences. Sue says 'I don't know what my life would have been like without the Mums and Bubs group. All the topics were relevant and helpful and the group gave me a first point of contact for any queries about my son's health or wellbeing.'

Sue feels that without this point of contact she would have had to make many more calls to the Tresillian Family Care Centre. During her son's first year she rang the Tresillian Family Care Centre five times but estimates that without advice and support from the Mums and Bubs group, she might have rung them once every two or three weeks.

The Children's Services Development Worker encouraged members of the group to form a playgroup, including arranging for a representative of the Playgroup Association to help them get started. About 70% of Sue's Mums and Bubs group formed the playgroup. When their children became toddlers, the worker contacted them again and invited them to attend a six-week Toddler Workshop. Sue found this second series of meetings very helpful.

Sue identified the following individual benefits from the above initiatives:

- access to relevant and timely information about child care and development issues, including access to books and videos through the local library
- access to a source of referral to other services and facilities in the area such as the Jumbunna Toy Library and Kindigym
- development of strong friendships with other mothers in the area who also provided support and acted as a sounding board for child care issues
- a sense of reassurance about her son's development from being able to compare his level of development with other children's

- a sense of reassurance from being able to see that other mothers were going through the same things and knowing that she could be put in touch with services should she need them.

'If I hadn't known about these groups, I can't imagine how I would have coped. It's been a lifeline.'

The initiatives of the Children's Support Officer have resulted in the formation of a formal network of mothers through the establishment of the playgroup. The mothers' group manages the playgroup, purchases toys for the children and provides support and referral services to the community.

Cost benefit elements

	Non-financial benefits of AAS	Financial benefits of AAS	Non-financial costs of AAS	Financial costs of AAS
Costs and benefits to the individual	Support and reassurance. Skills development. Awareness of resources available.	Fewer visits to the doctor.	None identified.	Membership fees and contributions to playgroup.
Costs and benefits to local communities and the state	Networks of mothers in Mt Annan area providing support to each other, pooling resources and acting as informal referral networks. Benefits in terms of physical and emotional health for mothers and babies. Longer-term benefits to the community arising from good parenting practices — e.g. better educational outcomes.	Savings to Tresillian Family Care Centre phone inquiry service. Savings to health and community services agencies' budgets arising from better parenting and reduced isolation of mothers.*	None identified.	Cost of Children's Services Development Worker position (AAS grant amount). Cost to various agencies of providing information and education support to mums and bubs and toddlers groups and to playgroups (minor costs because additional staff not required to carry out this function).

* extrapolating from Sue's estimate of calls not made this could have resulted in (140 women x 12 calls not made) 1,680 fewer calls to Tresillian Family Care Centre during the two years of the project.

Project Details

Project Name:	Children's Services Development Worker
Sponsor/Auspice:	Camden Area Community Resource Centre
Contact:	02 4647 1283
Duration:	2 years
Commencement:	1998
Funding Amount:	\$36,256
Location:	Macarthur Region

Case Study 7. From out of sight to visible — achievements of the Aboriginal Liaison Committee

'Previously we didn't have a voice and now we have a voice. Previously we felt shut out of the council, and people only paid lip service to Aboriginal issues, but now the presence of Koori people in the community is acknowledged.'

Koori member of the Aboriginal Liaison Committee, Kempsey, North Coast

Kempsey has the largest Aboriginal community outside Sydney and recorded the highest 'No' vote in the 1967 referendum on Aboriginal citizenship. The Aboriginal Liaison Committee was one of the first initiatives of the Aboriginal Liaison Officer, who was appointed to Kempsey Council in 1997 and financed for 6 years by the AAS.

The committee's achievements have changed the position of Aboriginal people in the local community from out-of-sight to very visible. 'Previously we didn't have a voice', says one Koori member of the committee 'and now we have a voice. 'Previously we felt shut out of the council, and people only paid lip service to Aboriginal issues, but now the presence of Koori people in the community is acknowledged.'

The committee comprises one representative of each of 12 major Aboriginal organisations in the shire, plus one representative of each of 5 major Aboriginal communities in the area. These 17 people sit with 3 councillors, 4 senior staff members (7 non-Aboriginal people) and the Aboriginal Liaison Officer.

The committee is able to cite an impressive list of achievements which have changed the place of Aboriginal people in the community. These achievements include:

- Kempsey Council's Statement of Commitment to the Aboriginal community
- the council's apology to the stolen generation
- flying the Aboriginal flag outside the civic centre and in the council chamber
- erecting a monument to the stolen generation in Kempsey Mall
- including the welcome to the land of the Dunghatti people at local events and ceremonies such as the Local Government State Conference held in Kempsey in 2000 at which there were Koori speakers and a focus on Aboriginal culture through dances and bush tucker
- the council's decision to erect signs on the highway, at the airport and at the railway station welcoming people to the Shire and to the land of the Dunghatti people
- having three Aboriginal people on the team which carried the Olympic flame through Kempsey in 2000. 'I've never seen so many Aboriginal people at a function in town and those who didn't come to town lined the highway. They were proud to be Koori', says one committee member.

The work done by this committee has been assessed as follows:

- 'It's wonderful.'
- 'Things have really looked up.'
- 'Relations within the Kempsey community have improved vastly.'

The committee's minutes and recommendations go to Kempsey Council which works with the Koori community. The next step, say the Koori members, will be to have an Aboriginal person elected to the council.

Cost benefit elements

	Non-financial benefits of AAS	Financial benefits of AAS	Non-financial costs of AAS	Financial costs of AAS
Costs and benefits to the individual	<p>Strong sense of inclusion and of being heard by members of the Aboriginal Liaison Committee.</p> <p>More self-esteem in the community through initiatives that recognise Aboriginal people as the original owners of the land in the area and acknowledge their experiences at the hands of settlers.</p>	<p>None specifically identified, however, increased self-esteem can be expected to result in improved education and employment outcomes for the Aboriginal communities in Kempsey.</p>	<p>Councillors and senior staff have had to break new ground with this initiative and give it their personal commitment and attention.</p>	<p>Any unreimbursed costs to members of the committee such as telephone, vehicle wear and tear.</p>
Costs and benefits to local communities and the state	<p>The council has a well regarded partnership with the Dughatti people, which can form the basis for both new initiatives and funding applications.</p> <p>The recognition of the contribution of Aboriginal people to community affairs sets the scene for much better social, educational and health impacts of current and future programs and projects targeted at both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.</p>	<p>AAS Funding for the Aboriginal Liaison Officer position.</p> <p>A better funding environment is likely to result in more success with funding applications</p>	<p>The council has contributed the effort and commitment needed to show leadership in its relationship with the Aboriginal community.</p>	<p>Costs of the AAS grant to the NSW Government.</p> <p>Costs to the council of implementing some unfunded initiatives such as purchase of flags.</p>

Project Details

Project Name:	Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer
Sponsor/Auspice:	Kempsey Shire Aboriginal Liaison Committee
Contact:	02 6562 6077
Duration:	6 years to ongoing
Commencement:	1997
Funding Amount:	\$224,419
Location:	North Coast Region

Case Study 8. Warhammer, camps and homework

'Coming here has changed my attitude towards getting along with people and I've learned to respect other people's opinions.'

Jessica, Coolaburoo Neighbourhood Centre, Bankstown, Sydney

Mark is the project officer for the AAS-funded South Bankstown Youth Project. He is responsible for coordinating outreach youth programs and developing and implementing recreational, social, educational and support programs for youth in the South Bankstown area in conjunction with other youth services. David and Jessica (names changed for privacy purposes) are two of the 50 children that Mark meets each week at the Coolaburoo Neighbourhood Centre in South Bankstown.

The centre is where David keeps in touch with his friends now he has left school to be a carpenter's apprentice at his dad's business. David also got help with homework and with the decision to leave school and start an apprenticeship. 'Mark helped me with my attitude to school and he also helped me use the computer to write out my resumé.' David regularly attends the centre's youth programs. 'I try to go on all the programs, but I especially like the camps. On one camp we did a Commando Course and the Mud Valley Challenge.'

For Jessica coming to the centre has helped her deal with bullying at school. She received counselling from Mark who also accompanied her to court to obtain an AVO against the bullies. She is still scared sometimes, but feels much more able to deal with her fear. She also attends the centre because she likes 'meeting new people' and 'it's something to do, better than hanging around on the street'. Before she started coming to the centre she spent a lot of time at home alone and was often bored.

Jessica says that she likes all the activities that are available at the centre. She regularly gets help with homework on Tuesdays, which is homework day. But she also likes playing Warhammer and going on excursions. 'They make it enjoyable and so everyone joins in. They base it around what we want to do.'

David and Jessica agree that they 'have learned new stuff by meeting new people.' Jessica says 'coming here has changed my attitude towards getting along with people and I've learned to respect other people's opinions'. And David adds 'If there was no program there'd be nothing else to do, I might get into mischief and I'd be feeling left out. This way I go home in a better mood and get on with my parents better.'

David and Jessica attend the centre, or its activities, from Tuesday to Friday from 4.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

Mark has also obtained funding including \$5,000 from Bankstown Council for:

- a street art video
- excursions
- a newsletter prepared by the children which promotes the centre's activities
- a skating group.

The above are opportunities for the children to enjoy themselves and learn skills. For example, the \$5,000 excursion budget is managed by a group of children who plan, budget for and evaluate the excursions.

Mark sums it up: 'What we provide is one-to-one attention and loads of ways in which kids can improve their skills, especially their interpersonal skills. What we see as a result is improved attitudes, grades and self-esteem.'

Cost benefit elements

	Non-financial benefits of AAS	Financial benefits of AAS	Non-financial costs of AAS	Financial costs of AAS
Costs and benefits to the individual	<p>Feelings of inclusion and improved self-esteem.</p> <p>Help with homework; better grades at school; better transition to work.</p> <p>Interpersonal skills and team skills.</p> <p>Planning, budgeting, evaluation and accounting skills.</p> <p>Other skills such as cooking, sports.</p> <p>One-to-one counselling and referral when needed.</p> <p>Reassurance for parents/better atmosphere at home.</p>	<p>Access to affordable activities and outings.</p> <p>Access to free counselling and support services.</p>	<p>Unpaid overtime by workers, for example, when workers attend weekend excursions.</p>	<p>Any costs to young people of attending the centre or its activities, such as bus fares.</p> <p>Any unreimbursed costs accrued by workers such as vehicle wear and tear.</p>
Costs and benefits to local communities and the state	<p>In-kind support from local schools, sports and community organisations.</p> <p>Integration of youth services into other local services which increases the range of services and activities available to young people, strengthens the organisational infrastructure supporting these activities and ensures they are well-connected with mainstream services.</p>	<p>South Bankstown community benefits from \$175,652.00 in AAS grant funding over a 4-year period. Other grants received, eg \$5,000 from Bankstown City Council.</p> <p>Savings to the community and government agencies from improved education, employment and health outcomes and reductions in crime.</p>	<p>Costs of in-kind support to local schools and community organisations.</p>	<p>\$175,652 over 4 years cost to the NSW Government.</p> <p>One-off grant costs eg \$5,000 donated by Bankstown Council.</p>

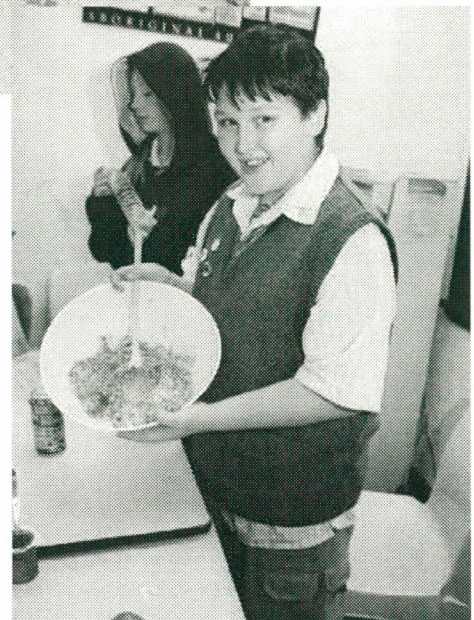
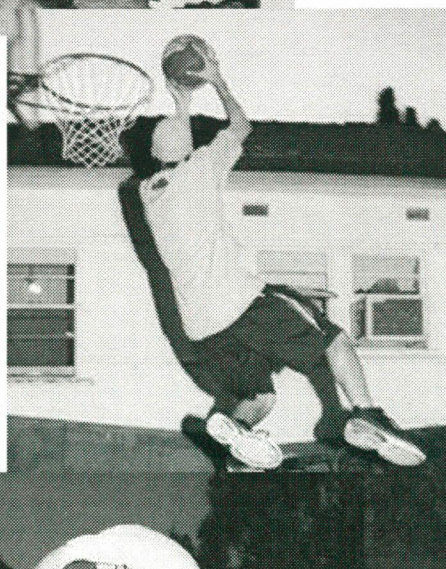
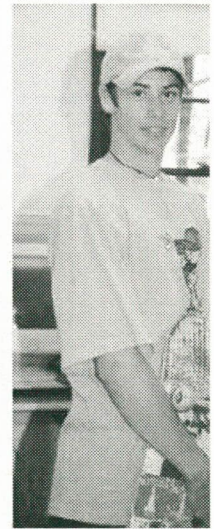
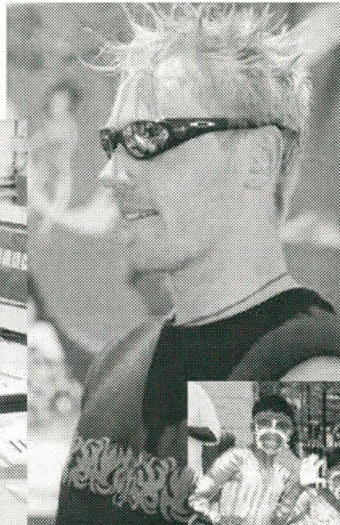
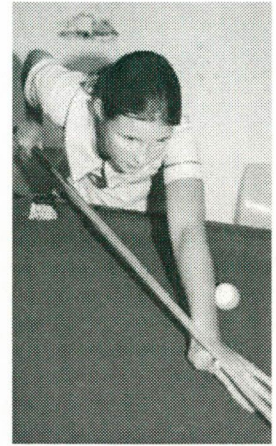
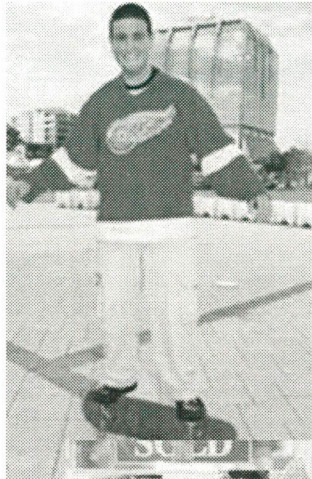
Cost benefit elements continued...

	Non-financial benefits of AAS	Financial benefits of AAS	Non-financial costs of AAS	Financial costs of AAS
Costs and benefits to local communities and the state	Fewer kids hanging about on the streets with nothing to do. Better educational outcomes. Likely long-term benefits in terms of reduced graffiti, vandalism, and street crime and increased sense of community safety.			

Project Details

Project Name: South Bankstown Youth Projects Officer
Sponsor/Auspice: Coolaburoo Neighbourhood Centre Inc.
Contact: 02 9774 2426
Duration: 4 Years
Commencement: 1998
Funding Amount: \$216,752
Location: Western Sydney Region

Part 3. Detailed benefit-cost analysis of the South Bankstown Youth Project



South Bankstown Youth Project

Aim of this study

As part of this benefit-cost analysis, PlanningNSW wished to determine if it was possible to provide some quantification of the benefits and costs resulting from the AAS. South Bankstown Youth Project, auspiced by Coolaburoo Neighbourhood Centre, was selected for a more detailed study as it provided a range of benefits for assessment.

Target of project

The South Bankstown Youth Project targets young people in the south ward of Bankstown LGA. This AAS-funded project provides a range of activities including a drop-in centre, counselling services, recreational activities, youth agency networking, lifestyle education and support to students experiencing difficulties with school work.

Funding

AAS funding totalling \$230,452 was provided to this project over a four-year period in 1998. In addition to these funds, the project attracted \$28,532 from the Bankstown City Council Community Grants Scheme, \$1,651 from ArtStart, Youth and Skills Festival, and \$500 from the Department of Health.

In-kind support is provided through food donations from local retail outlets. This has been estimated at \$100 per week.

Other costs are travel costs for participants of getting to and from the centre and its activities, and unreimbursed workers' expenses.

For this assessment it has been assumed each participant spends \$4 in travel costs and the workers contribute \$200 per week in unreimbursed expenses.

Influence of project

The project has served 111 young people on a regular basis (2–3 times per week) since it began in 1998. Currently, the project helps 72 young people 2–3 times per week and 50 others on a less regular basis.

Participants are from the following backgrounds:

- Arabian
- Vietnamese
- Lebanese
- Italian
- Aboriginal
- Pacific Island
- South American
- Assyrian
- Polish
- Anglo-Saxon.

Based on the take-up of services over the four-year funding life of the project, about 250 young people may be influenced by the centre's work. The beneficial influences are likely to continue past this time as the young people mature.

Identified benefits

The identified benefits of this program include:

- an increase in the participants' confidence and self-worth
- increased health standards
- better educational outcomes
- increased employment opportunities
- a breakdown of the cultural barriers between different ethnic groups
- an increase in participation in mainstream service and support activities through referral.

Social planners have indicated that longer-term benefits will include reductions in crimes such as vandalism, graffiti and street crime, and an increased sense of community safety.

As a direct result of the youth population benefiting from this project, other members of the community benefit as well.

Outcomes

The outcomes of these benefits will yield community economic benefits in several areas including:

- education and employment
- health
- justice.

Assessment of benefits

Education and employment

'One of the major objectives of schooling is to provide students with employment-related skills, career options and skills for further education and training.' (Productivity Commission: <http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/2001/prefaceb.pdf>)

Education is a major area of government expenditure and activity. Total operating expenses for all Australian governments in 1998–99 were approximately \$31.5 billion, which is equivalent to 5.3 percent of gross domestic product. The states and territories (including local governments) provided \$21.2 billion of this total. The Commonwealth Government provided \$11.5 billion, including \$8.8 billion comprising grants to other levels of government, including to universities. Education purpose data are not available from NSW due to data quality concerns. (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1996, *Aspects of Literacy: Assessed Skill Levels, Australia 1996*, cat. no. 4228.0, Canberra. Australian Bureau of Statistics 2000a, *Government Finance Statistics, Education, 1998-99*. cat. no. 5518.048.001, Canberra.)

Benefits

By some members of the South Bankstown youth community being better able to take advantage of the educational opportunities available, unemployment in the area may be reduced, leading to benefits from:

- increased employment and possibly greater productivity due to improved social and cultural interaction, an enhanced sense of wellbeing, confidence and self-worth
- reduced unemployment costs to the community.

Since the project commenced it has helped 20 young people to find work with 15 still employed. Given that the project funding being considered in this study will expire in 2002 there is potential for the program to help another 5–10 young people to obtain work.

For this assessment it is assumed the jobs were obtained as follows:

Year	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
No. Jobs	5	10	15	20	27

A review of the 1996 census demographic profile of Bankstown indicates the median individual weekly income was \$266. This takes into account all paid work across all industries and casual, part-time and full-time categories.

For this assessment it is assumed young people who obtained employment earned \$200 per week on average. This would generate about \$5,400 per week in total. The potential wages may be higher due to increased productivity.

Reduced unemployment costs potentially lessen the burden on the community to contribute to the federally-funded welfare net.

Young people who meet certain criteria may qualify for a youth allowance if they are aged between 16–20 and are looking for full-time work. Subject to an income test and an asset test, NewStart payments range from \$165 to \$394 per fortnight. Other miscellaneous allowances are also available, but have not been included in this assessment.

For the unemployed aged 21 and over NewStart Allowances range between \$365 and \$394 per fortnight. Other miscellaneous allowances are also available.

By these young people obtaining work as a result of the AAS, community savings of over \$4,200 per week are possible.

Health

Total expenditure (recurrent and capital) on health care services in Australia was \$50.2 billion in 1998–99. This was equivalent to 8.5 percent of gross domestic product, up from 7.5 percent in 1989–90. This implies that health care expenditure grew faster than the economy over the past decade. (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Health Expenditure Bulletin No. 16: Australia's Health Services Expenditure to 1998-99*, AIHW, Canberra.)

Difficulty in assessing benefits in monetary terms

In cost-benefit analysis all the costs and the benefits are expressed in monetary terms. This makes cost-benefit a useful tool for determining whether a program or project is worth undertaking, since both benefits and costs are expressed in the same units (money). It is also useful for comparing programs with different outcomes.

However, many costs and benefits, particularly the value of human life, are difficult to evaluate in monetary terms. As a result *cost-effectiveness analysis* which expresses benefits in terms of health effects (such as cancers detected, changes in blood pressure, life years saved) rather than in monetary terms is often used to evaluate health benefits.

Cost-utility analysis is a more recent technique in health program evaluation which overcomes the problem of trying to assess health effects in monetary terms (as in benefit-cost analysis) and of measuring life years gained irrespective of their quality (as in cost-effectiveness analysis). The outcome of the program is measured by the improvement in the quality of life, usually measured as healthy year equivalents, quality-adjusted life years (QALYs), or 'well years'.

Neither cost-effectiveness analysis nor cost-utility analysis gives a discrete answer as to whether a program is worth undertaking since net benefits cannot be calculated.

The health benefits potentially accruing from the South Bankstown Youth Program are both *curative*, that is, they can help people recover from illnesses such as alcohol and drug abuse, and *preventative*, that is, they can prevent illnesses such as alcohol and drug abuse from occurring by educating people about nutrition and teaching them personal development and living skills.

The effects of prevention usually take place a long time after costs are incurred, whereas in curative care the two usually coincide. This compounds the lack of monetary data in assessing the benefits from this project.

Benefits

A search of the National Health and Medical Research Council website (<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/>) and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare website (<http://www.aihw.gov.au/>) yielded a wealth of data on many areas of health. This included qualitative data such as:

- 'Young adults aged 15–24 years with low incomes were 50–60% more likely to report fair or poor health than young adults in high-income families. They also reported 15–20% more days of reduced activity due to health problems, and were much more likely to report handicap or disability. Chronic conditions reported much more often by young adults with low incomes included mental retardation and developmental delay, mental disorders, epilepsy and deafness'
- 'Unemployed young men and women aged 15–24 years were 64% and 82% more likely to report fair or poor health than employed young men and women respectively. They also reported more serious chronic illnesses, were twice as likely to be disabled or handicapped, and 40% more likely to report symptoms of psychological distress. Unemployed young women were 60% more likely to be overweight or obese and 29% more likely to be a smoker than employed young women.'
(<http://www.aihw.gov.au/inet/publications/health/ah96/ah96-c01.html>)

However, no specific data was identified that would assist in assessing the economic benefits of better health as a result of the South Bankstown Youth Project.

Discussions with staff of Federal and State health agencies also yielded no specific data for use in this assessment.

However, the qualitative data indicates direct and indirect links between employment and better living standards and generally better health.

To give an indication of the scale of benefits possible for this assessment it is assumed the young people influenced by the South Bankstown Youth Project require only 95% of the average per capita expenditure on health care services in the future.

This estimate amounts to a saving to the community of almost \$35,000 per annum.

Justice

According to the Productivity Commission's *Report on Government Services 2000*, the total government expenditure on justice in 1998–99 was approximately \$6 billion. Since 1994–95, government expenditure on justice has increased at a real average annual growth rate of 5.4%.

The largest component of the Australian justice system was police services, which accounted for approximately 66% of the total justice-related expenditure covered by the report. Corrective services accounted for a further 20%, and court administration accounted for the remaining 14%.

In NSW, the per capital expenditure on justice in 1999–2000 was:

Police	\$217
Court Admin.	\$ 37
Corrective Services	<u>\$ 79</u>
Total	\$333

(<http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/2001/prefaced.pdf>)

It must be noted that crimes recorded by the police do not reflect the true level of crime in Australia. Crime and safety surveys in Australia and crime victims' surveys from overseas show that the victims report only about 40% of crimes to the police. (Ref http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/facts/2000/facts_and_figures_2000.pdf)

Discussions with the Bankstown Police Station Youth Liaison Officer (Constable Green) and a policewoman at Revesby Police Station (Constable Korneluk) determined that the police are aware of the South Bankstown Youth Project and its aims and objectives.

However, neither constable was willing to estimate the quantum of the benefits of the project, if any. Constable Green indicated the Coolaburoo Neighbourhood Centre tried to assist young people but she could not say whether it was effective.

Benefits

No data could assist in determining the economic benefits to the community from the potential for the South Bankstown Youth Program to reduce the cost of crime in the area.

The influence of the program extends across much of Bankstown, Revesby, Picnic Point and surrounding areas. To give an indication of the scale of benefits possible for this assessment it is assumed the Bankstown SLA (Statistical Local Area) community (pop. 157,000 in 1996) have a minute savings in the average per capita cost of justice as a result of the services of the project.

With an allowance of a 0.1% reduction in the cost across the Bankstown population, savings would be \$52,000 per annum.

Timing of benefits

The accrual of benefits would have commenced some time after the setting up of the project, as participation numbers grew and the effects of the program started to result in the outcomes indicated above.

This analysis looks at the four-year funding of the project, so some assumptions have had to be made about the longevity of the benefits after this period.

It has been assumed that with a cessation of AAS grant funds the program would cease but the effects would continue into the future as a result of the changed behaviour patterns of the participants. Whether the benefits start to diminish over time needs to be considered.

For analysis purposes the period to 2007, or 10 years from the commencement of the project, has been the basis for assessment.

Benefit-cost analysis

Benefit-cost analysis generally considers the impacts of a program or project against the status quo. For this assessment two assessments have been made:

- without AAS funding for the South Bankstown Youth Project
- with AAS funding for the South Bankstown Youth Project.

Under the status quo, or 'without funding' scenario, the community has welfare costs for several unemployed young people (that through the project are now employed), but gains no benefits.

Under the 'with funding' option, the costs are the program grants, the costs of travel by the participants and any unreimbursed expenses by workers. Benefits include the wages generated by the now employed young people, and some savings on health and justice costs.

A comparison between the two scenarios shows the incremental difference between them.

Conclusions of benefit-cost analysis

This assessment indicates that the benefits accruing to the community as a result of AAS funding of the South Bankstown Youth Project significantly outweigh the costs.

Based on the above assumptions, this assessment indicates that from a ten-year assessment period from 1998–99 to 2007–08, the 'with funding' scenario — AAS funds of \$230,452 over 4 years — provides an incremental net benefit of \$1.65 million to the community, when compared to the 'no AAS funding' scenario.

This net benefit of \$1.65 million, when assessed as a return on government funds invested, provides a \$7.19 return to the community for each dollar of AAS funds provided.

This assessment would benefit from a roundtable debate between key stakeholders to review the assumptions, particularly those to do with the potential health and justice benefits and the longevity of any benefits.

South Bankstown Youth Project — Benefit-cost analysis

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Net Present Value @ 10% discount rate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Scenario 1: Without the AAS

Costs

Unemployment benefits	37,804	75,608	113,412	151,216	204,142	204,142	204,142	204,142	204,142	204,142
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Benefits

Nil

Net Benefit (Cost)

without AAS Project	(892,604)	(37,804)	(75,608)	(113,412)	(151,216)	(204,142)	(204,142)	(204,142)	(204,142)	(204,142)
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Scenario 2: With the AAS — South Bankstown Youth Project

Costs

Program funding	57,613	57,613	57,613	57,613						
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Other grants	28,532	1,651	500							
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Travel costs of participants	10,400	20,800	31,200	41,600	52,000	52,000	52,000	52,000	52,000	52,000
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Unreimbursed costs accrued by workers	10,400	10,400	10,400	10,400	10,400	10,400	10,400	10,400	10,400	10,400
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Donated food	5,200	5,200	5,200	5,200	5,200	5,200	5,200	5,200	5,200	5,200
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Total costs	83,613	122,545	106,064	115,313	67,600	67,600	67,600	67,600	67,600	67,600
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Benefits

Wages	39,000	78,000	117,000	156,000	210,600	210,600	210,600	210,600	210,600	210,600
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Health cost savings	6,972	13,944	20,917	27,889	34,861	34,861	34,861	34,861	34,861	34,861
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Justice cost savings	5,268	15,805	26,342	42,147	52,683	52,683	52,683	52,683	52,683	52,683
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Total benefits	51,241	107,749	164,258	226,036	298,145	298,145	298,145	298,145	298,145	298,145
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Net Benefit (Cost)

with AAS Project	763,492	(32,372)	(14,796)	58,194	110,723	230,545	230,545	230,545	230,545	230,545
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Incremental benefits (costs) arising from the AAS Project

	1,656,096	5,432	60,812	171,606	261,939	434,686	434,686	434,686	434,686	434,686
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South Bankstown Youth Project — Data assumptions

		1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
Costs						
No. Jobs		5	10	15	20	27
Unemployment benefits						
Assume						
Youth Allow.	40%	165	330	660	990	1,320
	10%	394	197	394	591	1,064
Newstart	40%	365	730	1,460	2,190	3,942
	10%	394	197	394	591	1,064
Total per fortnight		1,454	2,908	4,362	5,816	7,852
Total per week		727	1,454	2,181	2,908	3,926
No. Young People — cumulative		50	100	150	200	250
Travel costs	\$4 per week for all participants	10,400	20,800	31,200	41,600	52,000
Un-reimbursed costs accrued by workers	@ \$200 per week	10,400	10,400	10,400	10,400	10,400
Donated food	100 per week	5,200	5,200	5,200	5,200	5,200
Education and Employment						
Wages per week		150	750	1,500	2,250	4,050
Health						
Cost	50,200,000,000					
Population	18,000,000					
Per Capita	2,789					
	5%	139				
No. Young People — cumulative		50	100	150	200	250
Possible savings (from curative and preventative actions)		6,972	13,944	20,917	27,889	34,861
Justice						
Bankstown SLA (96)		157,735	157,735	157,735	157,735	157,735
NSW per capita	334	0.01%	0.03%	0.05%	0.08%	0.10%
Possible savings		5,268	15,805	26,342	42,147	52,683