



# Projections

Issue No 2, August 2001

Projection is the quarterly newsletter of **Project i**.

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/projecti>

**Project i** is one of the first, long-term studies ever conducted in Australia with homeless young people. It will be tracking the path of 240 newly homeless young people, aged between 12 and 20, over three years. **We are interested in finding out how their pathways** into and out of homelessness **are effected by service delivery**, and will interview them up to eight times over three years. One-off interviews will also be conducted with 600 longer-term homeless young people. We hope that this research will inform policy and provide valuable information on the best way to deliver services to young people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness. It is funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, and conducted by the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society at La Trobe University, in partnership with the Center for Community Health at the University of California, Los Angeles. **Project i** is also conducting surveys with service providers and workers within the homeless sector. It will review local, state and federal government policies that impact upon homeless young people. Ultimately, the Melbourne and Los Angeles studies will make comparisons between different models of service delivery in the two cities.

As we mentioned in the last newsletter, we have found the continuing support of agencies and services working with homeless young people (HYP) to be extremely encouraging and essential to the research. The greatest challenge to the research continues to be the number of 'newly' homeless young people we have been able to interview so far. While the number of interviews we have conducted with 'newly' HYP has been steadily rising we are still seeking the active collaboration of services/agencies to assist us to increase the amount of young people who are being referred to us.

**Project i's criteria for 'newly' homeless young people is out of home from 2 days to 6 months.**

This definition is designed to include HYP who are staying in refuges and rooming houses and those who are 'couch surfing' and moving around their extended family and friends. As of the 30th August, Project i has conducted 275 interviews—76 with newly HYP and 199 with experienced HYP.

### ***Project i Community Reports and Papers***

The first **Project i** community report, *Service Providers Broadsheet 1* is at the printers and will be released in mid September. This broadsheet reports on three sections from the Service Providers Survey (completed by workers in the sector in June 2000); the general workforce information section, the section on the workforce within services and the section on the sources of knowledge that underpin individual's work with homeless young people.

Two more broadsheets are planned for this year. One will report on the types of services provided to homeless young people, and how effectively workers feel these services are delivered. The other will report on what workers believe to be the most important reasons why young people leave home. These reasons will be compared to those that young people themselves see as being most important.

The research team has finished writing the first academic paper on the Service Providers Survey. This paper describes the workforce of service providers, the services provided to homeless young people and the personal and structural factors that impinge on service delivery. It was submitted for publication in late August. The next academic paper will be written on the reasons why young people leave home. The paper will be based on the HYP and service providers quantitative surveys. A further paper, based on the five-minute (qualitative) speech sample that follows the HYP's quantitative interview, is also being drafted.

### ***Service Providers Case Studies***

**Project i** has recently received ethics approval to begin the next stage of the research, which is the case studies of people working with homeless young people. We will be interviewing a mix of managers or coordinators and direct service workers from a variety of services in the Housing, Mental Health, Juvenile Justice, and Child Protection sectors. We will also interview some people working in preventative and family mediation programs and some Centrelink workers. A total of 50 workers will be interviewed before February 2002.

### ***Refuges Seminar***

Feedback from the half-day forum for refuge workers that **Project i** put on in June at the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society was extremely positive. Staff from 9 refuges attended the day which included a research update and discussion of some of the preliminary findings, a presentation on working with same-sex attracted young people, a presentation on young people in the juvenile justice system, and a workshop on working in refuges. The day also provided the chance for networking, something for which there is never enough time.

### ***Interview Team***

**Project i** recently trained two new interviewers to join the team. Jacquie will be our main interviewer at Frontyard (Melbourne Youth Support) while Paul, who is one of our research officers, will be based at the **Project i** office. Later in the year we will be looking to train 2-3 more interviewers, particularly when we finally get to begin interviewing young people in Dandenong and the outer south east.

### ***Further information:***

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