Role models
for young people
What makes an effective role model program?

a report to the

National Youth Affairs Research Scheme

by
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Contents

Executive summary

The purpose of the report

The 'What makes an effective role model program?' research project was commissioned by the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme (NYARS) to explore the extent and use of role model programs and their effectiveness, and to inform the development of role model programs for young people. The specific objectives were to:

- undertake a literature search and audit of role model programs targeting young people 12–25 years (from a diversity of cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds), delivered by various groups in educational and community settings, in both Australia and overseas;
- explain what makes a role model program effective or not effective in stimulating the changes for young participants;
- evaluate the effectiveness or otherwise of role model programs in terms of their objectives and corresponding outcomes;
- identify and analyse key aspects of an effective role model program; and
- provide advice on improving the effectiveness of programs to stimulate the desired changes for young people.

Definitions and issues

What is a role model?

For the purpose of this report, the term role model is considered in the widest sense from an individual simply "perceived as exemplary, or worthy of imitation" as described by Yancey (1998), to the inspirer "through personal contact" and "relationship" as proposed by Ingall (1997). Thus, mentors are seen as one type of role model, and mentoring programs are subsumed under the broader category of role model programs. The varying types and functions of role models are examined throughout the report.

Who can be a role model?

Young people perceive a range of individuals as potential role models, including celebrities and other famous people, family members, adult community members, teachers and peers. They may see different groups as role models in different kinds of ways. Programs involving a range of role models are included in the project.

What constitutes a role model program?

The project covers formal role model programs that involve people who function as role models or mentors, irrespective of whether or not role modelling

is an explicit part of the programs. Thus the programs included range from guest speaker programs, through adventure programs and workshops, drop-in centres and activity programs, to one-to-one mentoring programs.

Examining program effectiveness

The criteria of program effectiveness developed in the research takes account of the range of role model programs identified, particular issues raised in the review of literature, the perspectives of people situated in different positions within the role model programs (e.g. designer, coordinator, role model or mentor, young person) and the different components of programs of this nature (e.g. resources, processes and outcomes). The project does not aim to evaluate individual programs.

The methodology of the project

The research uses a predominantly qualitative methodology. There were six main phases in the study:

- a review of relevant literature;
- an audit of role model programs, followed by a survey of a sample of the programs;
- an initial analysis of the effectiveness of the role model programs surveyed in part 2, and

refinement of the model for determining effectiveness;
- in-depth case studies of selected role model programs identified in part 3;
- a detailed analysis of the qualitative data from part 4; and
- drawing conclusions and developing guidelines for policy decisions.

The theoretical framework

The theoretical framework developed takes account of the range of interpretations of the term role model and the differing nature of role model programs. The framework integrates the sometimes very diverse aspects of theory, research and practice as shown in the table below. It utilises the degree of interaction between a role model and a young person as the organising concept and is conceived as a continuum where the degree of interaction varies from limited interaction between a young person and a role model to extensive one-to-one interaction between them.

Four theoretical viewpoints are linked into this continuum in that each focuses more on a particular point or points in this continuum. For example the sociological viewpoint generally focuses on providing examples for observation and emulation. The social cognitive perspective deals with the initial period of observation that may not involve any personal contact, as well as with the provision of feedback during the

Table 1: Links between theory, research and practice				
Degree of interaction continuum	*Theoretical perspective*	*Broad focus of program*	*Types of role models used (from research review)*	*Examples of types of programs (from audit)*
limited ↓	**sociological** ↕	observation	media figures celebrities	award programs web sites
↓ **some**	**social cognitive**	demonstration	non-traditional adults	celebrity use/guest speakers
↓	↕	feedback	teachers other adults peers	workshops drop-in centres camps & clinics
↓ **extended** ↓	↕ **sociocultural** ↕	scaffolding or structured support		
↓ **extensive**	↕ **humanist**	personal support relationships	parents other adults peers mentors	workshop series youth groups mentoring

process of learning/modelling. The sociocultural perspective emphasises guided support or scaffolding that occurs during the learning process. The humanist or socioemotional views advocate a maximum amount of interaction in order to develop meaningful supportive relationships.

The audit of programs

The audit identified over 400 programs that focused on different points along the interaction continuum. For example at one extreme, programs using media figures or celebrities focused on the idea that these role models will be attractive to young people who will then pay attention to their words or actions. Guest speaker programs or visits to see experts at work allow for some interaction in that individuals might have an opportunity, although brief, to ask questions or to follow up with the speaker.

Other programs aim to use role models who exhibit desirable behaviours, while also endeavouring to support the young people in adopting these behaviours. For example coaching clinics or other short-term programs involving celebrity sportspeople, or older students working with groups of young people to develop a particular skill, involve more opportunities for personal interaction between participants. The role model and the young people probably know each other's names and might interact in an informal way in addition to undertaking the tasks focused on by the program. Further along the continuum, drop-in centres or workshops aim to use adults who model desirable behaviours or characteristics and who would also get to know the young people, interact with them and offer support. Peer modelling and peer support might also be features of such programs.

Still other programs aim to mainly provide intense individual support to young people who have little other support in life. These programs tend to the other extreme of the continuum. For example mentoring programs generally involve one-to-one interaction over an extended period of time. Both parties come to know each other very well and friendships might extend after the end of a formal program.

Key features of effective role model programs

The findings from the literature review, survey and case studies suggest that there are a number of features that contribute to the overall effectiveness of a range of role model programs. The key elements of effectiveness, however, differ from program to program, although each element may have some relevance across program types. The program types have been grouped in order to highlight the key elements of effectiveness.

Common elements of effectiveness

The common features of effective role model programs include:
- young-people-sensitive administration/management of the program;
- flexibility;
- the development of networks;
- mechanism for ongoing feedback from participants (young people, role models and other significant people) and evaluation for program improvement; and
- sufficient resources for the program to achieve its aims.

Programs with minimal interaction that focus on observation and modelling

The initial focus may be on the role model's celebrity status or position to grab young people's attention, but the main focus of the program needs to be on the role model's relevant personal characteristics, attitudes, skills and strategies that assisted them in achieving their goals. These programs rely on the young people perceiving the role model as a relevant role model for them at that particular time. The key elements include:
- role model appears relevant and accessible and demonstrates coping characteristics;
- role model has an approach consistent with the program's philosophy;
- provision of ongoing support for young people; and
- ongoing concrete reminders of the message or role model.

Programs that focus on short- or longer-term interaction through scaffolding and feedback

The role modelling may be less explicit in this type of program, and there will generally be a variety of role models including leaders, coordinators, community members, older and same-aged peers. Generally they are the people involved in running and participating in

the program. The young people are less likely to view the program as a role model program, but view it in terms of the activities or particular knowledge, skills and attitudes that may be developed through participation. The key elements include:

- role models who can relate to young people and display a range of relevant knowledge, skills and personal characteristics;
- provision of a safe and supportive environment;
- focus on purposeful activity;
- provision of opportunities for developing independence; and
- provision of opportunities for support and encouragement of a variety of role models, including peers.

Programs that focus on the development of supportive relationships

These programs may overlap with the longer-term programs above, and share many of the same key elements for effectiveness. They may involve an activity or development of particular skills, but the main focus will be on the needs of the young people and providing the support needed for the young person to achieve their goals. The additional key elements include:

- focus on the needs of the individual young people involved;
- special attention to selection and training of mentors/role models;
- role models with a non-judgmental caring approach; and
- provision of ongoing support and feedback for mentors/role models.

Characteristics of programs which limit effectiveness

It appears unlikely that any one program will be either effective or ineffective in stimulating the desired changes in young people with respect to improving their life situation, progressing educational and social outcomes, or other positive outcomes. It is more likely that programs will exhibit some features that improve effectiveness and others which limit it. Common characteristics that may limit the effectiveness of a program include:

- inadequate selection, screening, training and support of role models;

- too much reliance on one individual for program success;
- lack of ongoing support for young people in minimum interaction programs;
- taking too many young people into the program;
- lack of adequate funding; and
- inadequate resourcing and valuing of volunteers.

Other issues

Value for money of programs

It is very difficult to determine value for money of different programs, as different programs have different aims and cater to different groups of young people. Programs which develop ongoing support networks for young people especially those close to the young people (family and peers) or which assist young people to develop strategies of independence and self-reliance may be the most cost-effective in the longer term.

Transferability of effective programs

The literature review and audit identified many programs that are delivered in multiple sites or have been adopted in part or in full by others. Evidence suggests, however, that it is not a simple case of transfer from one site to another.

Programs for different groups of young people

Minimal interaction role model programs, which aim to create an awareness of possibilities, may be inappropriate for young people who do not have access to opportunities or support networks to assist them in pursuing possibilities or recognising and acting on opportunities when they arise. For young people who for whatever reason are not able to make sound life choices in their current context, the provision of support seems to be an essential element in a role model program. Role model programs are generally more effective when the young person receives support of one kind or another. The necessary support varies with the type of program, the group of young people and their individual circumstances and access.

Features of agencies delivering programs

A wide range of agencies delivers role model programs for young people. There is nothing to suggest that particular agencies or funding sources are responsible

for more effective programs. However, those agencies that are able to secure adequate funding for two to three years at a time, and involve dedicated staff willing to adapt programs to meet the needs of the young people concerned, are more likely to be able to deliver effective programs.

Development of future role model programs

Many of the comments already made could be used as a basis for improving the effectiveness of existing role model programs and for the development of future programs to stimulate the desired outcomes for young people. They principally concern characteristics of the role model programs. The issues listed below pertain more to the broader context in which role model programs operate:

- appropriate funding and resourcing;
- appreciation of the time taken for development of programs and appropriate evaluation models;
- importance of encouraging and maintaining a diversity of role model programs;
- encouragement of programs that have demonstrated effectiveness; and
- development of networks to support program development and improvement.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Role models are a facet of everyday life. We often read in autobiographies or hear people interviewed on radio saying that they were strongly influenced in their lives by someone they heard speak or someone they knew. Children and adolescents talk about fictional characters, sportsmen and women, movie and pop stars or other famous people as their heroes, or someone they want to be like or look up to. Parenting books often refer to parents as role models for their children. The media portray individuals who have achieved something notable (usually in sport, education or career) as role models or lament the poor behaviour of someone previously acknowledged as a role model. Just about everyone can identify a family member, friend, teacher or neighbour who, by example, inspired them to strive for something worthwhile. Role models appear to be a taken for granted part of our culture.

Generally we think of role models as having a positive influence, providing young people and others with a vision of themselves to work towards. Formal programs incorporating role models have been developed in educational, community and workplace settings based on the assumption that they can maximise the positive influence that we take for granted from role models. Further, it is assumed that these programs might stimulate young people to make sound life choices, to progress their educational outcomes and assist them to develop skills, values and other attributes that encourage citizenship and lead to a full and productive adulthood for the benefit of the community and the economy.

The purpose of the report

The "What makes an effective role model program?" research project was commissioned by the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme (NYARS) to explore the extent and use of role model programs and their effectiveness, and to inform the development of role model programs for young people. The specific objectives were to:

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Definitions and methodological issues

In devising the methodology for the project two important issues were addressed. The first concerns the meaning of the term "role model" and what constitutes a role model program for the purposes of the project. The second concerns developing an appropriate research model for evaluating effectiveness that takes account of the variety and uniqueness of different role model programs and the diverse groups of people involved.

Role models

What is a role model?

As Irvine (1989, p.52) says, the "concept of role model is an ill-defined and imprecise term that begs for more clarity and debate". In most instances terms are not clearly defined or operationalised and the meaning is assumed to be understood within the particular article or paper. These different types of role models can have different functions, and programs using role models will likely reflect these differences. Two related functions that emerge from the literature are those of role modelling and of mentoring (Ingall 1997; Irvine 1989; Struchen & Porta 1997; Yancey 1998).

In making this distinction Irvine (1989, p.53) suggests that "mentors are always role models, but role models are not always mentors". Flaxman et al.'s 1988 statement (cited by Yancey 1998) details each of the functions:

> *It is useful to distinguish between role modelling and mentoring. A role model is an individual who is perceived as exemplary, or worthy of imitation. Emotional attachment does not necessarily involve direct personal contact … Mentors, however, deliberately support, guide, and shape younger or less experienced individuals as they weather difficult periods, enter new arenas, or undertake challenging tasks* (Yancey 1998, p.3).

The 1995 Juvenile Welfare Board Community Forum in Florida summarises the distinction:

> *Role model[l]ing results in youths finding a positive image or identity that appeals to them. Mentoring goes further to impart the skills needed to achieve that image* (Struchen & Porta 1997, p.120).

Three elements stand out in these distinctions. One is perception of the particular young people, the second is level of interaction and/or assistance and the third is change in the young people. Role modelling focuses on how the role model is perceived by the young people concerned and the young person's desired goal, whereas mentoring focuses on explicit action by the mentor to assist the young person to reach their goal. This reiterates Jacobi's (1991) discussion of the diversity of mentoring descriptions which points out that the term mentoring subsumes several distinct kinds of interpersonal relationships with nothing in common except an intention to help students.

These distinctions between role modelling and mentoring may be valid in informal settings. It is less clear, however, as to the validity of these distinctions in formal settings. In formal role model programs, progress towards the desired goal may be necessary to demonstrate some degree of effectiveness of the program, and the role model or others may need to be active for this to occur.

Ingall presents a different taxonomy that gives a more active role to role models. In distinguishing between heroes and role models used by teachers in literature to highlight exemplary figures, Ingall (1997, pp.182-83) suggests four kinds of moral prototypes who have different functions:

- *the classical hero* – a remote, nationally known figure of high transcendence; symbolises the values of a given society and provides the "cultural glue" linking an individual to a group, e.g. King David, George Washington;
- *the new hero* – an historic figure representing groups that have been under-represented; embody virtues admired by a nation at any given time, e.g. Martin Luther King;
- *moral exemplar or quiet hero* – a locally or regionally known individual who displays moral or physical courage; less transcendent, e.g. earthquake rescuer, animal rights activist;
- *role model* – an individual who inspires through personal contact and observability, can inspire for "good or ill", can personify behaviours that build self-esteem, most rooted in relationship. The role model, like a mirror, helps the beholder to see the self.

The terminology is different from other writers, with "role model" in this taxonomy more like the term "mentor" used by other writers. The categories also reflect differing degrees of distance between the young person and the significant other and suggest a more

useful framework for considering different types of role models than the dichotomy of role modelling and mentoring.

For the purpose of this report, the term role model is considered in the widest sense from an individual simply "perceived as exemplary, or worthy of imitation" as described by Yancey (1998), to the inspirer "through personal contact" and "relationship" as proposed by Ingall (1997). Thus, mentors are seen as one type of role model, and mentoring programs are subsumed under the broader category of role model programs. The varying types and functions of role models will be examined throughout this report.

Who can be a role model?

Society generally recognises people who are powerful, prestigious and worthy of admiration as role models. These celebrity role models may be encountered through the media and more often than not are sports stars, pop stars, actors, adventurers or fictional characters. Men and women who have achieved success in non-traditional occupations are also often considered to be role models.

But do young people perceive individuals from these groups as their role models? Byrne (1993) and Irvine (1989) claim that men and women in non-traditional occupations are viewed as role models more by policy-makers and administrators than by the young people themselves. Few studies have actually asked children and young people to name their role models, and Ingall (1997) found that participants in most schools where they conducted their research were reluctant to use the term role model. Girls were uncomfortable with both the terms role model and hero. In most cases, whom young people nominate depends on the questions asked. When Australian students aged 10–15 years were asked in 1988 "who they would most like to be like" they nominated sporting heroes, pop stars, actors and TV characters showing a shift away from the dominance of parent and parent surrogates found in a pre-television study in 1956 (Duck 1990). Another Australian study (Ewens & Lashuk 1989) found similar responses to the same question with a similar age group, but when the young people were asked to nominate "the most important person in the world", 42% nominated a family member. Teachers, family members, peers and personal friends are usually nominated by young people when asked who their heroes are (e.g. Freedman-Doan 1997) or who they would ask to give them help or support (e.g. Philip & Hendry 1996).

It appears likely that young people perceive a range of individuals as potential role models, but may see different groups as role models in different kinds of ways. This issue is explored more fully in the literature review and the analysis of the data gathered for this report.

What constitutes a role model program?

It would be possible to define a role model program as any program that includes a role model. Since everyone is potentially a role model this definition would mean every program could be considered to be a role model program. But, if the young person's perspective is important in defining a role model, then to be considered a role model program a program must involve individuals whom the particular young people identify as important or inspirational for them, or able to support and guide them in some way.

Since different groups of people can be role models to young people and function in a range of ways, the range of role model programs is likely to be vast. These may differ in a number of ways. Depending on the type of role model concerned, the degree of contact between the role model and the young people is likely to vary. Similarly some programs would explicitly acknowledge the central function of a role model and others, either implicitly or explicitly, would include a role model or mentor as one element of the program. Since some programs aim to enhance educational or career opportunities for young people while others focus on personal and social development and enhancing life skills, the theoretical basis or assumptions underlying the rationale for programs may also differ. Also, as with most types of programs, some would be modifications of international or national programs, while others might be developed through local initiatives to meet the needs of specific groups of young people.

This project focuses on formal role model programs, but both formal programs and informal or naturally occurring relationships and influences are examined in the literature. For example, much mentoring research focuses on formal arrangements, yet several writers believe that these are not true mentoring. Byrne (1993) reiterates Hurley's point against formal arrangements on the grounds that "the reciprocity of mentor–protégé relationships involves mutual choosing, mutual respect and liking, mutual give and take, which cannot be systematised without losing these very characteristics" (p.138). Little (1990) also expresses concerns about formal programs since "there are few structured studies comparing formal arrangements with the conditions,

contexts, dynamics, and consequences of naturally occurring mentor relations" (p.343). He further questions "legislative or bureaucratic actions bent on converting the fundamentally personal, informal, and intense relations of mentoring to formal arrangements" (p.299). A similar case might be made in respect to the full range of formal role model programs, given that the term role model really implies that a young person chooses their own role model, or that a role model takes on that role from the perspective of the young person. This is irrespective of whether or not the role model perceives the relationship in that way.

Issues for evaluating effectiveness

What makes a role model program effective?

The question "what makes an effective role model program?" implies that a comparison of different programs can be made and that common factors leading to "effectiveness" or "ineffectiveness" can be drawn from the literature or from research to enable this comparison to be made. This question may be further broken down into three separate questions:

- What indicates that any particular role model program is effective?
- Is one type of program more effective or ineffective than another?
- Are there any features common to all effective role model programs?

Finding answers to any of these questions is problematic for a number of reasons. Different programs and empirical studies use different terminology, ask different research questions and collect different data. This work also generally tends to address a particular use of role models rather than the broader use and functions of role models. A further factor is that much of the relevant literature does not deal with formal role model programs as such but rather examines the role of other people in the lives of young people. These points are raised more fully in the literature review but are briefly discussed here so as to focus on methodological issues arising from attempts to answer any of the above questions and to define the parameters of the present research.

Methodological issues in evaluating effectiveness

Several authors have expressed concerns about various aspects of the methodology used in research relating to role models and mentors.

Just as researchers may understand terms such as role model or mentor in different ways, so may individ-

uals participating in their research. Philip and Hendry (1996) maintain that although mentoring is an increasingly popular intervention with youth, especially disadvantaged youth, little attention has been paid to how mentoring works from a young person's perspective. But asking young people for their perspective raises the issues of their understanding of the questions and terminology used and of their willingness to share their understandings with researchers. As previously mentioned, Ingall (1997) found participants were reluctant to use the term role model, and in Duck's (1990) research he also reported that "it is difficult to judge with film and TV actors whether the child is idealising the actor or the persona they play" (p.26). Young people may not be aware of motives they are being asked about, or they may not want to report them to a researcher as Berndt and Keefe (1996) found in their research regarding friendships and relationships.

There are few observations of the actual role modelling or mentoring process itself. Since role modelling, and particularly mentoring, involves essentially private, confidential and unstructured relationships, observing these presents ethical and practical difficulties. One suggestion to overcome some of these issues is to incorporate structured activities, feedback and evaluation as an integral part of any mentoring program (Director of Equal Opportunity in Employment 1996).

Scales and Gibbons (1996) make a number of suggestions for research designs that investigate questions regarding the role of non-parental adults in the lives of adolescents with the aim of addressing some of the concerns expressed about methodology. Those most pertinent to the present research include the use of a greater variety of measures – a convergence of differing methodological approaches (e.g. not just self-reports), greater precision in defining and measuring relationships, and studying the processes during actual interactions.

Evaluating program effectiveness

One of the key aspects considered in evaluating a program is whether or not it is effective in achieving its intended outcomes. This can be an important methodological issue when the outcomes are difficult to measure or may not be evident in the life of the program. If the anticipated outcomes from formal role model programs include the making of sound life choices, and development of skills, values and other attributes that encourage citizenship and lead to a full

and productive adulthood, these issues must be considered. This is particularly relevant to programs that aim to show young people "possibilities". Media publicity of a sports star denouncing the use of drugs, a guest speaker showing an adult in a non-traditional career, or a lesson about a person with a disability "overcoming the odds" may sow a seed which may not be translated into action until later. How can the impact of one particular event be evaluated?

There are similar difficulties with programs aiming to protect young people against current and later life stressors. Such programs are based on resilience research that highlights the significance of a caring, supportive relationship with others – adults or peers – in preventing later difficulties for youth "at risk". Short-term measures such as school attendance and feelings about being in a program may not actually measure the program's ultimate aim, which is a long-term preventive one. When considering programs designed with a protective function, Struchen and Porta (1997) emphasise that the impact of such programs may not be evident for years or even decades. Conversely, Evans, Whigham and Wang (1995) warn that we need to ask whether any changes seen in young people will hold over time. In effect, consideration needs to be given to what change is anticipated, the degree of change, how long it might take and how such change will be measured. Both short- and long-term measures should be considered.

Some examples of short-term measures are the degree of antisocial activities; academic performance, attitudes and behaviour; relationships with families and friends; and self-concept. Many of these constructs are difficult to measure in themselves (Struchen & Porta 1997). There are additional problems with at-risk young people who may have poor literacy skills in terms of reading, writing and speaking. Standardised instruments and questionnaires are expensive and require trained staff to administer, score and interpret. Some suggestions to overcome such difficulties are for the mentors (or other role models) to keep written records of observed behaviours in the relationships, collect information at the screening stage, and use open-ended interviews to focus on expectations and experiences (Struchen & Porta 1997).

Another concern is the extent to which the whole context of the young person or the program is taken into account in research or evaluation studies (American Psychological Association 1996; Bø 1996; Gauntlett 1999; Struchen & Porta 1997). For example, Bø concluded that research has often not incorporated the range of possible others with whom young people may interact, the relative importance of such interactions for the young people or the interconnections between significant people for adolescents and the larger social environment. Also, the concept of social support has been defined and measured rather narrowly as a personal trait or cognitive process, which neglects the contextual and interactional character of the construct (Gottlieb & Sylvestre 1996). A more holistic approach is recommended as young people "live within a network of relations and experience their social worlds with a variety of persons comprising their networks" (Bø 1996, p.109). Further, relationships between role models and young people are dynamic and the contexts within which relationships develop and operate are also changing. Capturing the nature of such relationships and measuring their effectiveness presents methodological challenges for researchers that have only been recently recognised. Philip & Hendry (1996) found that in broadening the context in their research they needed qualitative rather than quantitative data collection in order "to go beyond mere description and to explore the context of participants' social relationships" (p.191).

Evaluating the relative effectiveness of different programs

Notwithstanding the difficulties, program evaluation is based on the assumption that it is possible, given a clear understanding of the terms used and valid and reliable data collection procedures, to determine whether a particular role model program is effective in meeting its intended goals. The question remains as to whether one particular type of program is more effective than another type for a particular purpose.

When formal programs are evaluated, the nature of the data collected can vary greatly and again this can make comparisons between programs difficult. Batten and Russell (1995) and Withers and Batten (1995) report this difficulty in their reviews of a variety of programs for at-risk young people in Australia and overseas. They found that some studies reported non-specific or anecdotal outcomes such as "truancy was reduced" or "improved behaviour in class", while others reported more quantifiable specific outcomes such as the number of students reintegrating into school or finding employment, the number of days truancy, and literacy and numeracy test results. Withers and Batten warn that "it is not possible to identify a single program or a particular strategy that can be said to meet most effectively the needs of at-risk

youth" (p.x) and Batten and Russell stress the importance of appreciating "the different ways and circumstances in which successful strategies have been applied" (p.84). Saito and Blyth (1992) express a similar view. In noting that mentoring programs differ on a range of dimensions – including the structure of relationship, the minimum length of contact between participants, the intensity of the relationship, the nature of activities used, the activity location and the nature and degree of supervision of the participants – they liken the difficulties to the impossibility of comparing apples and oranges. The same would apply to an analysis of role model programs.

The advice given by Saito and Blyth (1992) relating to mentoring programs thus seems pertinent to role model programs in more general terms. They suggest that all mentoring programs focus on important issues such as academic tutoring, providing role models and friendship, or giving extra support and guidance regarding post secondary options. Therefore, rather than focus on comparing the effectiveness of different types of programs, it is better to focus on the actual processes and outcomes of the relationships between the participants in such programs.

Another key aspect of evaluating the effectiveness of programs concerns how programs achieve their intended outcomes and the key characteristics of those that do. This is a particularly important question when an aim is to improve the effectiveness of a program or to assist in the development of effective programs. The criteria of program effectiveness developed in the present research took account of the range of role model programs identified, particular issues raised in the review of literature, the perspectives of people situated in different positions within the role model programs (e.g. designer, coordinator, role model or mentor, young person) and the different components of programs of this nature (e.g. resources, processes and outcomes). The project does not aim to evaluate individual programs.

Can features common to all effective programs be identified?

Although it may be meaningless to compare different programs, given the above discussion, the literature does suggest that there are some general features common to effective programs for young people. Little is said about common features indicating ineffectiveness.

Batten and Russell (1995) and Withers and Batten (1995) do not refer to role model programs in their review; however, successful programs for at-risk youth are said to possess some common features. Their reviews suggest successful programs:

- have clear goals and objectives;
- pay attention to the whole person – social and personal as well as academic and vocational;
- establish collaborative links with parents, communities and other agencies; and
- have strong leadership.

The literature abounds with suggestions for running successful mentoring programs. Although a majority appear to be from personal experience rather than based on theory or research, there is a similarity between the suggestions made. Withers and Batten (1995) describe some of the features critical to the success of the mentoring programs they reviewed. Such programs:

- are part of a formal, well-supported organisation;
- have maximum diversity in the range of activities used while still allowing for individual mentor and mentee styles; and
- carefully select and closely monitor the mentor–mentee relationships.

In a recent Australian report, MacCallum and Beltman (1999) discuss features of successful mentoring programs based on the available literature and a series of case studies (see Appendix D). The case studies illustrate how each program is successful within the context in which it operates. Different types of programs highlight particular areas important in ensuring effectiveness. For example, in one-to-one mentoring programs appropriate strategies for screening, matching and training of mentors are critical, and mentors need to be aware of the nature and depth of the mentoring relationship and expectations of commitment and appropriate behaviour (Saito & Blyth 1992).

Thus answering the questions posed at the beginning of this section is difficult for a number of reasons. The nature of the role model programs themselves means they involve dynamic interrelationships. Programs may target different outcomes for different groups of young people. There are limitations in the tools of data collection and analysis, and limited time and funding provided for longitudinal studies. The importance of examining relationships within their natural community context has been stressed even though this may also present methodological difficulties. Thus in addressing the question, "What

makes an effective role model program?", this report takes into account these difficulties and suggests effective processes in particular contexts rather than providing a definitive answer.

The methodology of the project

The research uses a predominantly qualitative methodology. There were six main phases in the study:

- a review of relevant literature;
- an audit of role model programs, followed by a survey of a sample of the programs;
- an initial analysis of the effectiveness of the role model programs surveyed in part 2, and refinement of the model for determining effectiveness;
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- drawing conclusions and developing guidelines for policy decisions.

The literature review

The review of literature focused on issues for consideration, detailed information about role models and role model programs in a range of contexts (such as education, business and community), as well as research findings related to the evaluation and effectiveness of programs. Also reviewed were the possible theoretical frameworks for interpreting role modelling and research on role model programs. Searches included research databases (e.g. ERIC, PsychLIT), the Internet, and personal collections and contacts. The literature search identified a number of role model and mentoring programs, research findings related to the value of significant others in the development of young people and issues related to the implementation and evaluation of programs.

The audit and survey of role model programs

A number of role model and mentoring programs in Australia and overseas were identified through the literature search and from personal contacts. In order to identify a wider range of programs, a number of mechanisms were devised to canvass information about role model programs from a variety of sources. Youth agencies, schools and other community organisations, which have youth programs or participate in them, were invited to self-nominate or be nominated by others. Letters were sent to education systems, regional education offices and educational organisations throughout Australia and to community and youth agencies in New South Wales, Tasmania, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. A copy of the letter and accompanying form is presented in Appendix A. Also, requests for information were made through relevant listservs (e.g. YARN) and education networks, and through The Schools Today section in *The Australian*. Managers or administrative staff were asked to pass on the requests to relevant program coordinators. Contacts were asked to supply information (if known) such as program title, brief description, contact person, location of school(s) involved, other groups or organisations involved, characteristics of role models/mentors, and target groups of young people. The procedure uncovered over 400 programs that were considered to be role model programs. Although the list is not exhaustive, it may be argued that these programs are representative of those in existence.

From those programs uncovered by the audit process, a sample group of programs was selected for surveying. The procedure ensured inclusion of a range of types of role model programs and program aims, specific groups of young people targeted by the program, coverage of urban and rural or isolated areas across Australia, and institutions and groups organising or delivering the program. Selection was also mindful of gender balance, coverage of different age groups within the range of 12–25 years, and programs aimed at specific minority groups (including Indigenous young people, young people from non-Anglo backgrounds) and those facing socioeconomic disadvantage. A small consideration was offered to each program to cover the time taken to complete the survey questionnaire.

The development of the survey questions was informed by the theoretical framework devised for the project (discussed later in this chapter and in Chapter 2) and the range of role model programs uncovered by the audit. The survey was divided into five sections containing a total of 48 questions about five areas of role model programs. The first two sections related to general information about the type of program and its organisational structure. The next sections related to the young people and the role models involved in the program. Respondents were asked to describe the char-

acteristics of the young people and the role models, as well as how they were identified and selected. Questions about training and support for role models were also included. The final section asked respondents (usually program coordinators) to evaluate their own program's effectiveness and to describe difficulties encountered and ways they could be or had been addressed. In this final section of the survey, there was also an opportunity to make any further comments through open-ended questions. A copy of the survey questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix B.

Initial data analysis

The analysis of the information from the literature review, audit and survey identified common and unique features of the role model programs and the aspects of each type of program that might contribute to its effectiveness or ineffectiveness. A provisional model of effectiveness was devised.

The case studies

A selection process similar to that used for the survey was used to identify the programs for the case study that would further the objectives of the research project. They were selected to illustrate the range of programs available, including those in the categories of interest for this project. That is, some were programs for Indigenous young people, for young people born overseas and for young people facing socioeconomic disadvantage. Also case study selection was mindful of covering a cross section of states and territories, as well as programs in rural, remote and urban locations. It was not possible within the constraints of the present research to include programs that involved little or no interaction between the role model and young people. Budget restrictions also played a part in determining which programs were visited. The final selection was made in consultation with the NYARS committee.

The 11 programs selected differed in a number of ways. They covered a range of intensity of interaction, involved a range of people as role models, targeted a range of young people, focused on different aims, and were located in a range of settings and geographical regions. The programs selected cover metropolitan, rural, regional and remote sites, and are located in New South Wales, Western Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and the Northern Territory. In other words, the programs were selected to reflect the diverse nature and location of role model programs. Programs were seen to be typical of their type, rather than being selected through judgments about their quality. The features of the programs selected for case study are shown in Table 1.1.

The case studies were based on a transactional model that assumes the importance of understanding people and programs in context through data gathered in direct contact with the program and its participants (Patton 1990). As the review of the evaluation literature suggested that observation of role modelling was an important aspect of program research, one or two members of the research team travelled to each site to observe the program in action. As several programs were implemented in multiple sites, when possible, the case studies included visits to more than one site. Program materials, reports, newsletters and other relevant information were also collected or viewed on site.

In order to obtain information from different perspectives, a range of people associated in different ways with each program were asked to participate in the case study. As the programs and the people associated with them differed, advice was sought from the coordinator of each program. At this point, issues of confidentiality and methods of data collection were raised and negotiated. These people included the developer/designer(s), coordinator, those involved in selection/screening/training of participants, role model/mentors, and young people who had been or were currently participating in the program. Where appropriate and practical, individual face-to-face interviews or focus group interviews were carried out.

The questions were developed to elicit each participant's understanding of the program, how it operated from their perspective, the outcomes of which they were aware, their feelings about the program, any problems they had encountered, and their suggestions and advice to others about role model programs (see Appendix C).

Data analysis

An analysis of the case study data enabled details of the key features of effective role model programs to be enunciated and critiqued. This was used as the basis for the development of guidelines for policy-makers, program designers and providers to increase the effectiveness of programs to improve the life opportunities of the young people participating in them and progress their educational and social outcomes. Relevant extracts of the draft report were sent to each of the case study programs in order to verify program descriptions and comments attributed to program participants.

Name of program	Intensity & type of interaction	Role model characteristics	Age of young people	Focus of program	Location	State of case study
Sporting Partnerships	one-off	high profile sportsmen and women	school age	drug prevention and healthy lifestyle	multiple sites	WA
Australis Self Made Girls	one-day workshop	adult women in business or professions	young women 14–22	skills to improve financial independence	multiple sites, mainly city based	Vic/WA
Lunch Box (Journey 1)	set series of workshops	youth workers and cultural story tellers	12–25 years, generally at risk	youth suicide prevention, cultural and creative activities	multiple sites	WA
RAP	set series of workshops and expedition	youth workers, teachers	high school students, generally of early leaving age	motivation, adventure-based activities	main metro site plus rural and remote	NT
GAP Youth Centre	drop-in centre	Aboriginal youth workers & successful adults	mainly school age, mainly Aboriginal	recreation, support, and education	main site (drop-in centre) in remote area	NT
Migrant Resource Centre (Sth Tas) Inc.	weekly sessions over extended period	youth support workers and peer volunteers	11–21 years, recently arrived migrants	settlement issues, support and leadership	metropolitan	Tas
SHEIRA	series of meetings over extended period	program coordinator, guest speakers, young women	young women 13–24, single and pregnant or with a pre-school child	mutually agreed program, support	metropolitan	NT
Scouts Australia	weekly sessions, camps, over extended period	trained adults and more experienced peers	6–26 years	broad range of skills & areas of development, leadership	multiple sites	Tas
RecLink	weekly sporting activities and drop-in centre	various adults: police officers, street workers, umpires, peer volunteers	14–24 years, mainly unemployed, homeless	recreation, life style and support	various locations & city outreach centre	Tas
YOP	one-to-one mentoring	local community adults as mentors	17–20 years in rural areas in need of support	life skills, educational/ employment support	various locations in multiple rural sites	WA
BS/BB	one-to-one mentoring	young people 25–35, usually professional background	7–17 years, at risk	friendship, support	various locations	NSW

Table 1.1: Features of the programs selected for case studies

Ethical issues

The project was mindful of the ethical issues regarding any research that involves people, such as the privacy and dignity of participants, and the confidentiality and anonymity of data generated. The Murdoch University Human Ethics Research Committee administers strict guidelines that include gaining informed consent from all participants, working through issues of privacy, confidentiality, anonymity and potential disadvantage or harm to the participants. These guidelines are in concert with the NYARS Code of Ethics.

Particular issues of access and equity arise in a number of ways in this project. These were borne in mind with respect to the range of young people included as well as the range of role models. Procedures ensured the inclusion of programs in as wide a range of geographical locations as possible, involving various role models with diverse expertise and experience, and targeting different groups and ages of young people, including those at risk for a variety of reasons. The programs were chosen to reflect a range of age groups, and a diversity of cultural, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds.

It was anticipated that program staff would be reasonably willing to be involved in the research, but it was possible that some of the young people or volunteers may be hesitant. Role model and mentoring programs are based on the building of shared trust and respect for the people involved. This needed to be maintained in the research process. The coordinators chose the people with whom we spoke, and thus they were a select group. The criteria used by each coordinator no doubt differed, but we were confident we were not only exposed to the most successful participants. Rather, a common criterion appeared to be that the participants would be able to verbalise their thoughts and feelings.

In order to protect the identities of participants in the research, especially the young people, comments by coordinators or young people may be grouped under a particular issue rather than being identified with a particular program.

The theoretical framework

A theoretical framework was developed to take account of the range of interpretations of the term role model and the differing nature of role model programs. The framework was used to aid interpretation of the data and development of characteristics relevant to program effectiveness.

The framework integrates the sometimes very diverse aspects of theory, research and practice. A search of both print and electronic literature revealed a vast number of programs that include some aspect of role modelling but which vary considerably from each other in many ways. One way of categorising programs using role models is according to the degree of interaction between the role models and the young people. Programs may be seen to fall along a continuum. It is also possible to link the theoretical perspectives, the related research and programs found in practice to this continuum.

The degree of interaction continuum

The degree of interaction between a role model and a young person may usefully be conceived as a continuum where the degree of interaction varies from no personal interaction between a young person and a role model to intense one-to-one interaction between them (as shown in Table 1.2). The continuum is used here for descriptive purposes without assuming increasing effectiveness. This continuum may also be used to integrate the varying aspects of theory, research and practice.

Table 1.2 indicates the links between:
- the varying degrees of interaction between young people and role models;
- theoretical perspectives used to justify and explain the value of role models;
- the broad focus of different programs using role models;
- types of role models typically used in programs; and
- examples of particular programs using role models.

As illustrated in Table 1.2, each of the four theoretical viewpoints outlined in detail later may be linked into this continuum in that each focuses more on a particular point or points in this continuum. For example the sociological viewpoint generally focuses on providing examples for observation and emulation. The social cognitive perspective deals with the initial period of observation that may not involve any personal contact, as well as with the provision of feedback during the process of learning/modelling. The sociocultural perspective emphasises guided support or scaffolding that occurs during the learning process. The humanist or socioemotional views advocate a maximum amount of interaction in order to develop meaningful supportive relationships.

Table 1.2: Links between theory, research and practice				
Degree of interaction continuum	*Theoretical perspective*	*Broad focus of program*	*Types of role models used (from research review)*	*Examples of types of programs (from audit)*
limited ↓	**sociological** ↕	observation	media figures celebrities	award programs web sites
↓ **some** ↓	**social cognitive** ↕	demonstration	non-traditional adults	celebrity use/guest speakers
↓	↕	feedback	teachers other adults peers	workshops drop-in centres camps & clinics
↓ **extended** ↓ ↓	**sociocultural** ↕ ↕	scaffolding or structured support		
↓ **extensive**	**humanist**	personal support relationships	parents other adults peers mentors	workshop series youth groups mentoring

It will be seen later that programs examined for the audit may also focus on particular points along the continuum. For example, at one extreme, programs using media figures or celebrities focus on the idea that these role models will be attractive to young people who will then pay attention to their words or actions. Programs using the media to publicise positive actions by young people or by celebrities are unlikely to involve any one-to-one interaction. Guest speaker programs or visits to see experts at work, may allow for some interaction in that individuals may have an opportunity, although brief, to ask questions or to follow up with the speaker.

Other programs may aim to use role models who exhibit desirable behaviours, while also endeavouring to support the young people in adopting them. For example, coaching clinics or other short-term programs involving celebrity sportspeople or older students working with groups of young people to develop a particular skill involve more opportunities for personal interaction between participants. The role model and the young people probably know each other's names and may interact in an informal way in addition to the tasks focused on by the program. Further along the continuum, drop-in centres or workshops would aim to perhaps use adults who model desirable behaviours or characteristics and who would also get to know the young people, interact with them and offer support. Peer modelling and peer support may also be features of such programs.

Still other programs may aim to mainly provide intense individual support to a young person who has little other support in life and so tend to the other extreme of the continuum. For example, mentoring programs generally involve one-to-one interaction over an extended period of time. Both parties come to know each other very well and friendships may extend after the end of a formal program.

The literature review includes a discussion of theoretical assumptions behind the use of role models, and a review of research organised around the various categories of people who might act as role models. Other sections of the report describe and discuss programs involving varying degrees of interaction between a young person and a role model and illustrating the program types presented in Table 1.2.

The structure of the report

This chapter has detailed and discussed the purpose and parameters of the research and detailed the methodology and theoretical framework for the project. The theoretical perspectives and research on role models reviewed for this project are discussed in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, the reported outcomes of role modelling and mentoring are considered in relation to the research and evaluation of role model programs. The chapter concludes with a description and discussion of international and Australian programs evaluated in previous research.

Chapter 4 reports the audit of types of role model programs and Chapter 5 a summary of the findings of the survey of selected role model programs. Chapter 6 presents a brief description of the 11 role model programs selected as case studies. The views of the young people participating in role model programs are presented in Chapter 7. The analysis of the case studies explored from the perspectives of the different participants is presented in Chapter 8. The discussion highlights the characteristics that contribute to the programs being effective as well as the problems and challenges that were encountered.

The final chapter summarises the key aspects of effective role model programs and discusses ways of improving the effectiveness of role model programs and issues to consider in the development of future programs.

Chapter 2 ⸻

Role models
A review of the literature

Introduction
Structure of the review

The literature review provides a background for the project and is presented in three sections: theoretical assumptions of role model programs, a review of empirical research and implications for role model programs.

The first section of the literature review focuses on theory and considers different underlying assumptions or theoretical perspectives used to justify the use of role model programs and to explain their effectiveness.

The second section of the literature review consists of a review of related research. The research reviewed includes descriptions and evaluations of programs that are explicitly designed to provide role models for young people. There are also many programs that, although not calling themselves role model programs as such, do incorporate people acting as role models. Other research, such as that examining the impact of a variety of others on young people, may also inform programs using role models. The review of research is organised around the types of people who may and do act as role models for young people rather than around specific programs.

The final section of the literature review summarises features of successful programs that emerge from the theoretical and empirical evidence presented in the literature review.

Theoretical assumptions of role model programs
Introduction

Programs that set out, either formally or informally, to use role models to positively influence young people's attitudes or behaviour may have different purposes and be structured differently depending on their underlying theoretical assumptions. In addition, programs may be evaluated in ways that reflect different theoretical perspectives.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the general understanding of the term role model is that it is someone who motivates, inspires or assists others to engage in similar behaviour. The actual mechanisms by which this occurs are seen differently depending on the theoretical perspective adopted. An understanding of these perspectives is important in order to evaluate whether programs fulfil their intended outcomes.

This section of the literature review outlines four different views of the role modelling process, which are summarised in Table 2.1 and then discussed in detail.

Sociological perspective

Verdugo (1995) defines roles from a sociological perspective as:

Table 2.1: Role model programs: theoretical perspectives		
Perspective	*Program focus*	*Example*
Sociological	Changing inappropriate role stereotypes via exposure to alternatives	Successful women scientists or Aborigines as guest speakers
Social cognitive	Changing behaviour via observational learning; may also involve the provision of guided practice and feedback	Celebrities displaying their skills or telling their story; programs to develop particular skills
Sociocultural	Learning jointly constructed in particular settings through scaffolding	Programs involving more experienced others who guide and support young people
Humanist	Developing whole person via caring relationship	Mentoring programs for at-risk youth

patterned, expected behaviors [sic]. *They are based on conventions, mores, folkways, and the morals of society. Social structures, to a large extent, are the interrelations among individuals playing out their roles* (p.678).

The roles we play, therefore, reflect our position in our particular social context. For example, girls learn the role of an adult woman, initially at least, from their own mother, and then in turn act as role models for their own daughters. In this way, patterns of behaviour are perpetuated and role models "pass on system traditions, values, and culture from one to the next generation" (Verdugo 1995, p.678).

Over time, social structures change. Patterns of behaviour, however, may still occur which reflect earlier stereotypes, and which are no longer seen to be socially appropriate or are perpetuating disadvantages. Programs using successful women in non-traditional careers to provide positive role models to adolescent girls are an example of role model programs attempting to break stereotypes and, therefore, change behaviour.
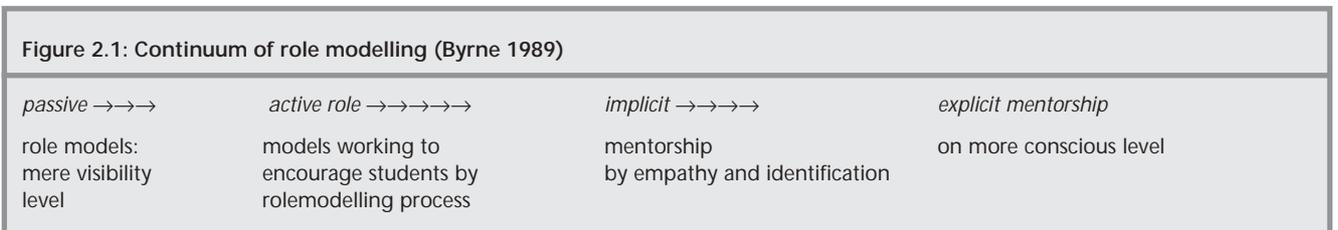
From within a sociological perspective, Byrne (1989) has examined such programs. She questions policies that reflect "an entrenched belief that the existence of more women role models would *automatically and by itself* [author's emphasis] increase female enrolments in the area represented by the female role models" (p.2). She maintains that the behaviour exhibited by the role model (i.e. success in a non-traditional career) must be seen as "normal" to the observer and that many guest speaker type programs may be uneconomical and ineffective. Byrne presents a four-stage role modelling process relating to changing career paths of women where:

- a stereotype is broken through role modelling;
- a student recognises that the model's example can be followed but that it is unusual and therefore undesirable;
- a student sees the role model as normal because the model is part of a critical mass; and
- a student alters a curricular or career choice or has it endorsed.

Byrne (1989) also argues that changing community attitudes is crucial to fostering change in individuals, and that there is a continuum from less effective, passive role modelling to more effective explicit mentoring (see Figure 2.1). This idea of stages of role modelling along a continuum is also reflected in the social cognitive perspective and is similar to the continuum of interaction presented in Chapter 1 (see Table 1.2).

Verdugo (1995) and Marqusee (1995) also question the assumption that visibility of a role model alone will make a difference in behaviour and their points of view are expanded in a later section on the use of ethnic role models.

Figure 2.1: Continuum of role modelling (Byrne 1989)			
passive →→→	*active role* →→→→→→	*implicit* →→→→	*explicit mentorship*
role models: mere visibility level	models working to encourage students by rolemodelling process	mentorship by empathy and identification	on more conscious level

Another function of role models from a sociological perspective is that of providing benchmarks. Individuals with status or power set standards to which others want to aspire in order to achieve a similar measure of social success. Celebrity role models – "persons who are generally revered and recognised by the larger society as powerful, prestigious, and venerable" (Irvine 1989, p.53) are the most common example of this.

Implications of a sociological perspective

The implication for role model programs based on a sociological perspective is that in order to break stereotypes and change young people's actions, observation of successful non-traditional others is needed, but further factors, including support, are also necessary in many cases. Some of the issues raised from a sociological perspective are also reflected in the views held by social cognitive theorists in terms of the social distance, perceived similarity or relevance of the role model. The need for support is also echoed in the humanist perspective.

Social cognitive perspective

Social cognitive theory, also known as social learning theory, proposes that learning and behaviour occur in a social context (Schunk & Zimmerman 1996). It is based on the principle that humans learn by observing the behaviour of others and the consequences resulting from that behaviour. It is not necessary to directly experience those consequences – people are also able to imagine performing a particular behaviour and imagine the resulting consequences – known as vicarious reinforcement (McInerney & McInerney 1998). "Behaviour" is considered in its broadest sense and may be any observable words or actions.

Individuals can also know how to perform a particular behaviour but never actually perform it because of anticipated negative consequences. Similarly they may decide to perform a behaviour only in a particular setting because they anticipate positive outcomes for themselves in that setting (McInerney & McInerney 1998). Learned behaviour is therefore not necessarily implemented by the learner, and may never be, if the environmental conditions are not conducive to this. This echoes Byrne's (1989) contention that observation alone is not enough to change behaviour.

Another important concept in social cognitive theory is the distinction between mastery (or expert) and coping models. As Schunk and Zimmerman (1996)

explain, mastery models "demonstrate faultless performance from the outset" whereas coping models "initially demonstrate the typical behavioral deficiencies and possible fears of observers but gradually improve their performance and gain self-confidence" (p.164). Research findings suggest that observing peer coping models enhances children's self-efficacy more than observing peer mastery models.

Speizer (1981) explains that a role model is a person who "possesses skills and displays techniques which the actor lacks … and from whom, by observation and comparison with his own performance, the actor can learn" (p.693). In order to maximise observational learning, there are four main processes that need to occur (McInerney & McInerney 1998, p.123). These processes are presented in Figure 2.2. Each of these processes will be described and implications for programs using role models suggested.

Figure 2.2: Processes of observational learning	
Attention:	Observers must attend to the model.
Retention:	Observers must be able to retain what they have observed.
Reproduction:	Opportunities must be given for the observer or learner to reproduce the desired behaviour with constructive and instructive feedback being crucial.
Motivation:	There must be some form of motivation if the behaviour is to be performed.
(adapted from McInerney & McInerney 1998, p.123)	

Attention

Individuals must attend to the model's behaviour in the first place if there is to be a possibility of change in the observer. This is thought to be more likely when the model has characteristics such as those described by McInerney and McInerney (1998) and listed in Figure 2.3.

As in the sociological perspective, celebrity role models may be seen to possess many of these features and are therefore likely to act as models simply because individuals are likely to pay attention to them. These features are also useful in examining the type of people who act as role models in various programs, and the structure of such programs.

Similarity, the final feature of effective models from

Figure 2.3: Features of effective role models	
Attractiveness	desirable physical and emotional characteristics
Social power	capacity to deliver rewards and punishments
Status	perceived importance of the model
Competence	specifically in the area of interest
Nurturance	perceived concern for the observer
Interaction	degree of contact; energy of contact
Similarity	characteristics in common between observer and model e.g. age, gender, interests
(adapted from McInerney & McInerney 1998, p.123)	

the above list, is thought to be particularly important especially when an individual holds doubt about their own ability to perform well (Schunk & Zimmerman 1996). In other words, if the observers have low self-efficacy (belief in their ability to perform an action), they are more likely to pay attention to a model seen as similar in some way to themselves. This is also more likely if a behaviour is not seen to have any immediate benefits for the observer.

The features of nurturance and interaction are not likely to be characteristics of celebrity role models, however, because an individual is unlikely to actually meet the celebrity. These features are more likely to occur in everyday interactions such as in families, schools and communities. The feature of nurturance also emerges as being important in the humanist theoretical perspective discussed later.

Other features of the observed behaviour that influence the likelihood of someone paying attention to it, are that:
- the behaviour must be distinctive or noticeable;
- it must be perceived as leading to relevant outcomes for the observer; and
- any information must be presented at an appropriate pace and level of complexity for the observer (McInerney & McInerney 1998).

Retention and reproduction

Individuals must be able to code the information observed in some way in order to retain it, and various teaching and learning strategies may assist this process (McInerney & McInerney 1998).

Corrective feedback, for example, is particularly important for reproduction to occur. Individuals need to practice the various components of a behaviour in

order to reproduce it. The apprenticeship model is based on this principle. In other words, believing an action is relevant and important and attending to it are not enough for that action to be reproduced – guided practice with feedback is needed.

This final issue is particularly relevant to role model programs for young people in terms of how skills are taught and in terms of what opportunities for practice are provided.

Motivation

As mentioned above, social cognitive theory suggests that a behaviour may be observed and retained, and an individual may be capable of reproducing it, but they may choose not to do so. In a violent neighbourhood, for example, a young person might approach conflict resolution through physical and verbal aggression, even though they are able to use calm, verbal problem-solving in a structured group setting.

Receiving positive feedback during practice encourages or motivates observers or learners to continue to practise the observed behaviour. Vicarious consequences (those observed as being obtained by others) may also motivate an individual to perform a behaviour. Similarly, if a behaviour is perceived as being useful or has already been reinforced, it is more likely that an individual will be motivated to perform it (McInerney & McInerney 1998; Schunk & Zimmerman 1996).

Implications of a social cognitive perspective

What are the implications of this theoretical perspective for programs aiming to maximise the influence of others on young people? In order for a young person to at least pay attention to a particular model, that model must be seen as attractive, important or relevant in some way to the young person. Celebrity and expert role models are often used in programs to gain the attention of young people, and research relating to this particular use of role models will be discussed later.

For some young people, models very similar to themselves who can demonstrate improvements in performance or self-confidence (coping models) may be more effective than expert models who demonstrate only the final, faultless performance. For an observed behaviour to be acquired, opportunities for practice, with guidance and feedback, are essential.

The settings in which young people learn and then are expected to perform certain skills are also very important and this has implications for programs endeavouring to teach young people skills in one

setting, that need to be transferred to other settings. Encouragement and recognition are crucial for continuing motivation to change.

Sociocultural perspective

Current educational theory and research emphasise the socially constructed nature of learning – "individuals construct meaning for themselves but within the context of interaction with others" (Kerka 1998, p.2). From this theoretical perspective, experts or more able others, initially perform an action then assist the learner by jointly solving problems within a particular setting. Scaffolds or aids are provided by the more capable or experienced person – whether an adult or a peer. These supports are gradually withdrawn until finally the learner is able to independently perform the action as the processes involved have been internalised.

Although the actual learning process may appear similar to the modelling process described above in the social cognitive theory, the belief here is that all learning primarily occurs this way – within a particular social setting with "the individual making personal meaning from socially shared perceptions" (McInerney & McInerney 1998, p.6). Learning is "situated" within that context.

The role of others is therefore crucial for cultural practices to become shared understandings and to then be internalised by individual learners. To be most effective, teachers, trainers, coaches, mentors etc. need to provide "authentic, experiential learning opportunities as well as an intense interpersonal relationship through which social learning takes place" (Kerka 1998, p.2). More experienced peers may also assist in this way.

Implications of a sociocultural perspective

This theoretical perspective has a number of implications for programs that use others to influence and assist young people. Of crucial importance are the types of learning support (demonstrations and scaffolds) provided, the nature of the learning setting or context (authentic experiences) and the nature of the interpersonal relationships within that context.

As with the sociological and social cognitive perspectives, supportive interpersonal relationships are needed for the final stage of change in an individual's knowledge, skills or actions. This leads to a further theoretical perspective describing why role models are important in the lives of young people (and those not so young!) – a humanist perspective.

Humanist perspective

From a humanist perspective, the focus of role model programs is likely to be that of the personal growth of the people within the program – both the young people and the role models. When considering the features of effective role models (see Figure 2.3) from a humanist perspective, the features of nurturance and interaction are the most salient.

Erikson's psychosocial theory of personality development reflects a humanist approach and informs us about the role others play in young people's lives (McInerney & McInerney 1998). The adolescent stage of identity formation is one where young people begin to test their identity in the wider world. Becoming members of social networks outside the family grows increasingly important and helps define for young people where they belong. Role confusion may result "when an adolescent feels lost, unattached or confused in social identity" (McInerney & McInerney 1998, p.349).

Hamilton and Darling (1989) explain how unrelated adults, particularly mentors, are important to adolescents as "they provide both the ideals that are necessary for identity formation and the skills that allow those ideals to be realized" (p.126). As young people are driven to differentiate themselves from their parents, they become more open to the influence of other adults. Increasing age and independence also permit more opportunities for contacts outside the home. Kerka (1998, p.3) cites Kaye and Jacobson's 1996 discussion of mentoring where "with trust as the foundation of the relationship, mentors give protégés a safe place to try out ideas, skills, and roles with minimal risk".

Mentors and non-related adults therefore play an important role as they:
- are proof that a successful transition to adulthood can be made and, if the adolescent identifies with the mentor, this may help them believe that they too can make a successful transition;
- may exhibit different skills and knowledge from those possessed by family members and so give a valuable insight into the wider world;
- allow adolescents to be in a close, meaningful relationship with an adult other than a parent and this more informal adult relationship prepares the young person for their own adulthood (Hamilton & Darling 1989).

The general importance of socioemotional development for young people is also highlighted in other

social psychology literature. Good social adjustment relates to positive social and personal outcomes such as prosocial behaviour and self-esteem. Positive interpersonal relationships with teachers and peers can:

- reinforce specific values, attitudes and behaviours;
- satisfy social needs; and
- promote healthy socioemotional development (Wentzel 1996).

Maslow, a humanist, states that people have a need to belong – to feel connected to and cared for by others (McInerney & McInerney 1998). This is similar to the concept of affiliative motivation (Barry & King 1998). As explained by Hymel et al. (1996), relatedness "refers to the interpersonal attachments and bonds developed between individuals, and is based on a fundamental striving for contact and alliance with others, enhancing the well-being of all involved" (p.317).

Recent research examining the protective factors that develop resiliency in young people indicates that feelings of caring and connectedness with adults and with peers are crucial in acting as protective factors (Zubrick et al. 1995). Resnick, Harris and Blum (1993) conclude that "fostering a sense of caring and connectedness between adolescents and adults should be an integral part of interventions designed to promote resiliency" (p.S7).

Scales and Gibbons (1996) suggest that a relationship with at least one caring adult, not necessarily a parent, is the single most important element in protecting young people with multiple risk factors in their lives. Gottlieb and Sylvestre (1996) focused on the issue of social support in relationships between older adolescents and adults and maintained that young people may be "protected" by:

- a supportive personal relationship with an adult;
- the presence of an adult with whom a youth closely identifies; and
- the participation in and commitment to activities that enable the youth to physically separate from the family and gain recognition.

From the humanist perspective, peers may also provide social support. As three of the perspectives suggest a role for peers as role models, the nature and importance of peers' influence will be further discussed in a later section of this report.

Implications of a humanist perspective

When developing a program with a humanist focus, the main areas of interest are the personal development of the young person (or protégé in a mentoring program) and even of the mentor as there are mutual benefits. The role of the mentor or supporter is to build on the skills, competencies and strengths of the young person or protégé through the development of mutual trust. Building strong, positive relationships between adults and young people and between young people themselves is crucial for optimising socioemotional health and well-being.

Integrating the perspectives

The different theoretical perspectives outlined above may lead to programs having somewhat differing aims and structure. For example, programs aiming at challenging and changing stereotypical behaviours may focus on giving previously disadvantaged groups in society new ideas or opportunities in terms of career choices. Programs aiming at developing academic, work or life skills may provide models who demonstrate these desirable behaviours in varying degrees of detail. When developing and supporting the whole person is seen as the primary aim, the focus of a program may be less important than the nature of the relationships formed between the people involved.

Although the theoretical perspectives may lead to programs with different desired outcomes and, therefore, evaluation methods, there are similarities that may be drawn to provide a more integrated picture.

The role models

Role models may be defined broadly. They may provide an example of someone who has succeeded outside a traditional societal role, has overcome a particular social or physical disadvantage, has gained status in our society or who possesses particular skills, knowledge or personal attributes that are seen to be desirable in a particular setting.

Purposes of programs

Role model programs aim to change young people's beliefs about themselves or to develop skills, and therefore, to change (enhance or develop) their behaviour in some way. Programs may also aim to support a young person who is making such changes.

The theoretical perspectives described indicate that other people are important in the development and well-being of young people as they provide the two essential functions of modelling and support. Through modelling or demonstrations by certain types of role models, young people are made aware of certain

knowledge, skills and behaviours that they may perceive as desirable.

For these to be internalised or learned, however, two kinds of support are also required. Support in learning occurs through guidance and feedback from a more expert other. Socioemotional support occurs through the development of a positive relationship between the young person and role model or mentor.

Stages of role modelling

In order to be most effective, from the theoretical perspectives presented, more than exposure to or observation of role models is required. There are stages of development in the way beliefs and behaviour change as a result of exposure to role models. In short, the model's behaviour must be seen to be desirable in some way, the learner must have some assistance in order to adopt that behaviour and any changes made must be supported by the individual's environment.

Review of empirical research

Introduction

As previously indicated, a variety of research findings may contribute to our understanding of what makes an effective role model program. In general, the research reviewed examines who influences young people and the nature of this influence. Researchers have asked questions reflecting different theoretical viewpoints and different purposes. The review is structured around those people who may informally or formally act as role models for young people.

The literature examined for this review comes from such diverse areas as:

- descriptions and evaluations of programs for young people;
- research examining who young people say they admire and with whom they interact; and
- research asking adults about who in retrospect helped or supported them in their lives.

To begin this review, the role of other people in general in the lives of young people will be examined in the light of current research. This indicates the range of others who may act as role models – whether intentionally or not – as well as some of the functions they perform.

Following this, findings from research relating to different types of possible role models will be presented. Clearly not all programs will use all types of role models and some people who act as role models

may not be incorporated into formal programs. The research findings may, however, inform us about who may act as role models and how they may be used most effectively. Types of role models discussed are media figures, celebrities, non-traditional adults, teachers, parents, mentors and peers. It may be seen that these are the role models that appear in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 in Chapter 1 and in general are attached to programs that involve an increasing degree of interaction between them and the young people.

The role of other people

Who are the significant others for young people?

It is difficult to provide a definitive answer to this question as research regarding those whom young people see as role models or as significant others has asked different questions for different reasons. Some have asked open questions such as whom young people saw as being "very important" non-parental adults (Greenburger, Chen & Beam 1998). Others have focused on one particular type of role model and asked young people, for example, to nominate their favourite sportsmen and sportswomen (Ewens & Lashuk 1989). Others have endeavoured to compare the relative impact of different role models such as parents versus peers (McCallum 1994). Still others have examined the impact of programs such as those aiming to encourage girls or minority groups into non-traditional careers by using appropriate role models (Kelly, Whyte & Smail 1984; Irvine 1989). Some studies have then examined the nature of the actual role these significant others might play in the lives of young people.

The next section of the review will examine research findings relating to the general role others play in young people's lives. It will become evident that the role others play is complex and that their impact on young people depends on many factors already suggested by the theories. Of importance are the characteristics of the role models, the characteristics and perceptions of the young people and the settings in which the modelling, learning and ultimate performance occur.

Literature relating to the general role of others in the lives of young people

The theoretical perspectives outlined earlier suggest that others are important because they demonstrate certain behaviours as well as offer support to individuals in changing their behaviours. As already indicated, research in this area has used different perspectives and

methodologies. Bø (1996) suggests that because of these differences there is no satisfying and comprehensive picture of young people's social worlds. He then presents findings that show there are a variety of others – younger children, peers and adults – who are important in the social networks of adolescents. Other authors reinforce the view that a range of related and non-related adults and peers may be important in different ways.

Sosniak (1985b), as part of a study examining factors influencing the development of highly talented adults, also supports the idea that a range of individuals may have an influence on development. In particular, "families, teachers, peers, and others play a critical role in what an individual learns, how well he or she learns it, and how long he or she continues the learning process" (p.497). The nature of the relationship with others was found to be very important. For successful individuals the relationship led to feelings of conviction and self-trust, successful development occurring in "the context of supportive and encouraging adults who often had confidence in them before they had confidence in themselves" (p.501).

Scales and Gibbons (1996) review literature that identifies the non-parental adults who positively affect adolescents' lives, the kinds and frequency of contact between them and the functions that such relationships serve – particularly in early adolescence. Young people reported many types of related and non-related adults as being important. These adults also offered different types of support depending on the nature of the issue or setting in question. The size of the support network and the young person's satisfaction with the network were also seen to be important. Non-parental adults performed various functions such as teacher-model, guide-supporter, challenger, controller-antagonist, and pal-companion. The authors pose many as yet unanswered research questions, including the way in which gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic factors interact in relation to adolescents' relationships with non-parental adults. Scales and Gibbons maintain that it is the interaction of variables that is essential to understanding risk and resilience. For example, socio-economic factors are seen as important as some research has indicated that mentoring programs may be more effective for low-income adolescents who are much more likely than others to spend at least three hours a day unsupervised, since mentors might compensate for this lack of supervision.

Greenburger, Chen and Beam (1998) explored similar issues. They asked 11th graders whether they had a VIP (very important person) in their lives, other than their parent. A VIP was defined as someone at least 21 years old who has had a significant influence on the young person and on whom they could count in times of need. Fifteen categories of VIPs emerged: no VIP, grandparent, aunt/uncle, cousin, sibling, parent's significant other, friend's parent, neighbour, older friend, relatives of boyfriend/girlfriend, teacher, coach, counsellor, church representative or other. Siblings and aunt/uncle were the most common categories named. Girls were more likely to report the presence of VIPs in their lives and both girls and boys tended to report more same-sex VIPs. The VIPs performed several functions, mostly relating to personal support (e.g. motivation for schoolwork, for interpersonal problems) and practical support (e.g. for interests, financial aid and advice). They also offered companionship and fun but only 6–9% suggested that they acted as role models. One conclusion the authors reached was that important relationships are formed by young people in contexts other than those typically examined by researchers (Greenburger, Chen & Beam 1998).

Galbo and Demetrulias (1996) asked university students to recollect those who had been significant adults during their lives. Parents represented 56.3% of all the related adults, with grandparents, aunts/uncles, brothers/sisters and other relatives also mentioned as significant. Teachers, including coaches and counsellors, were the most frequently selected non-related adults. A parent's friend and a friend's parent were also nominated, as were adults having a religious affiliation. When asked the reasons why they spent time with that person, females were more likely to say they wanted advice about personal problems and chose significant adults "who accepted you as you were". Males said they liked to spend time with adults with similar interests so they "could do things together" (p.412).

Gottlieb and Sylvestre (1996) examined the nature of significant adolescent–adult relationships in "real world" settings (rather than in formal programs) and concluded that:

Closer and more personal relationships between adolescents and selected adults were marked by informality, spontaneity, acceptance, sustained interaction, willingness to break the rigid mold [sic] that characterised the majority of contact with adults, and a measure of mutual disclosure (p.171).

Hamilton and Darling (1989) found that 82% of university students could identify at least one unrelated adult as an important person in their lives.

Parents represented the majority of adults seen to be a mentor, and siblings and same-age peers also performed this role. Unrelated mentors were more prevalent for boys in middle and later adolescence. The roles these adults performed were categorised as mentor (45% identified someone who might be seen as a mentor), supporter, companion, dependent, antagonist and challenger. The authors suggest that unrelated adults seen as mentors act in a complementary way to parents – reinforcing what the parents already do. An opposing hypothesis also discussed is that adolescents whose parents do not do what mentors do (teach, challenge and provide a set of admired values) may seek other adults to perform these functions.

Finally, Ingall (1997, p.20) also concludes that "heroes and role models, whether peers, celebrities, parents or parent surrogates, or significant adults, serve an important function in the development of middle school-age youths".

What other factors affect the influence of role models?

Individual factors such as the self-esteem and personal circumstances of the young person are important in determining how influential a role model may be (e.g. Duck 1990). Role models might also have differential effects depending on the age and experience of the young person. For example, Sosniak (1985a) found three distinct phases in the development of talent: initiation, development and perfection. Regnier, Salmela and Russell (1993) explain how these phases are common across various fields (world-class swimmers, tennis players, neurosurgeons, concert pianists, mathematicians and sculptors) and have implications for the changing roles of teachers and mentors. The phases are not linked specifically to age, but rather to development of expertise in a particular area. For example, pianists began their first phase much earlier than mathematicians, but all went through similar phases.

The first phase is *initiation* where the focus is on play and exploration. The mentor's role here is to kindle a love in the child for the talent area through "enormous encouragement of interest and involvement, stimulation, freedom to explore, and immediate rewards" (Sosniak 1985a, p.434). The second phase, *development* focuses on precision and discipline where the mentor, a person with considerable technical knowledge, takes a strong personal interest in the young person. The relationship with the mentor is one of respect. The final stage is one of *perfection* where the

initiation of ideas shifts from the mentor to the performer. Higher and higher levels are demanded and the level of required effort is increased, with the mentor and young person forming strong emotional love/hate ties. Throughout these phases, parents play an important role in seeking appropriate mentors, in providing financial and emotional support, and in sharing the excitement of the young person's progress.

These findings perhaps have more obvious implications for those working in programs for talented and gifted young people, but these phases are interesting if seen to be sequential. The components of initial enjoyment and fun, as well as discipline and skill development, with eventual independence have implications for all programs aiming to develop skills.

The final stage of the modelling process outlined by social cognitive theory is independent performance generalised to other settings. From the sociocultural perspective, the endpoint is internalised knowledge. "For all the dedication of their coaches and parents, eventually the athletes have to do this work by themselves and for themselves" (Sosniak 1985a, p.436). Schunk and Zimmerman (1996) also explain how commentary or feedback from a more knowledgeable other can prevent performers from becoming discouraged with their performance. They add that:

> *… adults must fade social and instructional supports and encourage students to work on tasks on their own. This should be done gradually, as students abstract the underlying learning strategy and receive progress feedback* (p.165).

The idea of different stages to a relationship is echoed throughout this report. In particular it is discussed again when the use of mentors is reviewed. Mentors gradually withdraw support as a mentoring relationship draws to a close.

Summary

To summarise, research examining who are the significant others for young people reveals that a wide range of others is seen to be important – parents, siblings, peers, teachers etc. Having a wide and supportive social network and developing quality relationships with adults other than parents is vital for young people.

Characteristics of the young people and of the role models, such as age or experience, gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic level, may affect who is seen as significant by young people, who might act as role models and the nature of any influence they might have.

Research relating to varying categories of possible role models is reviewed in the following sections.

Media figures

Real and fictional characters portrayed via the various media formats are often said to act as role models for young people. Concerns regarding the impact of violence portrayed as acceptable in video games, television and movies are well documented (Walsh 1995). There are also concerns that the media focus on the negative behaviour of young people and so make this seem more interesting, exciting or acceptable, particularly to those young people without role models exhibiting more positive behaviour. One aim of some role model programs is to counteract this possible negative effect by, for example, portraying young people in a more positive light, or by having high status personalities explicitly condemn certain behaviour such as drug use.

Opinion is divided about the impact that observing negative behaviours of presumably attractive individuals may have on young people. For example, some people strongly maintain that violence portrayed on television negatively influences young people – that there is "a demonstrated link between violent entertainment and violent behavior" (Walsh 1995, p.78). Others suggest that resilience against violence may be developed through such experiences as using positive role models (American Psychological Association 1996).

Gauntlett (1999) expresses concerns with findings about the effects of violence in the media on young people, and critiques the methodological assumptions and processes used to link media violence with violent behaviour in young people. For example he states that in this research children are generally treated as inadequate and deficient in their development, yet other research demonstrates that children do understand mass media and can discuss it cynically and intelligently. Ingall (1997, p.19), on examining research relating to adolescents' heroes and role models, also suggests that "adolescents are more impervious to popular culture than we think".

When considering media figures as a positive influence, Gauntlett (1999) presents findings from a seminar where university students reflected on elements of popular media/culture that are or have been personally meaningful for them in terms of influencing their identity formation. Not everyone offered an important media person – some emphasised that known individuals such as friends, parents or partner were the most meaningful personal influences on their own sense of identity. However, everyone listed a few important or significant media icons, particularly those such as pop stars who had been important in the teenage years.

For these university students (presumably interested in media, although this is not clear from the discussion), several themes of influence emerged. Traditional ideas of family structure, sexuality and other attitudes were challenged through figures such as Boy George and Madonna who also conferred legitimacy on those who felt themselves to be different. Superman and Wonderwoman presented as "aspirational and empowering" icons and other real life heroes, again like Madonna, showed that people could achieve what they wanted with their lives. Some particularly identified with media figures they felt were similar in some way to themselves – for example, those coming from the same geographical area. The appeal of other media figures was that they seemed "authentic", "ordinary" or "one of us".

Summary

To summarise, media figures may have negative or positive influences on young people, and the degree of influence may vary depending on the characteristics of the role model and of the young person. Research in this area presents varying findings and has been criticised as displaying some methodological problems. Many figures portrayed in the media are also celebrities in the sense that they are real people who are widely known. The following section discusses celebrity role models in more detail.

Celebrities

Some Australian research involving celebrity role models

There have been some interesting findings from three Australian studies that focus on or include celebrities as role models. Ewens and Lashuk (1989), concerned with young people's participation in sporting activities, asked 10- to 14-year-olds a number of questions about their own sporting interests and aspirations. They were also asked to name the adult they would most like to be like, and "the most important person in the world". Athletes, entertainers and family members were named most often as the person they would most like to be like. In terms of the most important person in the world, only 4% named athletes, 42% named a family member (usually a parent), 17% said "me" and 16%

named religious or political leaders. The finding that girls chose less athletes as role models than boys was explained in terms of family influence, media coverage, sport administration and organisation, and a lack of female role models. One of the writers' conclusions also was that future athletes cannot be attracted and retained "simply through the effects of hero worship" (Ewens & Lashuk 1989, p.20).

Another Australian study, also conducted some time ago, compared students in Years 5–9 in 1988 with a study conducted in 1956 – in pre-television times. Participants were asked to name three people they would most like to be like and three they would most not like to be like. Compared with the earlier study, there was "a marked shift away from the dominance of parent and parent surrogates as ideals towards the predominance of media figures" (Duck 1990, p.26). Boys tended to choose sporting heroes, pop stars, actors and TV characters. Although girls tended to nominate more friends, parents and other relatives than boys, primary-school-aged girls favoured pop stars, and high school girls mostly nominated film stars, TV characters and other relatives. Children's self-esteem was also measured, and boys with lower self-esteem chose more unrealistic or fantasy characters than those with high self-esteem.

A third, more recent, Australian study interested in the use of celebrity role models investigated the effects of various forms of sponsorship strategies on 10- to 14-year-olds attending three-day football clinics conducted by sporting coaches in Western Australia (Corti et al. 1997). Six conditions were compared in terms of how well young people remembered and understood the anti-smoking messages being promoted.

The role models used were also associated with a longer-term promotion of the anti-smoking message, and even the control group, with no mention explicitly made at their clinic, were able to recall this. The authors call this promotion by association. "Thus long-term high-profile sponsorship (in this case three years) appears to be effective in promoting health messages to children" (Corti et al. 1997, p.284).

In relation to the actual three-day clinics, those exposed to personal endorsement by external role models were three times more aware of the health messages than those exposed only to signage or to all the approaches combined. However, they were no more likely to be aware of the message than those who had the message endorsed only by the coaches, or than those who only saw the message promoted on clothing.

The authors suggest that the promotional clothing was effective because the T-shirts were visual stimuli placed in close proximity to the children throughout the clinic because of the ongoing presence of the coaches. "In addition, there is also an important dimension of personal endorsement inferred when a role model wears a T-shirt with a message, even if that message is never verbally communicated" (Corti et al. 1997, p.285).

Positive and negative influences of celebrity role models

The issue has already been raised regarding the possible negative influences of role models, particularly those seen as attractive to young people, who demonstrate behaviours that are seen to be undesirable. There is also doubt that role models exhibiting desirable characteristics always have a positive influence on young people. Lockwood and Kunda (1997) suggest that observing outstanding individuals may have one of three effects.

First, there may be no impact – someone may view a superb performance by an Olympic athlete and experience no change in their opinion of themselves or in their behaviour. Second, there is a common belief or "cultural cliché that superstars, that is, individuals of outstanding achievement, can serve as role models to others, inspiring them and motivating them to do their utmost best" (Lockwood & Kunda 1997, p.91).

Finally, there is also a view prevalent in our society "that superstars can demoralize and deflate less outstanding others" (Lockwood & Kunda 1997, p.91). For example, a "superwoman" who holds a successful job, runs a family and always appears well groomed can make other women feel incompetent. A less able sibling may be demoralised by the successes of a gifted brother or sister. Little research has addressed the question of whether and how people's self-views are affected by outstanding individuals.

Lockwood and Kunda (1997, 1999) examine in some detail the nature of the influences of "superstars" on young people. They do not use well-known celebrity figures, but rather those who have achieved outstanding results in various areas. In terms of this project, these "superstars" are like the individuals selected as guest speakers who tell their story in the hope of inspiring young people to greater achievements.

As previously stated, Lockwood and Kunda suggest that exposure to such outstanding others sometimes has no impact, sometimes demoralises or deflates and sometimes results in self-enhancement and inspiration. Two important features of the observed superstar were found: relevance and attainability.

Another person may be seen to be relevant if there are similarities in features (e.g. same gender or from same family), similarities in circumstances (e.g. same geographical background) or similarities in domain (i.e. area of expertise or interest such as a particular sport, career or study area). University students were asked to rate themselves and "superstars" they read about in relation to a number of adjectives such as being bright or unintelligent. They were also asked to rate how relevant the superstars were to them and why. Superstars were offered in the students' intended professional area and in unrelated areas.

Reading about relevant stars – those from the same professional area – had a positive impact on participants, but reading about irrelevant targets had no impact. The authors conclude, "the subjective experience of inspiration by an outstanding other is quite common and is particularly likely to be induced by relevant superstars" (Lockwood & Kunda 1997, p.96).

The "superstars" in this study were all at a further stage in their careers than were the participants. The authors then examined whether the nature of a superstar's influence (i.e. positive or negative) would depend on the perceived attainability of that superstar's success. Both first- and fourth-year students read about "star" fourth-year students in a relevant area of study. First-years found them to be inspiring but fourth-years rated the targets as less relevant and much less inspiring. For first-years, the targets provided a "template" of how to go about achieving success as "a role model whose achievements seem attainable can help individuals develop their goals in more practical, task-oriented ways" (Lockwood & Kunda 1997, p.98).

The fourth-years, for whom this success was already too late, made comments that indicated they were protecting their self-esteem. For example they said that they believed comparisons to be pointless, that they preferred to judge themselves by their own standards rather than by referring to others' achievements, or that they had too little information about the target to make a reasonable comparison. In other words, they probably played down the similarities between the role model and themselves to justify viewing the star as irrelevant to them and therefore non-threatening. These upward comparisons therefore did not then pose a threat to self-esteem – they did not lead to self-deflation.

Normally reflection on a superstar's success will inspire young people to generate such hopes and achievements for their future selves. But in a further study (Lockwood & Kunda 1999) it was found that if they are reminded of the limits of their own abilities

through being asked to think about their best achievements just before this, their inferiority is temporarily highlighted and this does not have a motivating effect. The authors suggest that highlighting an individual's inferiority to another in an attempt to motivate them will be counterproductive. Strategies such as saying "Why can't you be more like your brother?" for example, or team mate, may lead to a sense of inferiority and lack of will to do better.

On a positive note though, it may be possible to increase the relevance of seemingly irrelevant superstars by stressing some similarities to the individual. For example stating achievements in general rather than specific terms may be more relevant. Focusing on achieving the top honour in a particular field, rather than an Olympic medal in a specific sport, would make a star's achievements more relevant.

This has implications for celebrity and high-achieving role models who are asked to give "motivational" talks to young people. They need to find common ground or make their own circumstances or goals relevant in some way to those of the young people involved. From Lockwood and Kunda's (1997) perspective:

> A star's success can seem unattainable when the star is a peer so already unreachable or when the star's success is so extreme as to appear beyond most people's grasp. It seems like the ideal role model is a person who is somewhat older and at a more advanced career stage than the target individuals and who has achieved what these individuals hope for – outstanding but not impossible success at an enterprise in which they too wish to excel (p.102).

Summary

Young people do pay attention to celebrities, but not necessarily to a greater extent, in terms of learning or admiration, than to others in their environment. Any impact of such celebrities may be positive or negative. To be most effective in terms of inspiring young people, the celebrities and their achievements need to be seen to be relevant in some way, and their success must be seen to be attainable. If celebrities then are not the most significant others for most young people, who are?

Non-traditional adults

Research findings suggest that non-parental adults may play a significant role in young people's lives via both

modelling and support. Various programs have endeavoured to use adults with particular characteristics as role models for young people in an attempt to increase their relevance and therefore their potential impact. Such characteristics include ethnicity, gender and similar geographical backgrounds.

Ethnic role models

Verdugo (1995), from a sociological perspective, discusses the idea of using Hispanic faculty as role models. The belief is that by seeing Hispanic staff in positions of power and status within and outside the educational institution, Hispanic students will be motivated to remain in school and achieve academically. Verdugo questions this assumption by suggesting that Hispanic faculty members actually have poor status and that students will not necessarily want to emulate this. Broader social strategies are needed to address such issues.

Irvine (1989) suggests that ethnically similar teachers may be more important in a support role, rather than a modelling one, and specifically examines the assumed importance of black American teachers as role models for black American students. High school seniors were asked who their role models were, and teachers were not cited as role models. This was said to be because they were not seen to be held in high regard in the community.

The people selected as role models were said to be either familial or celebrity. Familial role models are said to be "persons who have long-term, intimate, family/kinship relationships with black students and who advocate, support and protect them", whereas celebrity role models are "persons who are generally revered and recognized by larger society as powerful, prestigious, and venerable" (Irvine 1989, p.53). Celebrity figures were said to be role models and this was not seen as an appropriate role for teachers. Familial figures were seen more as mentors and this was suggested as a more appropriate role for ethnically similar teachers who might serve as advocates for students, as counsellors, advisers and parent figures.

Marqusee (1995) also considers the sociological implications of using ethnic role models. He points out a contradiction that reflects Lockwood and Kunda's (1997) discussion of the importance of perceived attainability of the modelled success.

> *The purpose of the black role model is to provide an example to black people of personal success achieved within the laws and customs of the realm. Yet all but a*

tiny minority of blacks have no hope of achieving such success within those laws and customs (Marqusee 1995, pp.9-10).

The links between ethnic role models and social and political issues are also discussed by Tatz (1995). The role of sport for Australian Indigenous people is outlined as having:

> *… paved the way for respect from white Australia; it has given Aborigines a sense of worth and pride, especially since they have had to overcome the twin hurdles of racism and their opponents; it has shown Aborigines that using their bodies is still the one and only way they can compete on equal terms with an often hostile, certainly indifferent, mainstream society* (p.54).

Ethnically similar adults may not necessarily be seen as role models but they are often used in programs for high-risk youth. Yancey (1998), for example, describes the potential problems of adolescents in foster care – particularly those from African-American and Latino backgrounds and the PRIDE program designed to assist them. Negative images of these minority groups are prevalent in the dominant society and for youth in foster care these images are "unfiltered by parental racial/ethnic socialization" (p.253).

The PRIDE (Personal and Racial/ethnic Identity Development and Enhancement) program uses ethnically relevant role models in interactive group sessions centring on personal growth through increased knowledge and interpersonal skills. Recurrent themes in the sessions were those such as personal empowerment, the importance of following talents and interests in choosing a career, coping psychologically with anger and other negative emotions, and enhancing well-being through nutrition, exercise and avoidance of substance misuse/abuse.

Ethnically similar adult role models acted as relevant, coping models and the young people expressed relief that adults had been able to overcome negative experiences similar to their own. Evaluation indicated that over time the group dynamics changed with groups forming more promptly and lasting longer and with increased verbal engagement and self-disclosure. Various practical and methodological difficulties are discussed relating to carrying out and evaluating programs in a complex natural environment such as this, but:

> *it is in this milieu that interventions aimed at significantly altering the lives of at-risk youth must be*

systematically developed, implemented, and rigorously evaluated (Yancey 1998, p.267).

Ethnicity alone is not the only important characteristic of who is seen as a role model. Race, self-esteem and gender were found by Freedman-Doan (1997) to be important in determining who were selected as hero figures by 950 Grade 8 students. Galbo and Demetrulias (1996), when asking students to nominate significant adults, also found both ethnic and gender differences. Although most students nominated significant adults of the same sex, males identified twice as many adults from ethnic minorities than did females who identified mostly Caucasian adults. Also, females were more likely than males to nominate grandparents and kindergarten to Grade 6 teachers, and males were more likely to nominate Grade 9–12 teachers. The researchers suggest, however, that the quality of the relationship is more important than gender or ethnicity, and maintain, "other adults who are not related or not alike ethnically or in gender can fulfil important needs and should not be overlooked as a potential resource" (p.418). They recommend the use of mentoring programs.

Gender role models

As indicated in some of the above research, the gender of a young person may influence which role models are seen as relevant. Research relating to the impact of role models in making non-traditional career choices for girls is one example of research regarding the use of gender role models. This research tends to support the view that presenting or modelling a behaviour in itself is not enough for behavioural change in an observer. This idea has been raised already in discussions of the sociological and social cognitive theoretical perspectives.

Kelly, Whyte and Smail (1984) evaluated programs using workshops for teachers, visiting speakers and senior female students to change teacher and student attitudes and student subject choice regarding science and technology. Although attitudes changed, these processes had little impact on subject choice. Kelly suggests that for educational change, you need to do three things – increase knowledge, change attitudes and then change behaviour.

Byrne (1989, 1993) discusses problems with definitions and methodology in programs using women as role models in non-traditional areas. She questions the assumption of a simple cause–effect relationship between girls seeing or hearing inspiring women and

then altering their curricular or vocational choice. For example, research findings are presented that do not support the hypothesis that increasing the number and proportion of women academics will necessarily and by itself increase female enrolments in that discipline at universities. Byrne suggests that programs using women as guest speakers are a waste of women's scarce time and of public money. Updating educational materials and media representations of men and women as successful and happy in non-traditional roles would be more effective.

Byrne suggests that it is crucial that the role models are seen as normal and this relates to Lockwood and Kunda's (1997) discussion of relevance. Willis (1989) also states that it is essential to convince girls that these women are not taking a risk of being different or non-normal. Having "special" women scientists may highlight them as being unusual. As Carpenter, Fleishman and Western (1989) point out, parents and peers also play a crucial role as they help determine what is normal for career choice in a particular environment.

Brown (1991) reviews research regarding the use of role models to increase the participation of girls in maths and science. She concludes that evidence is mixed although there is an indication that occupational role models can help break down stereotypes and perhaps influence actual subject choice. An evaluation of an Australian project is discussed where successful career women visited Year 10 girls and their parents for career nights. Groups were small and informal interaction between the girls, their parents and the role models was possible. The parents, through their attendance, were also clearly supportive of their daughters' interests. Evidence of positive results including changes in subject choices was found and Brown (1991) concludes:

> *… perhaps the programs I have described are using women scientists and engineers as more than simply "passive" role models, and some kind of incipient mentoring is also going on* (pp.448-49).

Evans, Whigham and Wang (1995) also support the idea of a more personal approach, as well as using the idea of peer coping models – both "relevant" and "attainable" in terms of Lockwood and Kunda's (1997) research. A three-day program for all-girls classes and for mixed classes of boys and girls consisted of a presentation on day one by the project director relating to the importance of maths and science careers. On day two, female university students shared their academic, work and personal experiences and plans, and on day

three, students were shown videos of women working in non-traditional fields. Changes in attitudes and interests were noted for both boys and girls. Changes were no greater for the girls in the single-sex group, raising questions about the need for single-sex programs. The second day was the most popular with students and it seemed possible that this one day would have the same positive effects as the three-day program, although this was not evaluated in this paper.

Other community members

As well as using role models with particular characteristics, people from similar geographical areas or from the same community as young people may be used as role models. An example of a program using community members as role models for high-risk young people is given by Slinski and Sparks (1994) – the Master Teacher in Family Life program. The role models used in this program are those Ingall (1997) might call "moral exemplars" or "quiet heroes". They are the natural leaders and "real experts" in their communities who are well-known and trusted by the families around them. In this program, replicated in many communities in the US, local risk and protective factors are identified. Master Teachers are primarily responsible for doing this and for identifying possible solutions. It is seen to be important that young people become empowered by learning how to identify, analyse and solve problems instead of being overpowered by them.

One strategy in this program is to link young people with "positive role models" who can help them become stronger and more self-sufficient. Three levels of knowledge are said to be needed by the role models so they can do this:

- technical knowledge such as facts about health and careers;
- interpersonal knowledge such as effective communication techniques; and
- critical knowledge such as the ability to analyse and solve complex problems.

This program is a good example of one from a sociocultural perspective as the emphasis is on providing guided support within the social context of the young people. Another use of community members is discussed in the later section on mentors as role models.

Summary

The assumption that adults of a similar ethnic background will be effective role models for young people simply because of shared ethnicity cannot be made with any certainty. Other factors would also need to be considered, including the nature of the particular group of young people.

Likewise, simply using same-sex role models cannot be assumed to influence the behaviour of young people. Programs to encourage girls to enter non-traditional career areas have been researched over the past 15 years with mixed results. As with other programs, the situation is more complex than simply presenting students with apparently appropriate role models. Support for actual change in behaviour is also needed, and the quality of a relationship may be more important than matching any particular characteristic of young people and role models.

Teachers

The importance of teachers' behaviour in developing their students' learning, and the importance of teacher–student relationships in encouraging young people to continue their learning are well documented (e.g. Barry & King 1998). Research such as that already described by Galbo and Demetrulius (1996) indicates that young people often nominate teachers as being significant adults in their lives. From research with talented young people, Sosniak (1985) emphasises the impact of teachers for whom talented individuals felt love, admiration and respect, and who were dedicated to their students' development.

As with parents, teachers are often regular, consistent adults in the lives of young people. They have an important formal social role in our society and potentially offer the modelling and support roles discussed as being so important for many young people. Irvine (1989) suggests that teachers act as advocates for students, and as counsellors, advisers and parent figures.

Ingall (1997) examined the place of heroes and role models in the moral education of middle-school students and found that teachers played a crucial role in influencing who their students perceive to be heroes and role models. Teachers provided opportunities for observing the details of various role models through literature or history lessons. Teachers also acted as "quiet role models" themselves.

Summary

Teachers play an important role in the lives of young people through their normal social role, through the curriculum taught and through additional activities.

Formal school-based programs for young people may use teachers in a variety of ways – both as models demonstrating desirable behaviours and as supports for young people.

Parents

Parents are generally seen to be the most important adults in most young people's lives (e.g. Galbo & Demetrulias 1996; Hamilton & Darling 1989). This seems self-evident, as they are generally the adults with whom young people spend the most time and to whom they are closest emotionally. There are, therefore, more opportunities for the demonstration or direct teaching of values, skills and knowledge, as well as more likelihood of the formation of a close, supportive relationship.

When examining the role of parents in the development of exceptionally talented people, Sloane (1985) found that parents played a crucial role in that they modelled the value of working hard and setting high standards of performance. And "in addition to providing role models, the parents explicitly discussed with their children the importance of trying hard and doing well" (p.441). Parents also provided access to resources and materials in younger years and continued financial support in later years. Emotional support through the provision of a nurturing, understanding environment occurred throughout. Thus parents provided the two important functions of modelling and support.

The importance of the influence of parents has been demonstrated in a number of different contexts. For example Andrews, Hops and Duncan (1997), as part of a 12-year longitudinal study, examined family influence on the substance use of young people. The results were fairly complex and different for different ages and genders. But, in general, adolescents who had a good relationship with their parents were more likely to model their parents' use (or non-use) of cigarettes, marijuana and alcohol. A good relationship does not automatically mean that adolescents will not use drugs. If there was a conflictual parent–adolescent relationship young people were more likely to be influenced by friends who do use these substances. This resembles the hypothesis outlined earlier that young people whose parents do not provide practical and emotional guidance and support may turn to others for that need.

McCallum (1994) also discusses the complexities of parental influence compared with the influence of peers, and questions the assumption that peers are considered as a group whose values and behaviours are in direct contrast to those of parents. Difficulties with the interpretation of current research findings are discussed but it is suggested that although peers may have a strong and immediate influence on lifestyles, parents have a stronger and more long-lived influence regarding values and future life goals. Good relationships with parents provide the basis for good relationships within the peer system.

Summary

This discussion has implications for programs for young people. Given the importance of parents in young people's lives, many programs endeavour to incorporate parents into programs or to assist the parents in fulfilling their roles. Young people who, for whatever reason, do not have supportive parents who are positive role models may be more subject to any negative peer influences. Where parental influences are negative or absent, other adults may be able to demonstrate positive behaviours and provide support.

Mentors

The important role that non-parental adults play, especially in the lives of young people lacking family and other supports, has already been emphasised. Many programs use mentors who are members of the community or who fit within other categories of role models as used in this report (MacCallum & Beltman 1999).

Mentoring is generally defined as a one-to-one, long-term supportive relationship between a more experienced, usually older person and a younger, less experienced or knowledgeable person (e.g. Guetzloe 1997). Other writers (e.g. Philip & Hendry 1996; Saito & Blyth 1992; Struchen & Porta 1997) suggest that definitions of mentoring be extended beyond the "classic" definition described above to include, for example, group and peer mentoring.

Struchen and Porta (1997) describe two perspectives on mentoring as suggested by Freedman. Primary mentoring relationships feature extraordinary commitment, emotional openness and intensity. Secondary relationships, while friendly in nature, are limited in openness and intensity. Freedman suggests that these, especially the primary type, "can provide a key to reaching disadvantaged youth" (p.120).

Pascarelli (1998) also raises the issue of the needs of today's youth who are experiencing diminished family roles and community resources and, therefore, a lack of

positive social networks. They have cravings for belongingness, connectedness and meaning and this is seen to point to the need for significant others to "guide, support, coach and, in some cases, simply to physically attend" (p.231). The actual program may revolve around a particular theme such as career interests or hobbies, but:

> *Regardless of the theme that brings together the mentor and the protégé, we are learning that these powerful relationships have a significant impact in helping youth find a place in the world, a purpose for being, and a belief in self* (Pascarelli 1998, p.232).

One reason for the recent upsurge in the number of mentoring programs and general interest in mentoring is the above finding, combined with the reduced levels of family and community support available to many adolescents in current Western society (Songsthagen & Lee 1996). As Galbo and Demetrulias (1996, pp.403-04) point out, "the opportunities for meaningful interaction between youths and important adults are decreasing, yet such relationships are essential for healthy human development".

Mentoring programs often adopt a humanist theoretical perspective and, in particular, emphasise the role of social support for young people, but there are implications for all programs designed to assist young people. Jacobi (1991, p.525) discusses the importance of this support role in mentoring relationships in for example, higher education settings, and says, "mentoring provides emotional, appraisal, informational and instrumental support which either prevents stress or buffers students from the negative effects of stress".

Greenberger, Chen and Beam (1998, p.2) state, "studies of the frequency, nature, and, especially, the effects of adolescents' relationships with adults other than parents are still quite sparse". However, the idea of using adult role models in a mentoring relationship

with at-risk young people as a preventative measure or type of inoculation is the rationale behind many role model programs.

It has previously been discussed that in a guided learning situation, support or scaffolding must gradually be withdrawn as the observer, learner or young person is more able to operate independently. Mentoring literature also reflects this view. Pascarelli (1998), for example, proposes a four-stage model of the mentoring process, as depicted in Figure 2.4.

Another way of viewing the mentoring process, again in the form of stages, is outlined in Mentoring Works (1999) and illustrated in Figure 2.5.

Summary

Mentors have long been used to informally and formally assist and support young people. Current definitions of mentors expand the classical notion of an adult and a youth in a one-to-one relationship to include peers as mentors and group mentoring situations. The importance of an extended relationship built on trust is common to all definitions, and programs focusing on the use of mentors will see this as paramount. Mentoring relationships move through a series of stages and these have implications for the focus of a mentor's role.

Peers

Much literature discussing classical or traditional mentoring, and discussing other programs to assist young people, assumes that the mentors or significant others must be adults. However, from all theoretical viewpoints presented earlier, peers may take on this role. From both a social cognitive and a sociocultural perspective, peers may be more effective than adults as they are more similar in age and expertise. Research findings relating to the significant others nominated by young people also strongly suggests that peers have an

Figure 2.4: Stages of classical mentoring – Pascarelli (1998)			
Initiation	*Cultivation*	*Transformation*	*Separation*
Checking out – each person learns about and appreciates other	Build on mentee's strengths – the focus remains on young person	Mentee begins to take responsibility and moves to increasing autonomy	Mentee takes risks and tries out new approaches
Mentor communicates warmth and caring	Mentor cautious with advice; avoids judging /imposing; considers options, consequences, and solutions	Mentor provides timely, concrete, non-judgmental feedback	Mentor helps in reflection and making learning explicit; draws out mentee's personal strengths

Figure 2.5: Stages of mentoring relationships – Mentoring Works (1999)		
Stage 1	*Stage 2*	*Stage 2*
Developing rapport and building trust	Reaching goals	Closure
Involves goal setting and establishment of confidentiality; mentor must be predictable and consistent	Affirms uniqueness of relationship; mentee relies on support and resources of mentor who may also need support	Identify natural emotions e.g. grief, denial, resentment; say goodbye in healthy respectful way; celebrate successes

important role in both modelling and support functions.

From a humanist perspective, positive relationships with peers are important in various contexts, including schools. "A growing body of literature indicates that problematic peer relationships in childhood and adolescence are predictive of both academic and behavioral problems at school" (Kupersmidt et al. 1996, p.66). A lack of positive peer relationships is seen to be stressful for children. They feel unhappy or lonely, and the lack of this type of social support may increase their vulnerability to other life stressors. Peer relations are also critical in influencing feelings of relatedness or connectedness with school – an important factor associated with retention in schooling (Hymel et al. 1996).

Peers may also provide social support, even though others perhaps generally take on this role. Bø (1996) mapped the social worlds of 15- to 16-year-old Norwegians from rural and urban settings. Although the largest age group within the networks was peers, those seen by the adolescents to be the most significant were more likely to be relatives. The size of the networks was found to have a strong positive effect on school achievement and adaptation, irrespective of whether they were composed of younger children, peers or adults.

Although a variety of others may play a support role, there is evidence that, particularly for some adolescents, peers are extremely important in this regard. Philip and Hendry (1996) examined the networks of a wide cross-section of youth throughout Scotland. Unlike many such studies that are conducted in schools, they included both "clubbable" and "detached" youth and concluded:

From our findings it is clear that a variety of social relationships and networks, beyond the more traditional "one adult matched to one adolescent" model, can incorporate important elements of mentoring and be influential in helping young people in their transitions towards adulthood (Philip & Hendry 1996, p.200).

What is the nature of the support provided by peers? Research on child and adolescent friendships indicates that having quality relationships with best friends and a wider peer network is important (Kindermann, McCollam & Ellsworth 1996). Weiss, Smith and Theeboom (1996) conducted research relating to friendships young people have in sport. Twelve positive friendship dimensions were found – similar to those in mainstream developmental literature: companionship, pleasant/play association, self-esteem enhancement, help and guidance, prosocial behaviour, intimacy, loyalty, things in common, attractive personal qualities, emotional support, absence of conflicts and conflict resolution. The authors discuss the possibilities of sport as a socialising vehicle for teaching children how to effectively interact with peers and to develop leadership, cooperation and relationships.

Social cognitive theory's distinction between peer coping and mastery (or expert) models has already been outlined. Weiss et al. (1998) discuss research in academic contexts that supports the use of peer coping as opposed to peer mastery models. Learning of cognitive skills, self-efficacy and academic performance have all been shown to improve more through observation of peer coping models than of mastery models. This is thought to be because such models enhance selective attention (they are more relevant), they demonstrate a positive attitude and also impart information on how to learn a particular skill.

Weiss et al. (1998) then apply these findings to the physical domain in helping children who are afraid of swimming through showing peer coping models in videos. The authors concluded: "the use of peer models is an easy, inexpensive, and naturally built-in intervention to swimming lessons teachers can use to meaningfully contribute to the psychological and physical development of their students" (Weiss et al. 1998, p.20). That is, peer coping models may be used effectively to enhance skills and self-confidence.

Summary

There are direct implications for programs aiming to use peers to assist young people. Peers may be used formally and informally both as positive role models to demonstrate desirable skills and knowledge, and in a supportive role to assist and encourage others to change behaviour or to overcome difficult situations. Simply having a network of friends appears to have a protective effect on young people.

Implications for role model programs

Figure 2.6 provides a summary of the literature review in terms of the implications for role model programs. The implications are grouped according to the main focus of the role model program. This grouping is followed throughout this report.

Figure 2.6: Implications for role model programs

For programs using celebrities or experts as role models and emphasising observation or modelling rather than interaction (e.g. web sites, guest speakers and one-off workshops aiming to encourage and inspire)

- A model must be attractive, important or relevant in some way to the young person.

- Models need to find common ground or make their own circumstances or personal goals relevant in some way to those of the young people involved.

- For young people who doubt their own abilities or the value of a modelled behaviour, coping models who can demonstrate how success is achieved may be more effective than expert models.

- Young people do pay attention to celebrities, but not necessarily to a greater extent in terms of learning or admiration than to others in their environment.

- Using successful same-sex adults or those from similar ethnic or other backgrounds may increase relevance but is not sufficient alone to change behaviour.

For programs aiming to change behaviour through providing scaffolding or feedback (e.g. camps or clinics to develop skills or a series of workshops)

- A wide variety of others can play a significant role for young people – parents are particularly important and their influence may need to be considered.

- Teachers and other non-parental adults may complement parental values and behaviours, or, where these are negative or not available, demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours; peers may also do this.

- Enjoyment and fun, skill development and gradual independence may be seen as important, necessary components of learning new knowledge, skills and values.

- For an action to be reproduced, opportunities for guided practice with feedback are needed and a "safe place" is needed for this to occur.

For programs aiming primarily to provide support to young people and encourage them to change (e.g. long-term youth groups or mentoring programs)

- Socioemotional support may be needed for a learned behaviour to be enacted in new settings.

- Developing quality relationships with adults other than parents is vital for young people.

- Informality, spontaneity, acceptance and sustained interaction are features of positive relationships with non-parental adults.

- Having a wide and supportive social network of friends has a protective effect for young people.

Chapter 3

Program effectiveness
– a review of the literature

Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature exploring the effectiveness of a variety of role model and mentoring programs, and discusses a range of overseas and Australian programs for which some effectiveness data are available.

The literature relating to role model programs is patchy, and few papers actually address the effectiveness of programs. The available literature tends to focus on how to implement programs for at-risk young people and the types of outcomes demonstrated. Mentoring programs are more frequently addressed than other types of role model programs.

Issues in the evaluation of programs

The following discussion on evaluation of programs is relevant to the issue of evaluating the effectiveness of a range of programs, as well as for those interested in developing future programs.

Methodological issues related to evaluation of programs

There are a number of general methodological issues relevant to a consideration of the research literature on

effectiveness of programs for young people. Some of these issues were briefly discussed in Chapter 1 in reference to the main research aims of this project. Much of the available research is criticised in terms of its use of ill-defined concepts, over reliance on retrospective accounts, an absence of control or comparison groups, insufficient subject numbers or unrepresentative subjects, and a scarcity of longitudinal designs (Byrne 1993; Little 1990; Speizer 1981). Byrne's review of literature from the 1970s and 1980s relating to promoting alternative career paths for women uncovered articles based on "assertion and conviction" without a research base, a similar finding to Speizer's research review that showed "methodological fluffiness".

Some issues, like using retrospective accounts, can be seen in varying lights. If past events are reconstructed in the light of knowledge about the outcomes of those events, then it is argued that their recall may not accurately reflect the research variables being investigated. Others argue, however, that recollection made with reflection and insight provides a more comprehensive picture of an individual's development (Galbo & Demetrulias 1996). Longitudinal studies would overcome this concern but are expensive and difficult to conduct when programs are given funding for a limited period or are required to demonstrate short-term outcomes. There is also often a high turnover of at-risk young people in programs or

locations, which adds to the difficulties of follow-up over time (Yancey 1998).

Scales and Gibbons (1996) make a number of suggestions for research designs that investigate questions regarding the role of non-parental adults in the lives of adolescents with the aim of addressing some of the concerns expressed about methodology:

- use longitudinal research designs;
- use sufficiently diverse samples to examine factors such as gender and ethnicity;
- use sufficiently large samples for multiple nested comparisons;
- use a greater variety of measures – a convergence of differing methodological approaches, i.e. not just self-reports;
- attempt greater precision in defining and measuring relationships;
- continue work on developing alternative measures of adolescent self-reports – need briefer, simpler measures with higher reliability and validity; and
- study the processes during actual interactions.

Effectiveness of role model programs

A question that is frequently asked is whether or not a role model program is effective in achieving its intended outcomes. A more important question for improving the effectiveness of a program or for developing a future program is the question of how programs achieve their intended outcomes and the key characteristics of those that do. The literature tends to consist of reports about what was done and what the outcomes were, with little or no attention to the elements that contributed to the desired outcomes.

Features common to effective programs

Recent reviews have pointed out important elements of certain types of programs. Withers and associates (Batten & Russell 1995; Withers & Batten 1995; Withers & Russell 2001) have addressed this issue in terms of programs for at-risk young people and MacCallum and Beltman (1999) have compiled a list of features of successful mentoring programs (reproduced in Appendix D). Mentoring associations in Australia and USA have produced benchmarks of good practice to assist in the development of mentoring programs (see Mentoring Australia 2001).

Batten and Russell (1995) and Withers and Batten (1995) review a wide range of national and international programs for at-risk youth, including mentoring programs. Role model programs are not mentioned as a

specific category. Successful programs for at-risk youth possess features such as having clear goals and objectives; paying attention to the whole person – social and personal as well as academic and vocational; establishing collaborative links with parents, communities and other agencies; and strong leadership.

Most writers and program coordinators would agree that programs must set clear aims and carry out evaluations but this is not necessarily simple, as Struchen and Porta (1997) note in reference to mentoring programs. Funding bodies "need to work more closely with mentoring programs to ensure that these programs do not doom themselves to failure by establishing short-term objectives that sound nice but are unrealistic or by using evaluation tools that the mentoring staff are not trained to administer" (p.24). Further, program success may be limited because of factors not taken into account in the evaluation, such as the neighbourhood environment, a lack of parental involvement or because of the young people's baggage.

There are few reviews of role model programs using celebrities. It is difficult to review research relating to celebrities and others perceived as role models as the question investigated is generally about who are the role models rather than what influence the role models have. Even then, as discussed in Chapter 2, participants were sometimes asked retrospectively about who had helped them, or young people were asked about their heroes, who they would like to be like or who they would ask for help.

Classical or traditional mentoring programs have been the subject of wider review, with suggestions made for running successful programs. Although the source of this information is not always clear – whether it is based on theory, research or personal experience – there is a similarity between the suggestions made.

Withers and Batten (1995) describe some of the features critical to the success of the mentoring programs they reviewed as:

- being part of a formal, well supported organisation;
- having maximum diversity in the range of activities used while still allowing for individual mentor and mentee styles; and
- careful selection and close monitoring of mentor–mentee relationships.

Pascarelli (1998) lists a range of additional elements including providing assistance and training for the mentors. Saito and Blyth (1992) also highlight the need for appropriate screening, matching and training of

mentors, especially when the program goal involves improving academic or social skills – mentors need to be aware of the nature and depth of the mentoring relationship and expectations of commitment and appropriate behaviour. They also suggest providing opportunities for supported social activities and events for those in the program.

One important measure of effectiveness is whether or not there is a positive change in the young people. The most commonly reported indicator of effectiveness is the positive outcomes of a program with occasional reference to the possible factors responsible. Negative outcomes of programs are rarely addressed as these kinds of findings are seldom published.

Positive outcomes

An extensive meta-analytic review of adventure education programs was conducted by Hattie et al. (1997). They were astonished by the large effect sizes found in statistical analyses, indicating improvement in a range of outcome measures over the course of the program and in follow-up assessments. The measures were not the same for all the programs included in the review but covered academic achievement, leadership, self-concept, personality, interpersonal aspects and adventuresome aspects. A common feature of the programs was that they involved doing physically active things away from the person's normal environment. Their analysis revealed that longer rather than shorter programs had the greatest effects, programs with adults were more effective than those whose non-adults and that Australian programs had greater effects than those from other countries. They make the comment that in future, program research needs to move towards evaluating multiple outcomes and investigating the relations between program characteristics and outcomes if the success of adventure programs is to be understood.

A number of researchers have attempted to give a valid overview of the outcomes of mentoring programs by reviewing programs in multiple locations or only taking account of programs with methodologically sound evaluations. Some of these outcomes are attributed to the role model function of mentoring. Mentoring can provide clear role models in knowledge, behaviour and attitudes, as well as provide direct assistance and help youths develop (Beardon 1990; Goodlad 1995a, 1998). In employment or career-oriented mentor programs, the role model function is seen as important again. As well as acting as a role model for the learner, the mentor gives something to

aim at that is tangible. The mentor can also try to prevent damage to the learner's self-esteem from failure, by attributing the failure or relative lack of success to a factor that is adaptable, rather than to lack of ability or bad luck, both of which have a debilitating influence on motivation (Burns 1995). There is also access to the mentor's network, the acquisition of skills and knowledge and, for those already in employment, the possibility of improved promotion opportunities and increased status (Martin 1997).

Other outcomes are often mentioned which may or may not be attributed to the role model function of the relationship. A number of programs have reported increased retention and participation, such as improved attendance at school, staying on at school or going on to tertiary study (Bein 1999; Pascarelli 1998; Shumer 1994). This kind of outcome is easily measured and often reported. Another common aspect relates to the enhancement of affect in terms of self-confidence (Pascarelli 1998), higher self-worth and motivation (US Department of Education 1996; Miller 1998; Roberts & Cotton 1994; Tester 1997), reduced feelings of sadness and loneliness (Rogers & Taylor 1997) or the promotion of competence and "providing self-assurance and support in the face of new situations" (Hamilton & Darling 1989, p.121). There is also evidence of improved relationships with peers and family (Bein 1999) and improved problem-solving skills (Pascarelli 1998). Often these have been reflected in reduced rates of teenage pregnancy and reduced gang involvement (Pringle et al. cited in Bein 1999) and improved refusal skills regarding alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (Rogers & Taylor 1997).

A few evaluation studies have tried to tease out the factors most likely to account for the outcomes of a particular type of program. A United Kingdom study found mixed results when evaluating mentoring programs in seven schools (Miller 1998). The general aim of the programs was to increase Year 11 students' GCSE scores, their achievement motivation and their employability through community and business mentors working with the students. An expected GCSE score was calculated and the actual results of 90 mentored students were compared with matched control groups (of 93 students) not involved in mentoring or other attainment raising interventions. Significant differences in favour of the mentored students were found in four of the seven schools. One of the schools with no differences in GCSE scores used small-group mentoring instead of one-to-one mentoring. The researcher also noted that there

appeared to be some differences in expectations, with schools hoping mainly for increased motivation and employability and the students for better scores. Qualitative data collected indicated improved motivation as evidenced through increased homework completion and greater enthusiasm in class. When students reported no benefits, it was sometimes because students said they were already motivated. Also students who went regularly to their mentor's workplace developed more employment- related skills and received more opportunities for work experience.

Roberts and Cotton (1994) assessed a mentoring program using a strict experimental design. The program involved 76 African-American Year 11 students from two high schools, who were mentored for an hour per week by professional people. The mentors provided "practical advice, setting goals, evaluating academic performance, and motivating them" (p.1369) through activities at the school and at the mentors' workplaces. The researchers found limited positive support for the mentoring in terms of global self-esteem and grade point average over a three-month period. They suggested that future research should select variables "which may be more sensitive to mentors' influence" (p.1370) and that a test interval longer than three months may be needed to see any impact.

Another criterion often used in the literature to suggest success is the growth of a particular program. Cabrini Connections (Cabrini Connections 1999) was formed in 1992 and the Kids Connection program developed to support teens in public housing neighbourhoods. Kids Connection combines tutoring, mentoring and school-to-work transition experiences. A commitment is made that once a child joins the program, the organisation does everything it can to help them complete high school and enter a career. No detailed outcomes are presented in this report, but from five students and seven volunteers in 1993, the program had more than 100 teens and 120 volunteers in 1999. "Children who started in the program years ago are now entering college with a broad network of 'concerned adults' serving as lifelong sources of jobs, interviews and adult-mentoring as these young people enter the workforce and grow in their careers" (Cabrini Connections 1999).

Indicators of ineffectiveness

The review of the literature revealed that the focus is often only on the positive effects of strategies designed to use other people to assist young people. The few

authors who have discussed the possible negative effects on young people or factors limiting program effectiveness clearly show that some strategies or the way that they are implemented may be counterproductive.

Withers and Russell's (2001) recent review of programs designed to promote resilience in young people points out that some strategies may actually be ineffective or harmful. For example, a program involving prolonged counselling/role modelling/ mentoring was unsuccessful because it fostered dependence on the adults. Programs where juveniles were taken into prisons and told horror stories by adult prisoners made offending seem more risky or attractive, or created networks between delinquents. Similarly, programs offering gang members educational or recreational activities increased contact with core gang members and reinforced the negative behaviours of high-risk peers.

Freedman (1995) warns that mentoring is often portrayed as a win-win situation, but can actually be quite risky. Struchen and Porta (1997) argue that the literature often leaves out the impact of failed mentoring, which is an especially important issue for at-risk youth. Often the very reason these youth are involved in mentoring programs is because they have a lack of supportive adults in their lives, and may also have poor relationships with their peers and teachers. A history of failed relationships is a very real possibility, and setting up yet another relationship that fails, may do even further harm to that individual's self-esteem and lessen the possibility for future positive interpersonal relationships. They term this "drive-by" mentoring. Rhodes (1992) reiterates similar themes in her review of natural and volunteer mentor programs, and shows that often little consideration is given as to how a mentor may be perceived or "integrated within the youth's pre-existing social network" (p.19). Also, unsuccessful mentor relationships may lead to hurt and disappointment for all participants.

Hon and Shorr (1998), in evaluating the program at Hollywood (California) High School 'Each One-Reach-One', considered both positive and negative findings. Possible reasons for mismatches or failed relationships were explored. The major reason for such "failures" was seen to be unrealistic expectations on the part of the mentors and their perceived lack of impact. They report Freedman's 1992 study which found that the most successful mentors were those who showed up consistently aiming to have fun and make friends with the mentee. Those who came with a social agenda "to

make a difference" had no effect. Hon and Shorr provided regular meetings for mentors in order to reassure them that they were having a positive effect, even though they were sometimes discouraged by their initial results.

The literature relating to mentoring adults in higher education and in workplaces also raises issues about possible negative effects, but surprisingly these are rarely, if ever, considered in the literature about mentoring youth. Bova and Phillips (1984), for example, suggest that along with the opportunities for personal and professional growth from mentoring programs, there are also risks such as exploitation of the mentee and envy of those not selected as mentees. Carruthers (1993) also cautions regarding the issue of elitism. Peers of those selected as mentors and mentees may become jealous of their situation. These issues may be particularly relevant to programs that incorporate workplace experience, or involve gifted and talented young people.

Another possible negative consideration is known as the "Salieri phenomenon" (Carruthers, 1993). Salieri, the court composer, kept the genius of Mozart from being publicly recognised and this phenomenon is said to occur when a mentor prevents outstanding work of a mentee from receiving its just acclaim. Care in selecting and matching mentors and mentees, and monitoring of programs, are seen as ways of addressing such issues (Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment 1996).

Lack of adequate funding can limit program effectiveness and is an issue raised throughout this report. Rhodes, Grossman and Resch (2000) and Lovelock (1999) point out that organisations need sufficient resources to effectively screen and train mentors and provide ongoing support of the mentoring relationships. Also, insufficient ongoing funding can result in a program being only partly implemented. Role Models on the Web, a web-based role model program based in the United States of America, illustrates this situation (Role Models on the Web 2000). One of the aims listed in the mission statement is to inspire young people "to think about what they want to be, what they want to do, and how they'll contribute back to life" by presenting the stories of outstanding role models (including celebrities and everyday people from all walks of life). The site includes a study for students and guide questions for teachers to use with the role model stories. The program was set up by a non-profit education organisation and it appears the intention was to feature a role model as "role model of the month" and so add to the role models on the site. Unfortunately, there is only one role model web page, which is sponsored. There is list of role models to be featured and a plea for sponsorship for further web pages but no additional role models have been added.

Role model programs around the world

The review of literature and the Internet search identified a range of role model programs from around the world delivered by a range of agencies and organisations. Many of these programs have been mentioned in the discussion of role models in Chapter 2. Role model and mentoring programs in the USA have tended to focus on special groups of children and young people, specifically those at-risk academically, those from socioeconomically disadvantaged groups (e.g. PRIDE, Big Brother/Big Sister) or those involved with juvenile justice systems (e.g. Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP)) (Grossman & Garry 1997). This may be due to the emphasis on at-risk groups reinforced by policy decisions over the past 15 years. It was further emphasised in the President's 'Summit for America's Future' in 1997 that every child in America should be able to access "an ongoing relationship with a caring adult mentor, tutor, or coach" (Lauland 1998). These programs are often run by community-based organisations or agencies assisted by business and, even when the young people are school aged, don't always involve schools. In the United Kingdom and Israel, many programs have involved tertiary students working in schools as role models and tutors. These programs are generally organised through the universities, but are often collaborations of various stakeholders (Goodlad 1995a, 1998).

Examples of these programs utilising a range of role models are explored below, with particular emphasis given to aspects that may contribute to the effectiveness of the program.

A program utilising celebrities as role models

Sports Challenge Australia and Sports Challenge International (Australia)
The Sports Challenge Australia program (Tester 1997) is a rapidly growing West Australian based program managed by an independent organisation that trains a

group of mentors to deliver a sports-based program to schools around Australia and, more recently, to Asia. Small groups of students receive instruction on individual and team aspects of basketball from high profile elite athletes over a period of two to 10 weeks. The program also includes workshops for teachers and parents, and programs for non-at-risk students.

Using the Song and Hattie Self Concept Questionnaire, the program has been shown to have had a positive impact on at-risk students over an 11-month period (Tester 1997). Anecdotal data suggest that participating students demonstrated more confidence and were happier with their self-image, had improved relationships with family and friends and showed some improvements in academic skills and motor skills (MacCallum & Beltman 1999).

A case study of the program (MacCallum & Beltman 1999) showed that the program had a number of features that contributed to its success. It had clear goals and clear expectations of its staff, who were rigorously selected, well trained and well supported. Mentors supported each other and helped in training new staff. The focus on sport and use of talented sportspeople was attractive and interesting to students from a variety of at-risk backgrounds. The program was flexible and adaptable and all staff took part in continuously monitoring and improving its implementation. Formal evaluation data were collected at each site (pre- and post-tests) and used to provide information to sponsors and prospective clients. Each program concluded with a "Gala Day", which is a celebratory event for all participants and interested parties. The Director appeared enthusiastic and committed and showed he was able to respond to the needs of communities and individuals wanting assistance. The program promoted its identity by operating from a clearly marked site and having staff wear identifying uniforms.

The program has experienced some difficulties in maintaining and expanding the program due to spasmodic funding and a reliance on the continuing generosity of staff, sponsors and volunteers. Retaining staff was a difficulty because the young athletes needed more financial security and had developed skills through the program that they could use elsewhere. The program attempted to maintain contact with students but this sometimes incurred technical difficulties (e.g. responding to emails when working at another distant location). The program appeared to be less effective if not supported by teachers in the schools. Although the program engaged in ongoing evaluation, it appeared time for reporting was limited.

These factors may have limited the effectiveness of the program from time to time.

A program utilising ethnically relevant male role models

Project 2000 (USA)

PROJECT 2000 was developed as a preventative program in response to the perceived links between school failure for African-American boys and their involvement with crime and violence in urban communities (Holland 1996). The primary objective of the program was to "provide positive adult male role models, particularly African American men, in the daily school life of African American boys". Its secondary mission was to "assist the mostly female teachers of these students in teaching them the academic and social skills they will need to compete successfully in the 21st century" (pp.316-17).

The program began in 1988 when the class of 2000 entered school. From 1988–1994, the project was sponsored, funded and staffed by an all-male community service organisation, and volunteers were recruited from all segments of the city's community and included truck drivers, doctors, lawyers, electricians and university students. They spent one half day a week with the classes "serving as teacher assistants with an emphasis on providing one-on-one and group mentoring and tutoring for the 53 first-grade boys" (Holland 1996, p.318). For each year of the elementary and early secondary school phases, a different principle was stressed: listening, developing self-control, assuming responsibility, commitment, work, service, initiative, persistence and creativity. Over 200 men participated up to the sixth grade and this allowed the maintenance of continuous bonds. During the elementary school phase, all program activity took place in the school setting or in the context of the schools, with volunteers rarely working without direct supervision of professional educators. This facilitated the volunteers' willingness to be involved while allaying concerns about adult males working with young children.

The likelihood of increasing negative influences in the boys' lives as they began their last year (6th grade) of elementary school and faced the transition to junior high school led to the incorporation of PROJECT 2000 as a non-profit organisation in 1994. Three program volunteers became full-time employees and the program focus changed somewhat. The primary aim was to provide academic support, mentoring, personal

development services, plus direction and guidance with career and post-secondary education options. In 1996, PROJECT 2000 HOUSE was established in the basement of the recreation centre in the public housing development where 90% of the students in the program lived. This became a visible focus for the program as well as a safe haven for the program participants – now called "PROJECT 2000 scholars".

The program's scholars are required to maintain a certain grade point average, and maths, reading and general educational mentoring occurs after school. Relationships have been established with the schools attended by the scholars. Parental permission is obtained for access to school records, regular school visits are made, program staff respond to any problem (behavioural or academic) that the scholar has at school, and meetings are attended and report cards collected if parents are unable to do so. Additional mentoring is provided by the same community organisation first involved in the program. Adult males, particularly Africa-American men, are recruited and trained to provide one-on-one or group mentoring.

PROJECT 2000 provides additional services to the scholars. For example, several have lost friends or relatives through homicides over the past two years and psychological counselling, anger and grief management have been provided. All students also attend a 10-week interpersonal skills development seminar during eighth grade out of school hours and topics include conflict resolution, goal setting and prevention of pregnancy, STD/HIV/AIDS and substance abuse. A leadership development seminar is conducted for those who have maintained a minimum grade point average the previous year, and they are also eligible for participation in a peer counselling seminar.

To recruit new scholars, workshops are held during the year for all fifth and sixth grade boys at the school involved. Those who are interested and maintain a certain minimum grade average and at least a C+ in their school's citizenship course are recruited.

In 1992–1993, the program was formally evaluated using the PROJECT 2000 students as an experimental group and a control group of students from a comparable elementary school that, although offering some interventions such as after school tutors, did not have the adult male role models working in the classrooms. In the control group, girls had higher academic grade point averages, but there were no gender differences in the project group. The project students had significantly higher GPAs than the controls. Differences between boys in the control group

and boys in the project were "significant and dramatic". For example, more than 85% of PROJECT 2000 boys were at or above grade level in almost every subject area under examination, but 85% of the control group boys were below grade level. Students in the project also reported that the volunteers helped them in other areas than with their school subjects, which the control group did not. Another formal evaluation was planned for the end of the 1996–1997 academic year, but it was already evident that the scholars in the program were achieving better than expected at secondary school.

Holland (1996) describes features of the program seen to contribute to its success. Interventions in the early primary school years are seen to be vital in developing academic skills and positive attitudes. The program brings educational mentoring and support into the boys' home community and this allows it to have community-specific activities and to involve volunteers from the local area who have a vested interest in seeing these boys succeed. It also avoids the very real physical dangers for participants of having to venture into other neighbourhoods. One major limitation is finding responsible men available to do the volunteer work required during the day. The program has since been replicated in other areas. One such program uses business mentors who are provided with release from work.

A program utilising adult community members as role models

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America (USA)

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America (BB/BS) is a large-scale mentoring program run by over 500 agencies across the USA. The approach is characterised by a high level of contact (four hours per week, at least three times per month, with additional phone contact), and the mentor is defined as a friend, rather than a preacher or a teacher, who supports the students' endeavours rather than explicitly attempts change. The program's success is often attributed to these characteristics. BB/BS involves volunteers from the community mentoring young people of school age. Many of the young people are from at-risk groups, over 60% are males, many coming from minority groups, single-parent or low-income families, or families with a history of substance abuse or violence.

A large-scale evaluation of the BB/BS program across a range of agencies was carried out in 1992–1993 by Public/Private Ventures (Tierney, Grossman & Resch

1995). The study compared 959 mentees in the program (10 –16 years) with a matched group of young people selected for the program but still on the waiting list for a mentor. They found changes in a number of behavioural and attitude indices, with greater impact among minority participants. When compared with the non-mentored groups, findings showed mentees were 46% less likely to start using illegal drugs, 27% less likely to begin using alcohol and 53% less likely to skip school. Violent behaviour was reduced by 33% and the mentees experienced positive attitudes to completing schoolwork and improved peer and family relationships. No improvements were found in the two areas of self-concept and social and cultural enrichment (Tierney, Grossman & Resch 1995).

There are programs run on the lines of BB/BS in Australia. The YWCA operates Big Sister/Big Brother or Big Sister Little Sister programs in several States of Australia (NSW, WA and NT) and the Jesuit Social Service operates BB/BS in Victoria. The NSW program is included as a case study in this project.

A program utilising skilled professionals as role models

Telementoring (USA and elsewhere)

A recent and apparently cost-effective method of role modelling and mentoring is telementoring. One of the pioneers of this form of mentoring, the HP Email Mentoring Program, began in the USA in 1995. It aimed to improve mathematics and science achieve-ment among 5th to 12th grade students, and to increase the number of females and minorities studying and teaching mathematics and science (Lauland 1998). The International Telementor Center at the Science, Mathematics and Technology Education at the Colorado State University (CSMATE) now manages the program and facilitates electronic mentoring relationships between professional adults and students worldwide (International Telementor Center 1999). In 1998 there were nearly 2,900 students in the USA, Canada, Australia and France involved with 2,900 mentors from 14 countries (Lauland 1998).

The web site contains instructions for joining the program, a student application form and pre-survey. Teachers apply to join the program on behalf of their students and supervise the mentoring. Both teachers and students need Internet and email access. Mentors submit an online application to program staff who match them with students on specific needs, common career interests, academic studies and hobbies. Mentors

are responsible for communicating with the students at least two to three times per week throughout the 36-week academic period. Mentors must agree to be a positive role model, encourage students to excel in maths and science, use appropriate grammar and effective communication skills, encourage students to use the Internet as a resource, and correspond with the students, teachers and program staff.

Costs in the program are said to be minimal, requiring only basic administrative expenditures and email and Internet related expenditures. In an evaluation of the project (Cobb 1997), teachers indicated positive results for students such as increased attendance, use of technology, involvement at school, self-confidence and motivation. Although the report suggests the overall outcomes of this program are positive, there were a few problems. Some teachers and students found the time commitment to the program to be much greater than they expected, and there were communication difficulties, due to unfamiliarity with each other's organisational cultures and lack of school-site email access and technical support.

A program utilising peers as role models

Perach (Israel)

Perach, "flower" in Hebrew, is a publicly supervised tutorial/mentoring program that involves 45,000 Israeli children each year. It began in 1975 as an experimental project under the auspices of the Weizmann Institute of Science. It is now a nationwide program in which Israeli university and college students work with needy school children. Originally, mentoring was one-to-one, but more recently group-tutored enrichment programs in health, science, nature studies and the arts have been added (Frekso & Kowalsky 1998; Perach 1999).

The rationale behind Perach is the belief that attention from a caring young adult who is a potential role model makes the children more likely to fulfil their potential in terms of self-esteem and academic potential. Coordinators in eight regional offices in universities around the country choose, support and guide the tutors who meet with their students twice per week for two-hour periods over one year. Meetings are usually out of school hours and may be held at the child's school, home or at a Perach enrichment centre. Perach (1999) maintains that the voluntary nature of the program, the recruitment process used and the extensive support system involved result in a low dropout rate. It appears that in many cases the coordinators also act as role models for the university students.

The program has been evaluated several times over the years. Topping and Hill (1995) report a series of studies carried out by Eisenberg and associates during the 1980s where tutored students were compared with matched non-tutored students. Findings revealed few gains in academic areas on standardised tests, but significant improvements in attitudes towards school, self-reported participation in class and time allocated to leisure reading. Tutored students also dropped out of school less often than non-tutored students did. Subsequent studies found that greater differences were evident where the tutor didn't join the program for the extrinsic reward of rebate of tuition fees, and tutor satisfaction was greater where the tutor had established a good relationship with the student, who was from the same ethnic group.

Similar programs operate around the world. In 1998 there were over 180 cross-institutional tutoring and mentoring schemes in the United Kingdom using tertiary students as role models for school students, with similar schemes in USA, New Zealand, Australia, Europe, South Africa, India and Thailand (Goodlad 1998). Many schemes have been systematically evaluated and documented successful outcomes (e.g. CSV 1990; Goodlad 1995a, 1998; Goodlad & Hirst 1989). The STAR (Science and Technology Awareness Raising) Program in Western Australia is an example of one of these programs. Goodlad (1995a, 1998) has collected papers documenting a number of these programs, and over 20 international programs are summarised in the appendix of each of the volumes, providing information about aims, activities and evaluation.

Conclusions

The research on effectiveness suggests that little is really known about what characteristics of programs contribute to their effectiveness. Partly, this is due to the methodological problems of research involving the development of young people, and also to the preoccupation with short-term outcomes and the lack of information linking outcomes and programs' characteristics and processes.

The review does suggest that there are discernible positive outcomes from a variety of role model programs and that a case study approach to research can elicit some characteristics of programs that contribute to their effectiveness. The case studies examined in the present project are described in Chapter 6 and analysed in Chapters 7 and 8.

The next two chapters report the findings of the audit and survey of Australian role model programs. The audit of types of Australian role model programs is presented first, followed by the survey of the characteristics of a selection of these programs.

Chapter 4

An audit of role model program types

Introduction

This chapter examines the extent of role model programs in Australia and reports the audit of types of role model programs identified during the research process. The audit indicates the range of program types and locations and the variety of programs that use role models in some way. It does not include every Australian program using role models. In other words it is an "audit of types", not an "audit of programs". Examples of programs from each type are given to illustrate the various characteristics of such programs. In order to identify role model programs, a letter and accompanying audit form (see Appendix A) were sent to various educational and community organisations around Australia. The details are explained in Chapter 1. As the process targeted particular Australian States, the programs listed in the audit reflect this fact – not a lack of programs in other places.

Audit of programs

Information was received regarding over 400 programs from every State and Territory. Sometimes information was received about the same State or national program from the organisers at several sites, while other programs sent one set of information representing similar operations at multiple sites. Therefore, one response from any program may actually equate to many different individual programs.

Deciding how to group the programs was problematic because of the diversity of program types. Programs tended to vary along six dimensions illustrated in Figure 4.1. These dimensions are the degree of interaction between the role models and young people (also used in Table 1.2 to describe the links between theory, research and practice), the type of role model, the programs' time frames, the groups' composition, the focus of the programs and the nature of activities used in the programs.

When reading the descriptions of programs in this chapter, it may be seen that programs tend to be positioned similarly on each of the above dimensions, but this is not necessarily the case. For example, a one-day workshop could be categorised as falling towards the left-hand side of most dimensions since opportunities for interaction are limited within a short, set time frame and the same young people take part in a predetermined set of activities. In terms of the type of role model (Dimension 2), however, celebrities would not be the only type of role model involved in such a program. In contrast, mentoring programs fall on the right-hand side of three of the dimensions as they use one-to-one interaction for an extended period of time and activities are normally negotiated between both participants. In terms of Dimension 4, mentoring programs would aim to keep the same young

Figure 4.1: Dimensions of role model programs and examples of types

Dimension 1: Degree of interaction between role model(s) and young people

Limited opportunities for interaction **e.g. web sites**	Some opportunities for interaction **one-day workshop**	Greater opportunities for interaction **group program**	Extensive extended 1-1 interaction **mentoring**

Dimension 2: Type of role model

Celebrity **e.g. guest speakers**	Adult with specific skills/knowledge **camp or clinic**	Adult community member **mentoring**	Peer **peer support**

Dimension 3: Program time frame

Fixed short-term time **e.g. One-day workshop**	Series of set sessions **10 weekly sessions**	Ongoing program **drop-in centre**

Dimension 4: Group composition

Intact group for whole program **e.g. workshop series**	Members move in and out of program **youth group**	Group varies perhaps each time **drop-in centre**

Dimension 5: Focus of program

Specific career, skill or knowledge area **e.g. workshop series**	General life skills/motivation **adventure camp**	Personal development and support **mentoring**

Dimension 6: Nature of activists

Program organisers set activities to be used with each group **e.g. workshop series**	Activities vary within general framework **youth group**	Activities selected by young people **drop-in centre**

person with the same mentor for the whole time.

In the following description of programs, Dimension 1 is primarily used. That is, the programs have been categorised into four main groups according to the degree and nature of the interaction between the role model and the young person. Within these categories there are also different types of programs – generally according to the type of activities offered or purpose of the program. Table 4.1 summarises the categories used for this audit. Overall, the degree of interaction and the extent of contact between the role model and the young person increase from the top to the bottom of the table.

Some final points about the programs listed. Information used to group programs was taken from the brief responses to the initial requests for information so may not indicate all facets of the programs mentioned. For example, most programs endeavour to maximise interaction with young people if it is needed and is within their resources, so some components of programs could be categorised further down the table. The programs described are illustrative of those for which responses to the request for information were received. All of the programs said they use role models in some way, but very few were actually set up solely as formal role model programs. As programs evolve over time, it is possible that some programs have changed their focus and others may no longer be in operation.

Programs examined in more depth as case studies are indicated with an asterix (*).

Table 4.1: Types of role model programs		
Program group	*Degree of interaction*	*Type of program*
Group 1	Limited interaction	1a Award programs
		1b Media materials
		1c Celebrities and others
Group 2	Some interaction	2a Interactive: no face-to-face contact
		2b Guest speakers
		2c Workshops and one-off events
		2d Drop-in centres and activities
Group 3	Extended interaction in a group	3a Camps and clinics
		Series of workshops – fixed group:
		3b For leadership/talent/skill
		3c For young people at risk
		3d Series of meetings: varied group/time
Group 4	Extensive 1-1 interaction	4a Mentoring programs

Group 1: limited interaction

These programs generally involve award programs, media campaigns or Internet sites where the role model might be a high-achieving young person, or a celebrity sports or media personality. The role model's characteristics or achievements are made visible to a potential audience of young people, but opportunities for direct interaction between role model and audience do not occur or are very limited.

Group 1a: limited interaction – award programs

Various programs advertise for nominations of young people from different categories, and present awards to selected winners, usually at a publicised ceremony. Generally those nominated, or at least the winners, receive publicity via the media. Examples are:

- *Australian Training Awards, ANTA (Australian National Training Authority), QLD*
- *Young Australian of the Year Award, Australia Day Council of NSW*
- *National Youth Media Awards, VIC*
- *Lions Youth of the Year Quest, WA*

Group 1b: limited interaction – media materials

Other programs or projects have produced material about role models in the hope of inspiring people to strive for higher achievements. For example:

- *Take Off, ANTA, Brisbane, QLD*
  This program, which operates through a web site (http://www.anta.gov.au/takeoff/), targets all young people in secondary schools and uses as role models other young people who have made career choices. A video is also available, and case

studies are given of young people and how they made vocational choices.

- *Booklet of Women's Autobiographies, NSW*
  Material published by Office of the Director of Equal Opportunity in the Public Sector documenting the life stories of successful women.
- *Local Heroes, Perth, WA*
  Stories of people from potentially disadvantaged circumstances who have achieved in the TAFE sector are contained in a package for use in schools. This program will also provide speakers.
- *Youth Magazine, Youth Futures Group Inc, Lawson, NSW*
  A magazine by young people for young people.

Group 1c: limited interaction – celebrities and other role models

Two other programs providing information resources are examples of how role models, in the "visibility only" sense, can be used as part of a broader program to attract and inform young people.

- *Reach Out! (www.reachout.asn.au), NSW*
  This web site encourages young people to seek help for themselves and friends from organisations such as Samaritans, Kids Help Line and Lifeline. Included with resources and information is a section called 'Spotlights' which contains transcripts from about 100 interviews with various people to show "how others get through their tough times". Questions about methods of stress reduction, types of difficulties encountered, dealing with grief and whether the person had ever had counselling are included. The role models are from a number of categories such as "musos", "on the airwaves", "scientists, researchers and other smart people", "sporties", "the creative crowd" and "young people".
- *Make a Noise, Murray Area Health Service, Albury, NSW*
  Make a Noise is a Youth Suicide Prevention Project of the Greater Murray Area Health Service in which role models are used to promote referral points, help reduce the stigma associated with help-seeking behaviour and highlight where and

how young people could get help. Three high profile "ambassadors" who grew up in the Greater Murray area head the campaign – a nationally successful band, a former Australian Rugby League test captain and a NSW Rugby League player. They are used on television and posters etc. to promote Make A Noise and to give the project credibility with young people. Other levels of support are then also available through the program.

Group 2: some interaction

The next group of programs contains situations where some direct interaction between the role models and young people is possible. Programs are grouped according to the degree of interaction and may be thought of as a continuum. Examples of programs in this group with increasing degrees of interaction are interactive web sites, guest speaker programs and one-off workshops or seminars. In face-to-face settings, formal (via question times) or informal (moving around group discussions) interaction with the guest speaker or role model is possible, but the group of young people may be large, and opportunities for one-to-one interaction are restricted.

The other major type of program in this group is the "drop-in" centre where greater opportunities for interaction exist but are not formalised or highly structured. Typically these centres provide after-school, and evening and/or weekend activities for young people. There may be a core of regular attendees but also a large group of those who attend less often – the group of young people is not fixed. Role models are often youth workers supplemented by other professional staff and/or volunteers. Related to these programs are support programs that provide services and support to young people on a casual or needs basis. The group and activities may vary depending on individual needs, and more intensive individual interaction may be available, but the focus is generally the group.

Group 2a: some interaction – interactive but no face-to-face contact

- *Genesis Project, Swanview SHS, WA*
  The Genesis web site is accessible to schools on registration via the University of WA Electrical Engineering Department. University resources, software, expertise and a forum discussion are available to schools students who work on projects under the guidance of university staff and students.

- *Being There – Peer Skills Program, Kids Help Line, Redhill, QLD*
  A national telephone counselling service, this program uses young people who are willing to listen and assist other young people as role models.

- *Lifelink Samaritans Tas. Inc.*
  As with similar programs, trained befrienders are available through telephone contact for young people. Young people may also be trained to act as role models through voluntary phone work. Caring, supportive, non-judgmental listeners act as role models to the "client" group.

Group 2b: some interaction – guest speakers

- *Women of Distinction Leadership Seminar Series, Guides WA*
  Aimed at young women 13–18 years, four seminar breakfasts are held each year. Successful women from the community are used as positive role models with regard to leadership skills, decision-making and career planning.

- *Blokes' Brekkie, Female Feast, Queanbeyan South Public School, NSW*
  School students aged 12–13 meet positive role models for breakfast (boys and their fathers) or afternoon tea (girls and their mothers) in order to "open the eyes of our students to non-stereotyp-ical career opportunities".

- *Sporting Partnerships, WA Drug Abuse Strategy Office, WA**
  This program facilitates the use of sporting role models to promote the anti-drug and healthy lifestyle messages. Elite athletes visit schools and sporting clubs to speak, present awards or simply "make an appearance". Various organisations such as the WA Football Development Trust, Perth Wildcats, Perth Orioles also sent information separately about their involvement in this program.

- *MAA Team 2000, Motor Accidents Authority of NSW, Sydney*
  This program uses paralympians injured in motor vehicle crashes to promote road safety education for the media, for public relations events or in full presentations to various groups. Priority is given to 13- to 25-year-olds in groups of 30–40 young people.

- *Aboriginal Role Model Program, Ministry of Sport and Recreation, WA*
  Employed under the Smarter than Smoking project, elite athletes are guest speakers for young

people in rural and remote areas. They may appear at community events or at schools. Initially speakers, they may be invited back to conduct workshops or clinics.

* *The South Australian Register of Recreation and Sportswomen, SA*
  The web-based register, http://www.recsport.sa. gov.au/rsd/womreg.htm, provides the details of positive role models who could promote the benefits of sport and physical activity to women and girls, provide them with career ideas or inspire them to pursue their own goals. The role models are available to a range of groups including those involving young people (e.g. schools) as guest speakers and for trophy presentations.

Group 2c: some interaction – workshops and "one-off" events

- *Australis Self Made Girl, Clayton South, VIC **
  This national program targets young women and aims to encourage financial independence. One-day activity-based workshops for about 60–100 girls are offered with local business and other career women acting as role models.
- *Australia Day Youth Exchange, Australia Day Council of NSW*
  Young people aged 13–16 who wouldn't normally have such an opportunity, exchange between city and country areas over the Australia Day period and discover aspects of different backgrounds.
- *Reach Youth Ltd, Richmond, VIC*
  A motivational and personal development program that uses role models who have "a life experience, message and journey which can be used" and targets young people aged 13–18 years.
- *VEGAS (Vocational Education and Guidance for Aborigines Scheme), VET in schools, TAS*
  Targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 11 and 12 students, one component of this program is the use of culturally appropriate role models who address small groups and assemblies and attend camps.
- *PASH (Promoting Adolescent Sexual Health), Public & Community Health Unit, WA*
  A youth health coordinator and Aboriginal male cofacilitator run this program four times a year at a detention centre. It is also a peer education program designed to promote safer sex behaviour through information and discussion.

Group 2d: some interaction – drop-in centres and activities

We received information from a large number of programs in this group. Although not generally using the actual term role model, these programs considered that they were in fact programs that used role models to assist young people. Drop-in centres typically offer recreational activities and information to young people in a particular geographical area. Some target young people at risk but generally they are open to all. Individual support and/or referral to other agencies are also generally offered when required. Some centres also run courses to develop specific skills or have a more specific focus. The following programs, unless otherwise specified are those generally available to all young people in an area.

- *GAP Youth Centre Aboriginal Corporation, Alice Springs, NT **
  This program provides after school and other activities for young people – both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. Trained staff and volunteers, both adults and peer workers are used as role models.
- *RecLink Tasmania, Hobart PCYC, Hobart, TAS **
  An initiative of the Hobart PCYC (Police and Citizens Youth Club) and other agencies, RecLink uses sport to assist unemployed and homeless young people 17–25 years (many with drug problems or a record of offending) to take charge of their own lives. A range of role models includes youth workers, police officers, older people and peers, especially those who have worked through difficulties in their own lives. RecLink is linked with other PCYC programs, such as Mobile Activity Centre (MAC), Street Work and Teen Vacation. It has developed networks with other community organisations and agencies to enhance young people's access to a variety of support services and personal development opportunities.
- *Gosford Regional Youth Support Services Inc., Gosford, NSW*
  A variety of services are available such as activities, guest speakers, youth services, cafe, advocacy services, young women's workshops etc. based around the Gosford region and aimed at young people aged 12–25.
- *Mathoura Boxing/Gym, Youth Initiatives Officer, Mathoura, NSW*
  Open to all, the boxing gym is designed to provide recreational and leisure activity for local youth – an initiative to alleviate boredom.

- *Youth Program for Children with a Disability, NT*
  Using different role models each week, this program aims at exposing young people with disabilities to various forms of recreation. Paid employees and volunteers also act as role models and a camp is held every 10 weeks. This program therefore uses role models in a number of different ways and would also fit into Group 3 categories.
- *Alice Springs Youth Accommodation and Support Service, NT*
  Various programs are also located within this service including accommodation, advocacy, counselling, a drop-in centre, 24-hour crisis phone support and an employment program.
- *Belmont Clothes Library, Belmont Business Enterprise Centre Inc., Cloverdale, WA*
  This clothes library provides clothing and assistance for young people who do not have appropriate clothes for job interviews.
- *Carey College Chaplains, NSW*
  Only a few schools responded to the initial request for information about role model programs by nominating their student support staff. In a sense, however, such staff may act as role models in much the same way that youth workers have suggested that they do. Carey College nominated its chaplains as role models when they interact informally with students in a range of activities and settings.

Group 3: extended interaction – in a group

Programs in this group involve extended interaction between one or more role models and a relatively small group of young people. Group 3 formed the largest group of programs about which information was provided for the audit. There were four main subgroups within this category.

Some programs operate with a particular group for an intensive period of time such as week-long camps or coaching clinics. Alternatively, contact may be over a longer period of time such as in programs with a series of meetings or those operating for one school term or a year. These generally target a specific group of young people for a specific set of workshops or activities. There are generally formal activities, but also ample opportunity for informal interaction with the role models. This subgroup could also be divided into programs to develop leadership skills or talent, and programs for young people at risk. In other programs in this category, the group of young people might vary somewhat from week to week and the program is generally ongoing.

Group 3a: extended interaction in a group – camps and clinics
- *Australian Business Week, Australian Business Week Limited, Parramatta, NSW*
  During a five-day residential program in January, teams of Year 10 and 11 students work on a variety of activities with the aim of learning about business as a career option. Keynote speakers are used as role models and successful business people or recent graduates act as business mentors.
- *Wise Old People, Kyogle Youth Action, Kyogle, NSW*
  Camps, weekends and other projects are used to break down barriers between generations. Diverse young people aged 13–26 years are targeted with equally diverse older people acting as role models.
- *Youth Focus Program, Youth Charities Trust, Perth, WA*
  Weekend camps are held that aim to empower, support and encourage at-risk youth aged 14–18 to make positive changes in their lives. Youth and adult volunteers act as role models on the camps. Counselling, support groups and training are also provided from this program's Perth office and are available following camps.
- *Camp Quality WA, Balcatta, WA*
  In this program, 12- to 17-year-olds who have or are undergoing treatment for cancer are allocated a companion (three young people for each mentor). As well as assisting and getting to know the young people on camp, the mentor also makes a 12-month commitment to them, so this program could also fit into Group 4.
- *RUSH (Rigorous Ultimate Survival Haven Inc.), Belrose, NSW*
  An adventure-based program for disadvantaged and at-risk youth, RUSH offers a variety of activities such as whitewater rafting and rock climbing, perhaps over a weekend. Youth workers, a police youth liaison officer and an ex-para-trooper act as role models.

Group 3b: extended interaction in a group – series of workshops with fixed group and time. Leadership/talent/ skill programs
- *Tasmania Youth Consultative Committee, Youth Network of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS*
  A committee of 15 young people has been established for government, communities and other agencies that wish to consult with a broadly representative group of young people. Three of these young people are peer support workers and they

act as role models by providing support and assistance to other committee members.

- *STAR (Science and Technology Awareness Raising), Murdoch University, WA*
  The STAR program uses university students as tutors and mentors for school students. Originally focusing on science and technology, other subject areas are now incorporated. Tutors are trained and allocated to a particular class in a school where they assist teachers by helping the school students in class – either individually or in small groups. The program is developing an email component for more remote schools.

- *Peer Support Program – Christchurch Grammar School, Claremont, WA*
  Many high schools have a peer support program where older students, generally in Year 11, are trained and then conduct various activities with students new to the school – Year 8 in WA. This school originally used the program developed by the Peer Support Foundation Ltd, but now organises its own. The leaders are seen to be role models as they are committed, understanding and compassionate and help the younger student in the transition process through support, information and developing of networks. Teachers in the school also perform this role in supporting the Year 11 leaders.

- *Sportsfun, Ministry of Sport and Recreation, Wembley, WA*
  In this program, Year 11 and 12 secondary school students act as role models for primary school students in Years 5–7. The focus is on leadership skills for the older students who assist the younger ones to learn, play and enjoy sport in a non-threatening environment, either during or after school. Begun in 1987, this state-wide program had 1,500 secondary leaders and 7,000 primary participants in 1999. School or community coordinators train and support the secondary students – sometimes called "tripartite mentoring".

- *YAA Business Skills and Business Alive, Young Achievement Australia, Melbourne, VIC*
  These two national programs have been run in each State for many years, mostly in schools and universities. They aim to develop business enterprise skills, capacities and understanding, and are open to all young people. Business Skills runs in schools for up to 10 sessions. Business Alive, where the young people run their own company, operates for up to a six-month period for senior secondary or tertiary students. The programs are sponsored by the business community and nationally involve nearly 2,000 business mentors annually. In 1999, YAA won international awards for outstanding delivery and outcomes in the Business Skills Program, and for the development of programs for disadvantaged groups in the community.

- *Enterprise in Remote Pilbara Schools, Karratha, WA*
  Still in its early stage, this program targets remote and rural secondary schools which have a predominantly Indigenous population. The aim is to encourage the young people to develop enterprises in their schools or communities. Role models are Indigenous people who have succeeded in setting up their own enterprise or small business.

- *Public Access Resource Point, Northern Rivers Social Development Council, Kyogle, NSW*
  This program reverses the role modelling process of other programs listed. Young people aged 12–26 act as role models for older people by teaching them Internet and computing skills.

Group 3c: extended interaction in a group – series of workshops with fixed group and time. Programs for young people at risk

- *The Lunch Box (Journey 1) Program, Northbridge, WA**
  This program aims to provide young people with new learning experiences in a supportive atmosphere. It uses arts-based activities from various cultural traditions and is creative and innovative in its approach to youth suicide prevention.

- *RAP (Redirecting Attitude Potential), Youth for Christ, NT**
  This program uses outdoors and adventure-based activities to provide challenges for young people. Overcoming these challenges, with the support of the role models, leads to the development of self-confidence and interpersonal skills as well as giving a sense of achievement. Various forms of the program are available. The young people are often selected by schools. RAP is also used as a "diversionary program". Such programs provide alternatives to the sentencing of young offenders aged 15 and 16 who appear in court for their second property offence(s).

- *Sticking up for Yourself, Wyong Youth Services, NSW*
  This 10-week (two hours per week) program for young people at local high schools who have low self-esteem and other concerns noted by school welfare staff focuses on personal development and

the management of real-life situations. Role models are required to be genuine, honest, fun loving, non-judgmental, caring and supportive.

- *Peer Leadership Programs, Community Resource Unit, Parkville, VIC*
  In these three programs, young people are trained to assist health professionals. Both the young people and professionals act as role models to offer support and skills to young people aged 13–17 with special needs:
  CHIPS (Chronic Illness Peer Support) is for those with chronic illnesses. Over an eight-week period, six to eight young people meet once a week. A parent project is also available.
  PATS (peer support for young people whose parents are living with mental illness) is a six-week course for 13- to 18-year-olds interested in exploring issues around mental illness as well as social outings.
  CHAT (Confident Happy Adolescents Talking) is a social skills peer support program for those who are shy or isolated. Meetings over eight weeks focus on games, art and discussions about friendships and feelings.
- *Sports Challenge, Guildford, WA*
  Operating in schools, remote communities or detention centres, this program uses elite athletes as role models to develop self-esteem and interpersonal skills in young people at risk. Flexible programs are offered depending on the situation. For example, there may be two sessions a week during a school term, or two days a week over four weeks in a different location. Some follow-up after the program is included. This program operates around Australia as well as overseas.
- *Huon Challenge, Huon Valley Council Youth Service, TAS*
  School-aged participants (mainly aged 11–16), some of whom have displayed at-risk behaviours, become involved in boat building and sail training. Role models are often volunteers including teachers, fitness leaders, youth workers, boat builders and parents. This program has been operating in different forms since 1992 and may be adapted to the needs of various groups and communities. Other programs, activities and support are available through the Huon Valley Council Youth Service.
- *Clarence Plains Workshop Program, Coordinator Youth Services, Rosny Park, TAS*
  Youth workers and a woodwork/metalwork tutor

provide workshops to young offenders as part of their community service orders, and to secondary at-risk students as part of their curriculum. The aim is to provide learning opportunities, information and support in an alternative environment. Young people aged 12–24 are assisted to develop responsibility for their own actions, problem-solving skills, teamwork, confidence and a positive self-image. Products made are donated or sold in the community and participants also assist other community centres through maintenance repairs.

- *Circuit Breakers, Time-Out and Koori Youth Program, Department of Education and Training, Darlinghurst, NSW*
  These programs are initiatives of the NSW Department of Education and Training and operate state-wide. All target specific groups of young people and offer a range of activities. Circuit Breakers is an educational, career information and personal development program for students in Year 9–12 who have English as a second language. Time Out targets Year 7 and 8 students with attendance or behavioural problems and operates two days per week. The Koori Youth Program is for young Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders who are in Years 7–12 at school and at risk of leaving early, or who are under 24, left school at the end of Year 10 or earlier and are unemployed.
- *Rip It Up Music Program, Swan View Youth Centre/Mundaring Arts Centre, WA*
  Weekly music workshops are held for 13- to 18-year-olds who reside in the Mundaring Shire (outer metropolitan). Participants are mainly males at risk. A friendly, non-judgmental facilitator acts as a role model with the aim of encouraging participation and exposure to musical equipment, irrespective of skill levels.
- *Kolor Skeme Team, Guildford Youth Project, Merrylands, NSW*
  This program is a "graffiti solutions pilot project" that uses well-known graffiti and hip-hop artists and local business people. They work with young people interested in, or at risk of, participating in illegal aspects of graffiti art and hip-hop culture on projects such as decorating walls and giving exhibitions. The duration of the interaction is not clear from the information received, but it is assumed that the same young people are involved over a number of sessions for preparation and performance.

Group 3d: extended interaction – series of meetings for a varied group/time

- SHEIRA Peer Support Group, Darwin, NT*
  SHEIRA (Support, Health, Entertainment, Independence, Relationships, Art) offers support for young pregnant women or those with preschoolers. Organised activities are run depending on the needs of the participants and support is offered by a trained coordinator and by other young women who have been in similar circumstances. There is generally a core group of participants with others leaving and joining.
- Scouts Australia*
  Information about this international program was received from several locations. Scouts caters for young people (boys and girls) aged 6–26 years and provides regular activities aimed at encouraging physical, mental, social and spiritual development. As well as trained leaders, young people may also act as role models as they become patrol leaders or assistant leaders.
- Guides Australia
  An international program, Guides has many components. As well as the regular units, there are Lifeskills Programs, a Queen's Guide Leadership Focus and a Junior Leader Program. Regular units meet weekly for various activities and leaders act as role models for girls, with patrol leaders also acting as role models to younger girls.
- Girls' Friendly Society
  Also for girls, from preschool age upwards, this international Anglican Ministry program offers weekly or fortnightly meetings of various activities plus camps. Girls do not need to belong to the Anglican Church but the trained leaders do.
- Youth Training Scheme – Cadets WA Program, Office of Youth Affairs, Perth, WA
  This State and national program targets mainstream young people who wish to develop life skills and community values, and undertake self-improvement opportunities. Various community leaders, volunteer members, teachers and parents may act as role models. A number of types of cadet units are available through organisations such as St John Ambulance and the Police.
- WA Deaf Society's Youth Group, Leederville, WA
  This youth group offers deaf and hard of hearing young people aged 13–18 years a place to relax, have fun and develop new skills and new friendships. Role models are volunteers who are also deaf or hard of hearing and who demonstrate a

positive and active participation in Australian society.
- Faith Centre Youth, Faith Centre Darwin Inc., Sanderson, NT
  This is a youth group for any young person. Young married couples or single people with a strong Christian faith, positive outlook on life and desire to help youth act as role models.
- Migrant Resource Centre (Sth Tas) Inc., Youth Support Program, New Town, TAS*
  Targeting young people aged 12–25 who have recently arrived in Australia, this program aims to address settlement issues through information sessions, participation in community events, homework support, recreational activities, group work and referral support.
- PASS (Peer Assisted Study Sessions), University of Queensland, QLD
  Working in pairs, second- and third-year university students run voluntary weekly study groups for first-year university students in a number of subjects. The more experienced students are selected and trained to act as social mentors as well as content guides for the new university students.

Group 4: extensive interaction – individual

Generally using the classical model of mentoring, these programs involve one adult acting as a mentor to one young person, usually though not always a youth at risk. The focus is often, therefore, on developing self-esteem and broad life skills or on providing a stable, caring adult as a support person. This applies particularly to community-based mentoring programs.

Mentoring programs operating within or organised by schools, colleges or universities may have an educational (remedial or extension) or a career focus. For many programs, however, the personal relationships that develop, and subsequent improvements in self-confidence and self-esteem, are seen to be the most important aspects of mentoring.

Group 4a: extensive interaction – mentoring programs

- Youth Outreach Programme, Jobs South West, Busselton, WA*
  This is a one-to-one mentoring program with community members from the young person's town mentoring young people in personal and job-related areas.

- *Big Sister/Big Brother, YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) of Sydney, NSW**
  This program is representative of many such one-to-one programs operating in Australia as well as internationally. Volunteers from the community are carefully screened and matched with a young person with a particular need. As a pair, they engage in various self-chosen activities over an extended period of time, with a supportive relationship developing between them.
- *Aboriginal Youth Mentor Program, Fitzroy, VIC*
  In this program, young at-risk Aboriginal people aged 10–25 are mentored by community elders in order to promote participation in school and connectedness to family.
- *SHARK (Seniors Helping "At-Risk" Kids), Morley, WA*
  Developed as an initiative for the International Year of Older Persons, this program operates as a partnership between the Red Cross and the Intergenerational Advisory Network. Seniors are trained to act as mentors to young people at risk. Some programs are run in schools and others in detention centres and other locations. Volunteers undertake various activities such as literacy and numeracy skill development, gardening, crafts etc. to enhance the learning opportunities of the young people.
- *Youthlink, Port Macquarie, NSW*
  Young people with a disability are nominated by high school staff and paired with a young person without a disability to do recreational activities. It is a joint initiative between Hastings Council, Port Macquarie PCYC, Hastings Respite Care and the Department of Community Services.
- *Duke of Edinburgh's Award*
  An international personal development program, this targets young people aged 14–25 who endeavour to achieve in four sections at various levels: skill, service, physical recreation and expedition. For each section, a mentor or role model is selected by the young person to assist and support them in the chosen activity. As an individual program, the mentor has a one-to-one role although others may be involved, depending on the activity chosen. Schools may be involved in supporting this program but it is organised by a community-based organisation.
- *VET Certificate I in Work Education, Launceston College, TAS*
  Year 11 and 12 students, the majority of whom are at risk in various ways, undergo work experience.

This program has been included as a mentoring program as there is a one-to-one level of interaction between young people and community employers and employees.
- *Nyum Nyar Aboriginal Student Mentor Program, NSW Department of Education and Training, Sydney*
  Operating within several secondary schools in rural and metropolitan areas, this program aims to provide Aboriginal high school students with the personal support of someone who can guide and assist them to develop their skills and confidence. Mentors meet individuals (or sometimes a small group of students) at school for at least a year. Mentors are employed by the Department of Education and Training and may or may not be Aboriginal.
- *Mentoring Program, Lakeside S.C., Reservoir, VIC*
  Secondary school students who lack a significant stable person in their life or who would benefit from increased self-esteem and a broadened perspective on life are paired with community mentors. Meetings are held at the school once a week with the intention of gradually meeting less often.
- *LAP (Learning Assistance Program), Adelaide, SA*
  Operating and expanding over a number of years, this program trains and supports mentors in schools for any student who would benefit. They may have learning difficulties, socioemotional problems, be in need of extension or generally in need of adult support. Begun in schools and using school-based coordinators, this program now has its own independent association and operates internationally as well as across Australia.
- *SBC (School Business Club), Sydney, NSW*
  This Enterprise Education program originated and operates within a coeducational private school in the Sydney central business district. Both boys and girls from Years 7–12 participate in the SBC as an extracurricular activity involving in-school time as well as weekends and holidays. The SBC aims to give students an understanding of business and to develop networks between the students and members of the business community. Facilitated by the school's Director of Enterprise Education, students initiate various projects with the support of appropriate business and community mentors.
- *Ready-Set-Go Vocational Educational Projects, Department of Education Training and Employment, SA*
  This program aims to enhance career education for secondary students at risk. The project was trialled

in eight schools that each developed a program to suit their own needs. Various programs using mentors as role models have been developed including mentors from the information technology industry, from TAFE and from the community working with young women at risk to develop a web site. Another school has linked its students with university and primary school students in a tripartite mentoring program based on activities at the local recreation centre.

Conclusions

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, this audit has aimed at illustrating the diversity of Australian programs using role models to assist young people. Examples have been given of many programs that target young people from very different circumstances and use very different methods to achieve fairly similar aims. The next chapter explores the diversity of role model programs in more detail.

Chapter 5

Survey analysis

Introduction

This chapter explores the diversity of role model programs in some detail. It summarises the information from 53 surveys that were returned by programs that had contributed to the audit information. All these programs targeted young people in the 12–25 year age range. The programs selected for case studies are not included in the survey data reported here, but are considered in the following chapters of this report.

Surveys were returned from all States and Territories except South Australia and ACT, with most being from Western Australia. Programs operated in metropolitan regions (20), rural and remote regions (18) and on a state-wide (11) or national (4) basis. Although this number equates to approximately one-eighth of programs for which audit information was received, the sample of programs is representative of the range of role model programs operating in Australia in terms of coverage of the range within each of the dimensions addressed in Chapter 4.

The discussion follows the five sections of the survey document. A copy of the complete survey form is reproduced in Appendix B. The first two sections relate to general information about the type of program and its organisational structure. The next sections relate to the young people and to the role models involved in the program. Respondents were asked to describe the characteristics of the young

people and of the role models, as well as how they were identified and selected. Questions about training and support for role models were also included. The final section addresses program effectiveness, and the survey asked respondents (usually program coordinators) to evaluate their own program's effectiveness and to describe difficulties encountered and ways they could be or had been addressed.

The survey instrument was constructed in such a way that the findings could be presented in tables giving the percentages of programs responding in each category. When analysis began it was evident that not only were the programs representative of a diverse group, but that each program was quite complex and contained diverse elements. Thus reporting the findings in the tabular manner planned would not be very meaningful or useful. Instead the findings are presented in prose form to illustrate the complexity of the programs.

General information about programs

All programs began as a response to a need in the community perceived by an individual or an organisation. Some were triggered by specific events such as a suicide or death, or by the recognition that there were no venues for recreation. Others were a response to an

issue such as increasing homelessness. Some took advantage of a specific event such as the Paralympics to launch a program. About half the programs surveyed had been operating for less than five years. Seventeen had been running for six to 12 years and eight programs had operated for 14 years or more. There was no real pattern to these longer lasting programs. Some originated internationally such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award (36 years) or had a large organisation behind them such as YWCA or Jesuits. Others such as Canteen and camps for children with disabilities focused on a particular target group. Out of these eight long-programs, only three targeted at-risk young people.

Information obtained from the audit was used to develop categories regarding the degree of interaction between young people and role models, and respondents were asked to classify their program accordingly. Nearly half indicated that various combinations of interaction types occurred – reflecting the diversity of programs and the attempts to meet needs at a variety of levels. Almost all seemed concerned with being more than a one-off program. Only 12 of all programs indicated that no formal option for ongoing contact was available.

Program aims centred round three main areas: providing general support for young people; assisting young people who have specific characteristics or are dealing with particular issues; and developing young people's skills or knowledge.

Programs with aims focusing on a supportive function provided that support in the form of adults or peers with whom a young person could communicate. Providing a safe, secure and supervised environment in which young people could interact with adults and peers was important. Some programs aimed at enabling fun and friendship between young people, while others aimed to include support for families, advocacy and referral.

The aims of some programs centred on the needs of specific groups of young people. Examples of these were young people with same-sex attractions or with physical or intellectual disabilities. Other programs had a focus on one particular issue such as graffiti or drug abuse. Variety and diversity of focus areas were the striking feature here.

Finally, programs aimed to develop a variety of skills and knowledge in young people. The most common themes were those of developing life skills and of empowering young people to make decisions and accept responsibility for their actions. Life skills included general social and interpersonal skills, self-confidence and self-esteem. A number of other programs had these aims but focused not on at-risk young people but on those with potential for leadership in sport, local government and other community organisations. Providing access to participation in quality and constructive recreational activities was an aim of a few programs. Other programs aimed to develop specific skills for education and employment such as manual skills, literacy and numeracy skills, and scientific problem-solving.

Organisational structure of programs

Most (29) programs were delivered by a range of not-for-profit organisations such as PCYC and YWCA. Fourteen were delivered by federal, State or local government bodies and nine by educational institutions. The majority of programs used various sites, depending on the nature of a particular activity, and only five programs said they had a dedicated site.

Twenty programs were funded by a single source but most programs were funded by multiple sources. A typical example would be a combination of a government grant, business sponsorship and fundraising. Programs reported using both monetary resources and in-kind donations. Only one reported charging a fee for participants although several of the case study programs discussed later incurred some cost to participants.

It was difficult to determine operating costs of programs as half the respondents did not reply to that question or reported that they did not know. Others interpreted the question in a variety of ways. For example some included salaries and others didn't. In any case there was a huge range in the amounts given, ranging from $5,000 to $2.1 million per annum.

Almost all programs reported that they had other components apart from the use of role models and, therefore, used a range of personnel. In fact 46 programs had components the respondents believed were additional to provision of a role model such as peer support, recreation, family support or respite, access to youth services, Internet resources and skill development. All had a main coordinator and most had some form of administrative staff. Some programs had a management committee of parents or volunteers. Other staff mentioned frequently included youth workers and publicity or liaison officers, psychologists,

family support workers, policemen and Aboriginal liaison officers. Many staff, such as teachers or community workers, were paid to work in the program as part of other duties.

The young people

Thirteen of the surveyed programs were offered to young people in the 12–25 year age range whereas others only covered part of that range. Most programs were available to young people of both genders, and generally ethnicity was not a selection criterion. The exceptions to these were programs that targeted, for example, Indigenous young people in remote areas or recently arrived young migrant refugees.

Thirty programs were aimed at young people generally at risk for a number of reasons. Many were homeless, truants, young mothers or had disabilities of some kind. These programs varied in terms of the degree of perceived risk. For example, some were aimed at school students who teachers felt were in danger of leaving early, whereas others were aimed at high-risk youth such as detainees or offenders.

Some programs targeted young people with specific characteristics or interests. Examples are programs aimed at gifted and talented young people in specific areas such as science or business, or programs that targeted specific groups such as sons of single mothers or young people with cancer. Some programs (e.g. MAA Team 2000) were available to multiple groups – for example, programs visited regular schools, remote areas or detention centres.

Most used a variety of means to inform people about their program such as publicity via youth events, schools, media reports, Internet, local papers, fliers and posters. As well as using formal advertising, most programs also relied on word of mouth from friends, peers and others using the service. Many programs also took referrals from people such as youth workers, case workers, school staff and other youth services.

Young people were selected for programs in various ways depending on the type of program. Most programs were voluntary although some were a compulsory part of a school course or a court order. About half said they obtained parental permission in writing where age appropriate, but this was generally not required for drop-in-type centres or when parents were not the legal guardians.

There was a huge range from two to 11,000 in terms of the number of young people involved in programs at any one time. In 1999, respondents estimated that numbers participating ranged from two to 100,000. Periods of contact of the young people within the programs also varied greatly. Most programs fell into three groups although some offered a variety of types of contact. Drop-in-type centres typically were available one or more times per week for a few hours at a time (12 programs). Sixteen programs consisted of a camp, a one-off workshop or presentation, or a short series of four to five workshops. Some used weekly meetings for a set term for a set group or for individual mentoring (17 programs). One other program operated on a full-time residential basis.

About two-thirds of the programs surveyed said they kept in contact with young people after the program. This was generally done on an informal basis. About half the surveys that gave details about their follow-up said they sought two main types of information. These were information about the young person him/herself (e.g. How are they coping? Do they need further support or assistance?) and information about the program itself (e.g. What did the young person learn from it? Have they changed their behaviour or gained skills? Can the program be improved? What future activities could be included?).

The role models

The survey asked about the characteristics of the people used as role models. About half the programs used role models that had achieved in or had knowledge of a particular skill area such as sport, business or a hobby. A few programs, because of their nature, said their role models were male or female or committed Christians. About one-third used qualified youth workers, social workers, teachers, police officers etc. as role models. Other programs reported using trained peer helpers and older community members to work with young people. No specific qualifications were required for this last type of program but a range of personal characteristics was seen to be essential. Many programs in the other categories also mentioned the following characteristics as being needed: committed, relate well to young people, tolerant, nurturing, able to set limits and follow through, flexible, friendly, empathic and able to listen.

Survey respondents were also asked to explain in what way these people were role models for the young people in the program. The responses suggested that role models perform three major functions – inspiration, setting an example and providing personalised support.

People who are successful and admired, and perhaps well-known or skilled, can be an inspiration to young people and are often used as guest speakers or in short-term workshops. The second type of role model is people who have a positive attitude and good social skills and who encourage communication and education. They can demonstrate and set an example for young people of different ways of living. Through interacting with the young people, they are also able to support and encourage them to learn these life skills and solve problems. Role models taking on this type of role are often involved in recreation and activities programs. They combine the other two roles in a sense – demonstrating plus supporting. Finally, some role models take on a mentoring role. Their primary role is to listen, to offer friendship and encouragement, to offer advice or guidance and to become a significant other in the life of a young person. These types of role models closely correspond to the role model functions depicted in the theoretical framework detailed in Chapters 1 and 2.

Role models are generally located via advertising, by personal recommendation or through organisations. In two programs, the young people find and select their own role models. Thirty-six programs reported using a combination of screening methods. Less than half required a police clearance as part of the screening process. About half the programs reported difficulties locating role models who had time to spare and the right characteristics. A high burnout rate made retaining role models difficult. In most programs the activities were negotiated between the role models and the young people using set programs or general guidelines as a framework.

With regard to training the role models, 10 programs did not respond to these questions and 13 said they provided no training – two because their role models had relevant tertiary qualifications. The remaining programs reported using a variety of training procedures, with a majority using a combination of group training and one-to-one assistance. Coordinators mainly provided the training in conjunction with other role models and paid training providers. Nearly all the programs surveyed said they provided written material to the role models.

Evaluation

Only three programs believed they were "extremely effective" and about half said they felt "very effective". Others said effectiveness varied from site to site, or that they were as effective as they could be given their limited resources. Effectiveness was determined through three main sources of information and most programs used a combination of these for evaluation: coordinator observation, formal evaluation procedures such as surveys, and informal feedback from participants and others.

The survey asked respondents to describe aspects of their program they thought were particularly successful. Many indicated more than one aspect that they felt had been successful. About half the programs felt they had given young people the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge or access experiences they may not have otherwise had. The next most commonly reported successful aspect was that young people were able to develop a one-to-one relationship with an adult who would listen and support them. Another important aspect was the nature of role models used – they were described as credible, interesting and dedicated. Other programs reported that an aspect of their success was that young people developed wider networks or a sense of community between themselves or both. Additional successful aspects suggested were: providing strong support for volunteers; having clear policies and procedures; giving young people a sense of ownership of programs by giving them responsibilities and managerial roles; working with and supporting families of young people; and the interaction developed between different groups, such as schools and parents, to run the programs.

Respondents were also asked about difficulties programs had encountered and how they were or might be resolved. Five main types of difficulties were outlined (some said more than one type) that related to: funding, role models and staff, community perceptions, the young people and issues specific to individual programs.

Many programs cited obtaining regular and sufficient funding as their major difficulty. There was often more demand for programs than resources could fulfil. Possible solutions were seen as increased advertising or public profile, more fundraising, using resources wisely and creatively, and help from "parent" organisations.

Other programs had difficulty in finding appropriate role models (especially males) who had sufficient time and were prepared to work at night and on weekends for little or no pay in a low-status setting. Fear of litigation for school staff and for mentors in unsupervised settings was also a concern. Possible solutions were ensuring role models were trained and

supported, and improving programs' images through public relations.

Issues of negative community perceptions of young people, and working with a variety of professional groups, presented difficulties for some programs. Possible solutions included developing a positive public profile, awareness raising in the community, holding meetings with various "stakeholders" and keeping out of "political dogfights".

Another difficulty mentioned was with the young people themselves. For example, there could be problems such as maintaining their motivation throughout a set program, dealing with difficult individuals such as those who vanish from a mentoring program, having to turn away youth using drugs and alcohol, and meeting the level of needs with current staff levels. There were also sometimes conflicts between young people within a program or between a young person and a staff member. Possible solutions given were few as this was a real difficulty for programs serving severely at-risk youth. Some solutions offered were persistence and encouragement of program staff, discussions between conflicting parties, anger management techniques for young people and increased funding to employ and train more staff.

The final area of difficulties concerned problems specific to individual programs. Two examples are given here. Mentoring programs generally had a long wait time between application and matching, and both mentors and young people could become discouraged. Rural and remote programs presented cost and organisational difficulties for the role models and issues of access for young people without transport.

The survey gave respondents the opportunity to suggest improvements that could be made to their program and by far the most frequent improvement desired was increased funding. Programs said they would use this in two main ways – for personnel and for an extension of the program's activities.

Additional funding for personnel was suggested for ideas such as employing administrative support staff, increasing training for staff, paying current volunteers, having more paid staff so more volunteers could be supported, providing relief staff, paying for travel for programs in rural or remote areas and employing someone to promote the program.

Other programs would use additional funding to extend the program's activities. Examples given were providing camps and school holiday programs, running more programs in schools or extending the program into schools, offering the program in rural and remote areas and creating a multipurpose venue for the program.

Several programs gave ideas for improvements that were specific to their individual situation. For example, attracting more male volunteers, improving written policies and procedures, and trying to gain accreditation for their course. Other programs wanted to link with similar programs "to deliver as much as possible to as many as possible".

An opportunity was given in the survey for further comments regarding anything that was important to the operation of the respondent's program or about any other relevant issue. Comments tended to be specific to particular program needs and were positive or negative. Positive aspects included, for example, the support from parent bodies and the community, and the commitment of role models. Negative aspects mentioned included stressing that a program takes time to run, and that it was difficult to also find the time to get sponsorship or raise the community profile of the program in order to attract sponsors. Final responses stressed the importance of such programs and how others needed to be aware of their positive impact, especially funding bodies that needed to realise that time (five years rather than one year) was needed to establish programs and get results. One further comment emphasised the need for programs to be run "properly":

> Mentoring is simple in principle but extremely complex in practice. Good intentions aren't enough.

Conclusions

It is difficult to draw definitive conclusions for several reasons. First, although the programs included in the survey are representative of role model programs in general, they are not wholly representative of all programs available. Second and principally, the survey programs portrayed such a range of characteristics that summarising them would be meaningless. Therefore a conclusion that can be drawn is that role model programs in Australia reflect the diverse nature and needs of young people and of those who are interested in their well-being.

One common positive feature that emerged, and was clearly demonstrated to the researchers throughout this project, was the commitment of those working with young people. Program staff were continually trying to provide the best possible program for their target group of young people with the resources available.

Perhaps the major issue of concern raised in the survey that seemed common to most programs was the ever present problem of funding. Funding was often available for a pilot project or initial start-up period, but obtaining longer-term funding was more difficult. Some programs reported that it took time to establish credibility, to sort out "teething problems" and to establish program structure before it could attract role models and young people, and before it could be said whether or not a program was successful. Time constraints made it difficult for coordinators to also find the time to get sponsorship or raise the community profile of the program in order to attract sponsors.

An issue of concern relating to funding emerged from the survey responses. When asked about the operating cost of their program, 23 surveys did not respond to this question and two said that they did not know. Others interpreted the question differently making it very difficult to estimate program costs and value for money. Contributing to this problem was the fact that most programs relied on "in kind" donations, volunteers, multiple sources of funding or participants being paid as part of other duties. For these reasons it appeared that coordinators had difficulty accurately costing programs and that some may need assistance to determine the real cost of programs. It must be difficult to apply for funding and to develop business plans when a coordinator's expertise is in working with youth or other areas not generally involving costing and budgeting. Perhaps this help in costing and accounting, as well as assisting with applying for funding would be a useful role of a central funding body. For example, a finance officer or similar could help with both of these and advise on issues related to GST.

The following chapters of this report examine various characteristics of role model programs in more depth and raises common concerns and issues. Chapter 6 gives an outline of the 11 role model programs involved in the case studies, Chapter 7 gives voice to the views of some of the young people from those programs, and Chapter 8 presents the analysis of role model effectiveness taking account of the full range of case study data.

The case study programs

Introduction

This chapter describes the 11 programs selected for the case studies. The descriptions provide a background to the analysis in Chapters 7 and 8, and detail the aims of the program and target group of young people, role models and their function in the program, location, brief history, funding and other relevant characteristics.

The programs were selected to cover the range of programs involving at least some interaction between role models and young people, and to meet the requirements of the project with respect to coverage of programs for specific groups of young people and types of role models. The process is outlined in Chapter 1. The program descriptions are presented in an order approximating the level of interaction between role model and young people, with the minimum interaction programs first and the programs providing one-on-one support last.

The case study programs

Sporting partnerships

Coordinated by the WA Drug Abuse Strategy Office (WADASO), this is a preventative program that facilitates the use of high profile sporting role models to promote the anti-drug and healthy lifestyle messages to young players in local sporting teams. It is a "partnership" which connects sporting organisations at State level with local sporting groups through Local Drug Action Groups (LDAGS). The LDAGS were initially set up in 1997 as part of the Together Against Drugs strategy. With the help of a State coordinator, LDAGS organise activities and events such as trophy presentations or autograph sessions by elite athletes. The athletes might also act as guest speakers at sporting club presentation sessions or school assemblies. In 1998/99 over 30 role models from five sports were involved on a regular basis, and the program sometimes tapped into other sporting role model programs.

Each of the State sporting organisations selects athletes appropriate to the program to be involved as role models. They attend a training session in sport groups facilitated by the WADASO. The role models are encouraged to talk with the young people about various aspects of their lives including the idea of making choices about drugs. The target group is all young people – not those at risk. It originally targeted junior high school ages but has recently included upper primary school ages. The program is designed to reinforce the "Drug Free" message promoted elsewhere, including school-based drug education programs.

A range of printed supporting materials is available for the role models, the young people and the sporting clubs and coaches, and also for the parents who are

seen as the other important target group in the program. As a partnership, the program offers the sporting groups a "big name" at their events, sponsorship of teams or trophies, and assistance in developing drug policies and guidelines for junior clubs.

Australis Self Made Girl

This national program targets young women aged 14–23 years and aims to expand their career options, build their self-confidence and esteem, encourage creativity, and motivate them to become self reliant and financially independent (Australis information brochure). Launched in September 1998, the Australis Self Made Girl program is based on the US program An Income of Her Own. At present the program runs mainly one-day workshops around Australia but the Four Year Plan extends activities to two- to three-day workshops and to other formats. The first three-day workshop, Club $tart Up was conducted in 2000 and involved girls from four schools across Victoria.

Local business and other career women act as the role models. Although the intention originally was for these mentors to be running their own businesses, they may include women holding a senior position in a business or other organisation. The women are voluntary and there are no age, professional or educational requirements. They are recruited through word of mouth, the Australis web site and personal invitation. Each attends an induction and information evening prior to the workshop.

Different activity-based workshops are run for young women aged 14–18 years and 18–23 years. Girls are divided into teams of eight each facilitated by a mentor, "providing a first hand look into the real world working alongside successful business women on a series of activities" (Australis information brochure). These activities include a board game 'Hot Company' which raises issues and decisions relevant to running a business, and the 'Powerful Impressions' activities which include discussing issues and making decisions about a suitable wardrobe for various activities, and applying make-up after watching a demonstration of make-up application. The workshops also include time for the girls to interact with and ask questions of a range of mentors. For example, three mentors are (pre) selected and, one at a time, invite girls to ask questions in order to guess their occupations. They then explain what they do and briefly how they got to that position. During a round robin activity girls are encouraged to ask the mentors any questions they wish. The day

concludes with teams creating a product and presenting their business plan to the whole group.

The cost of the one-day workshop ($54 in 1999/2000) includes all materials, meals and refreshments, a gift bag with make-up and other sponsors' products, and subscription to a newsletter sent out to girls three times a year. Girls experiencing financial hardship may be sponsored through the Trust for Young Australians or by individuals or organisations. About one sixth of participants are sponsored in some way.

The web site (www.selfmadegirl.com.au) invites young women to attend workshops, schools to consider hosting workshops, and also recruits career women to become mentors in the program. It also lists a range of government departments, banks and private companies that endorse and support the program.

The Lunch Box Program (now Journey 1)

The Journey 1 program aims to provide young people with new learning experiences in a supportive atmosphere, and help young people with low self-esteem to understand and manage their feelings. Originating in Western Australia, it uses arts-based activities, and has been described in support letters as an "exciting, innovative and creative approach to tackling a difficult and all too prevalent problem". In 1997 the Australian Dreaming Project Inc., after three years consultation with psychotherapists, art therapists, cultural consultants, youth workers, teachers, street kids and students, developed this Youth Suicide prevention and cultural program. The focus is on personal heritage and culture, with the aim of inspiring young people to connect with their own indigenous culture – "by helping young people to understand where their genes are from, they in turn may gain a sense of belonging, become stronger in their inner identity and learn to respect other cultures".

Journey 1 strives to be youth centred and activity based, and to deal with the concerns of young people in a non-threatening way. It is proactive, rather than reactive and focuses on dealing with issues which lead young people to suicide, including low self-esteem, depression and social exclusion. It aims to endow them with the skills they need to effectively live within and as a functioning part of our society.

Programs are run by trained staff over a 12-week period and combine creativity and cultural traditions. The activities explored include drum making, Ninjutsu martial arts, urban arts, video production, costume

design, journal making, genetic map making, medicine wheel gardens, body art, hair wrapping/friendship band making, global healing, kinetic movement and storytelling. Programs have been conducted in inner and outer Perth regions and it is planned to develop manuals and train youth arts workers in the use of the program. It is also hoped to extend it to rural areas.

The leaders role model ways of working together and having fun as well as a range of communication skills like listening; being open to discussion but making up their own minds; and being fair, consistent and non-discriminatory. Depending on the venue for the program, there may be other adults who act as role models. At the site visited, a local outreach program had arranged for the Lunch Box Program and organised transport for the young people to attend. Thus a variety of people from different backgrounds including a bus driver, youth activities officer, youth worker and police officer were potential role models.

The Australian Dreaming Project Inc. is funded by various State and local government bodies, by arts organisations and businesses. As well as the Journey 1 Program, it is involved with various community events connected with developing a global culture and creating a positive focus for youth.

RAP: Redirecting Adolescents Potential

RAP is one of several programs offered by a Darwin-based not-for-profit organisation, Youth for Christ. It engages young people in outdoor or adventure-based activities that are challenging, exciting and achievable. The program is designed to be preventative and target early intervention, and aims to create a positive learning environment that develops confidence and self-esteem, trust, initiative and teamwork. Overcoming the challenge with the support of the role models is believed to enhance the young people's self-confidence and interpersonal skills as well as giving them a sense of achievement. The program is funded by public donations and in-kind donations by local businesses, and receives no Government funding.

It works in conjunction with local high schools, and provides an alternative to suspension. The target group is students in the 13–17 year bracket, especially those in Years 8 and 9 who "exhibit limited social skills, and are therefore unmotivated and are not interested in current options available to them" (RAP information brochure). School staff interview and assess prospective participants and liaise with parents.

There are several variations of the program that run

for four, eight or 12 weeks. RAP8 was used for the case study and operates for eight weeks, for two and a half hours per week. A minimum of eight and maximum of 12 students is seen as best for group dynamics. Each group is run by two trained leaders. The program includes activities such as setting boundaries (the young people come up with the operating principles and give the program a name), problem-solving, communications, abseiling, planning an expedition and raft building. A two-day expedition incorporating a 12-kilometre hike and 12-kilometre raft trip concludes the program. The cost of $60 is met by the students. They are presented with a T-shirt and certificate of recognition for successful completion of the program. The presentation sometimes occurs at a school or year group assembly.

Migrant Resource Centre Youth Support Program

The Migrant Resource Centre in southern Tasmania has run a youth support program for recently arrived young migrants and refugees (first five years after arrival) since 1998. It aims to address settlement issues and foster leadership and other skills within the group in a directed and supportive environment. At the time the case study was conducted, the program operated from an office and drop-in centre situated away from the main Migrant Resource Centre, in an area close to where most of the young people live and go to school. Since then a reduction in funding has meant the closure of the office and drop-in centre, with the program workers sited at the main centre.

A range of activities for the young people is offered, including recreational activities at a local community centre one afternoon per week, drop-in homework centre, annual three-day camp and school holiday program (three times per year for four days). The participants are mainly school aged, but the program is also open to young adults. A youth support worker and activities coordinator organise and supervise the activities. When possible they are assisted by peer support volunteers. They also conduct consultations with the young people and liaise between young people and the ethnic community. The youth support worker conducts workshops in schools for upper school students. As bicultural workers, they model appropriate language and cultural skills to the young people across a variety of contexts.

Peer support workers were included in the program after consultation with the young people who were

more comfortable in raising settlement issues to a peer, and informal feedback revealed that an adult bicultural worker was often seen as a friend of their parents. To formalise the role, the centre appointed a young adult worker from a designated ethnic group as a paid peer support worker. This young person can be seen as a peer acting positively with responsibility in an employed position within their ethnic group.

GAP Youth Centre Aboriginal Corporation

The GAP Youth Centre in Alice Springs was established in 1977 by the St Vincent De Paul Society to meet the social and recreational needs of Aboriginal youth in the town. Some residents still call the centre "Sainty's". In 1986 the Centre was registered as an Aboriginal Corporation. It is a non-profit organisation funded by ATSIC, by grants from government departments such as Sport and Recreation and through fundraising activities.

Alice Springs is a culturally diverse town with a large Indigenous population from many Aboriginal language groups. The centre grew from a concern that young people in the town often fall into a cycle of alcohol and substance abuse including petrol and aerosol sniffing. Family breakdowns may mean young people roam the streets and become an easy target for police. Youth suicide is a growing area of concern. An information brochure gives the mission statement as "The GAP Youth Centre Aboriginal Corporation will provide a safe environment for the youth of Alice Springs to pursue recreational, sporting, cultural and educational activities".

The specific aims are to improve the quality of life for all youth who attend the Centre by:
- instilling in youth respect for themselves and others;
- assisting youth to reach their full potential;
- teaching good citizenship skills;
- providing positive role models;
- boosting self-esteem; and
- relieving boredom.

To this end the Centre hosts a number of programs for young people from five years of age upwards, but the majority of young people using it are aged from 12 to 18 years. The After School Activities program was selected as a case study as it is used as a drop-in centre by high school students. The Centre also currently offers school holiday programs, a DETYA-funded

Homework Centre, sporting activities and facilities for community use such as its basketball court and hall. The Centre also acts as a resource for young people and connects them to services available in the community.

The current model of service delivery is seen to be culturally appropriate and underpinned by "the principles of youth empowerment, cultural revival and respect". The philosophy is to strengthen family ties, provide a nonjudgmental service and develop resilience in young people. A variety of facilities such as a pool table and video games are available continuously. Other activities such as craft or sporting competitions are also arranged. One aim of the Centre is empowerment – both of the staff and of the young people. Staff are encouraged to develop their skills through study and by implementing new ideas. The young people take part in planning and organising activities and some are selected as peer leaders. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are welcomed.

Role modelling occurs in a number of ways. The staff are role models because of their attitude and the environment they create, and because they are Aboriginal people in responsible positions. They provide positive lifestyle messages to young people in the way they conduct themselves at the Centre and in the community, and in their interest in further education. A youth committee of peers also act as role models for other young people reinforcing good behaviour. High-profile Aboriginal celebrities have also been invited as role models and they show that despite a hard upbringing it is possible to succeed. The staff also act as role models to the trainee youth workers talking through with them such things as the responsibilities of being a worker.

SHEIRA Peer Support Group

SHEIRA (Support, Health, Entertainment, Independence, Relationships, Art – also the name of the female character in the Masters of the Universe cartoon series) began in Darwin in 1995. It is funded by the YWCA of Darwin and Darwin Community Care. SHEIRA offers support for young pregnant women (aged 13–24 years) or those with preschoolers. This support is provided by a trained coordinator and by other young women (volunteers) who have been in similar circumstances and survived successfully.

SHEIRA runs one morning a fortnight from a house in suburban Darwin. The house itself offers supported accommodation in another program. SHEIRA provides young women with information, non-judgmental

support, recreation activities and linkages with community service agencies. Free transport, childcare and a light lunch are provided at the fortnightly meetings. Average attendance at any group is six to nine young women, with approximately 36 women and 42 children (birth to three years) attending over the course of a year. Most women attend for about two years.

The aim of the group is to enhance life skills, promote positive parenting skills, promote self-empowerment, reduce social isolation and so increase quality of life for the participants, and reduce the incidence of child abuse. Participants are from a variety of cultural backgrounds with the majority being Anglo-Australian and one quarter of Aboriginal descent. Many have dealt with serious issues in their lives such as drug abuse, domestic violence and attempted suicide. The young women participate in a brain storming session every three months to decide on topics for workshops such as self-defence, positive parenting skills, child protection issues, budgeting, cooking, employment and stress management.

The coordinator and peer support volunteers act as role models for the young women in staying calm and supportive even in crisis situations, showing respect for others, and in the way they interact with the children and informally model child-care skills.

RecLink

RecLink is a sports-based program which actively targets and supports unemployed and homeless young people (mainly aged 17–24 years) in pursuit of a positive influence in their lives. Organised by the Hobart Police and Citizen Youth Club Inc. (PCYC), it began in 1997 in response to a perceived need by the PCYC, the Rotary Club of Sullivans Cove and the City of Hobart to assist displaced young people in the community. Building a program around physical activity was seen as a means of promoting personal growth, and of developing ownership of the program by the young people. Football and cricket are played weekly on a set day of the week during the playing seasons, and other sports like volleyball are played all year round. The program covers most of the south of Tasmania, and young people play games in suburbs and surrounding areas of Hobart – the PCYC bus will take the young people to anywhere that wants to field a team.

The program is multifaceted and aims to "introduce and inform these young people to the recreational possibilities for the positive utilisation of their leisure time and provide a self-help approach". It also aims to give ownership and responsibility of the program to the young people. They are involved in the organisation and programming, and encourage others to come along. RecLink gives them something to look forward to and to get involved in. After playing a few times, many of the young people realise they need to do something about their health and diet, to train, and to get off the alcohol or drugs for a day before a game. One of the signs of the program's success is that many of the participating young people who had been on the streets for four to five years now have jobs and stable relationships, and have moved away from the street scene.

The outreach centre, staffed by the youth worker (funded by a service club) and a peer volunteer worker, is an important part of the program. It provides information and education referral and support services to young people four to five days per week, and young people don't need to make an appointment to see the youth worker or volunteer worker. It is also a drop-in centre and meeting place for the young people.

RecLink is open to anyone who wants to participate. Young people find out about the program through friends, word of mouth and referrals from other agencies (especially through community work orders). Participation is voluntary and about 100 young people have participated each year. RecLink involves collaborative action achieved by networking the communities young people live within, mainstream support workers and agencies, mainstream sport and recreation officers, and mainstream health and welfare workers and agencies. To this end, a range of people participate in the teams or help on and off the field. These include the coordinating PCYC officers and the youth worker paid by the program. Volunteers act as referees and assist with cooking, scoring, bus driving and so on. Other PCYC staff and work-experience people attend when able or required, and workers from other agencies contribute when possible as part of their duties. As part of the non-judging approach, everyone is considered to be equal. Those involved perform a myriad of functions while maintaining open communication and listening skills to assist young people.

Anyone in the program can be a role model. The older participants and volunteers tend to keep the rest in check, display positive attitudes, encourage problem-solving, relate incidents of difficulties in their lives that they have been able to overcome, promote education for future employment, address issues relevant to the

young people and set an example for them to follow. No-one is discouraged from the program, regardless of criminal history. Consequently there is no formal screening or initial training for role models, but there is one-to-one assistance as required. Appropriate persons are identified by the staff and a group assessment made before enlisting that person – sometimes on a trial basis.

Scouts Australia

Scouts Australia is the largest youth organisation in Australia and the World Organisation of the Scout Movement is the largest internationally. Currently there are around 25 million active Scouts in 216 countries and territories (Moreillon 1999). In Australia, total youth membership is around 73,000 with 18,500 adult leaders (Scouts Australia 2000). In 1999 the Tasmanian Branch (the site of the case study) had close to 2,450 Scouts (a small drop from the previous year) and 600 leaders.

Scouts caters for young people (boys and girls) from six to 26 years in five sections, Joey Scouts (6–7 years), Cub Scouts (8–10 years), Scouts (11–15 years), Venturers (14–18 years) and Rovers (18–26 years). Young people aged 18 years and over may also be involved as leaders. While most Scout groups have a Cub Scout Pack and a Scout Troop, only a few have a Venturer Unit or a Rover Crew due to less membership in the older age groups.

The stated aim of The Scout Association is to "encourage the physical, mental, social and spiritual development of young people so that they may take a constructive place in society as responsible citizens" (The Scout Association of Australia Tasmanian Branch 1999, p.2). A promotional booklet describes the "unique and proven" developmental methods, which provide a "wide range of attractive, constructive and challenging activities" for young people in a "safe environment" (*Scouting: A Positive Experience*, pp.2-3). As well as including a commitment to a positive code for living, the method also focuses on opportunities for leadership and responsibility, learning by doing, activities in small groups and recognition of individual achievements. These are all recognised educational principles. The booklet declares that "Scouting helps young people to meet and conquer challenges and enables them to develop a sense of personal self-worth and confidence" (*Scouting: A Positive Experience*, p.2). Due to its international nature, strong emphasis on team building, and opportunities for groups from different parts of Australia and the world to come together for jamborees, Scouting also boasts strong multicultural and international credentials which have "fostered tolerance, understanding and opportunity" (Scouts Australia 1997, p.5).

Scout leaders are volunteers and do not receive any renumeration for their time. They agree to attend training sessions and conduct Scout weekly activities and camps. Leaders attend accredited courses in leadership and skill development (Scouts Australia web site: http://www.scouts.com.au). The costs of running Scouts at the association and group level come from subscriptions from members. These differ a little from State to State and from group to group. Most States levy around $45 per member and groups around $50–$80. Camp costs are additional to this, but are usually kept to around $10 per day, and most groups charge a few dollars for each meeting.

Scouts is a role model program in a number of different ways. The booklet *Scouting the Way to Success* features Australian men and women who have gained success in a variety of fields of endeavour, and participated in Scouting. Rather than touting individuals as role models per se, it is the values inherent in a Scouting background that are modelled and promoted as a way of "getting a good start in life" (Scouts Australia 1997, p.5). At the Scout group level and in each section, the Scout leaders create opportunities for role modelling values, attitudes and skills. The patrol system in Scout troops, which organises Scouts into patrols each with a leader (PL) and assistant (APL), also provides the opportunity for more senior Scouts to be peer role models to slightly younger Scouts.

Big Sister/Big Brother

The Big Sister/Big Brother Program is a community-based one-to-one mentor program focusing on personal development. It has been run by the YWCA in Sydney since 1978. Like other "Big" programs in Australia (Big Sister Little Sister, YWCA WA and YWCA NT; Big Brothers Big Sisters, Jesuit Social Services Vic.), it resembles the "Bigs" movement in USA. The program provides support to young people (7–17 years) who "lack adequate adult friendship, by facilitating a trusting relationship with an appropriate adult volunteer" (YWCA booklet, *Information for Professionals*). Thus the main focus is to provide a young person with a friend, like an older brother or sister, who can support, guide and just be there for them. The "match" is made taking account of the

young person's needs, interests, temperament, family circumstances and location, and the skills and qualities the volunteer offers.

The mentor and young person agree to spend a few hours together each week, having fun and getting to know each other, for a period of at least 12 months. The idea is that they do ordinary things together. Although they may begin by going out to places such as the movies or the beach, or play sport of some kind, after three months or so they may go on drives, spend time chatting over a meal or watch videos at the mentor's home. The mentor models being a friend, ways of relating to others and working through problems, as well as a variety of ways to have fun and enjoy recreation.

As there is very little direct supervision of the match, the program has developed comprehensive processes for the selection of mentors, matching a young person with a mentor, and the ongoing training and support of participants. These incorporate extensive mechanisms for feedback and monitoring of the match. Each match is supported by one of the two case workers, who keep in regular contact with the young person, the mentor and the young person's family, carry out three-month and 12-month reviews and organise monthly mentor meetings, as well as screening and organising new matches. The core program supports 40–50 matches, but the emphasis is on quality of the matches rather than maintaining a certain number of matches.

Over the last few years the YWCA has set up new mentor programs, based on Big Sister/Big Brother, which target specific groups of at-risk young people. A feature of the young offenders' mentoring project is the addition to the team of a family support worker to assist the family of each young person, freeing up time for the case workers to concentrate on supporting the matches.

Youth Outreach Programme (YOP)

The program was developed in 1992 by Jobs South West in Western Australia in direct response to concerns raised by another of its programs, the School Leaver Support Program. Youth in rural and remote areas experienced a lack of available services to aid job/education seeking, restricted access to services due to lack of transport facilities, and a lack of people within the communities with relevant expertise.

The mission statement combines the education and personal support aspects of YOP:

Empower youth, provide with the necessary esteem, confidence and personal development which will enable them to access education, training and employment opportunities and the ability to cope with conflict, problem solving and general life situations with the assistance of a personalised mentor who provides a comprehensive assessment, one-to-one support, positive role modelling information and resources.

A recent evaluation report touts the effectiveness of the YOP model of mentoring. It points to its key as "mentors providing high intensity support to high need young people in the context of their own environments and supported by their own communities" (Lhuede & O'Meara 1999, p.32). As well as working well in the rural setting the report suggests it is a "powerful model for replicability across varying contexts" (p.32). Another key is the program's flexibility and holistic approach to supporting young people.

The program is aimed at young people living in towns in the south-west of Western Australia who are disadvantaged in some way. They can become involved in the program in a variety of ways, such as through schools, agencies or internal referral by a participant suggesting a young person might "have a yarn with so and so". YOP's mentors are paid to work with the young people and each mentor may support five or so young people. It appears to be more of a retainer than a wage, as many of the mentors work many more hours than the maximum number of hours per month they can claim. A district coordinator recruits local people as mentors, and trains and supports them.

The program is flexible in terms of how it operates in different country towns, and flexible in terms of meeting the needs of individual young people "where each person is at". In the two towns visited, the program operated in different ways. In one town there was small house that provided a place to meet and access information. In another town, participants met in a local café or in the park and it was "formalising something that was there already". In that town, meetings tended to be informal, occurred about twice per week, and were initiated either by the mentor or the young person. In the small community there were opportunities to see each other a lot and say "How are you going?".

The mentor is someone from outside the family, who can give a variety of assistance. It might be the opportunity to talk to someone when not feeling happy,

assistance to go to a career course in a major centre, or find accommodation when not old enough to sign a lease, and assistance with finding out about legal and financial issues. Or it might involve providing contacts for a job, helping with filling out forms, being a referee, *organising a learner's permit for driving lessons when there is no driving instruction in the town, or providing transport to driving lessons or job interviews out of town. Some of the assistance is the kind that would normally be given by a family member.*

Chapter 7

Young people's views

Introduction

Since the young person's view of the role model is particularly important in terms of how they perceive the model, this chapter is devoted to their views. This chapter focuses specifically on the voice of the young people interviewed, and, where possible, the young people's comments are quoted verbatim with an indication of their age and gender. When no age is given, the comment is representative of similar comments. The chapter covers the areas that appeared to be of most concern to the young people including: the role models, their characteristics and what was being modelled; the program and activities and the young people's perceptions of the benefits to them; consultation and inclusion; and the young people's perceptions of what makes programs effective and how they might be improved. Some young people were considerably more articulate than others, but the views expressed here are representative of all the young people who participated in the study.

The young people's views

Role models and role modelling

From the discussion of role models in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 it is clear that for some types of role modelling, at least, the young people's perception of the role model may be crucial for effectiveness. An analysis of our discussions with the young people in a range of programs shows that if young people perceived the role models as such they were more likely to have identified with them in some way or thought what they were modelling was relevant to them in some way. It was more difficult to consider the degree to which young people identified with the program leaders and mentors if they didn't see them as role models per se.

Although the research did not set out to explore young people's understanding of role models and who their specific role models were in everyday life, some of these ideas were touched on in interviews and it is appropriate to discuss these ideas here. The young people had very different views about role models and this related in some ways to their perceptions of the function of a role model and to the level of interaction they expected with a role model. Their ideas paralleled the different views of role models and who could be role models reported in the literature. Some young people thought of role models in the sense of well-known people who had made it in a particular field, others more in terms of anyone they knew who'd gained something from life and from whom they could learn in some way. A number of young people mentioned celebrity role models, such as music or rock stars (e.g. Mariah Carey), young women in public life (e.g. Natasha Stott Despoja), and sportspeople (e.g. Nicky Winmar, Cathy Freeman), but never expected to

personally interact with these role models. One young girl said that Cathy Freeman used to be her role model but she wasn't any more as she knew she wasn't going to make it as a runner (perhaps she was not relevant to her aspirations any longer). This girl maintained that she didn't have any role models in the program in which she had participated for a few years, and she didn't appear to expect anyone in the program to be a role model for her. On the other hand, other young people mentioned people they knew well as their role models such as parents, grandparents, siblings and friends. Several young people said that they had no role models, one girl adding the reason, "I'm an individual".

In terms of the programs in which the young people were participating, there were a variety of views expressed about whom they identified with as role models and what was being modelled.

Leaders and mentors as role models

The minimum interaction programs more explicitly portrayed the role models as such, and on the whole the young people interviewed saw them in that way. The under-12 boys basketball team who met and played briefly with an elite basketball player considered him to be a role model. They thought that it was "cool" and "shows that he's drug free and can get that far without them". They also thought it would "get them more into basketball" and help them "learn more about basketball". The 14- to 15-year-old girls attending the one-day Australis workshop thought that the mentors were role models as they showed them what was possible for young women if they wanted to have a go, inspired them to want to try, and demonstrated some of the ways to achieve financial independence. As such, these role models provided the functions expressed in the definitions of role models, at least in the short term. Some comments from young people in these programs included:

shows we can be more independent than men

inspires us to be like them – if we try we can do what we want … if you have a dream you don't give up

I won't forget it – it will stick in my head … I'll remember the make-up and dress for an interview (15-year-old girl)

[the women] have gone through life and not just stopped – [they] have done different things

Another important aspect was that these role models appeared to the young people to be enjoying their lives, and engaging with them was fun:

it's fun to have him here

[the women are] happy in what they're doing

A number of young people recognised the leaders, workers or other participants in the extended interaction programs as role models and identified with them in some way:

role models are someone you look up to and the workers here are as you can tell them your problems (14-year-old girl)

one guy from another team [is a role model] a really good cricketer – wouldn't mind being like him (19-year-old male)

someone I'd like to be like … easy going and fun (15-year-old girl)

They could also be encouraging, and model attitudes as well as ways to do things:

staff are role models as they run the homework centre – encourages kids to do homework (18-year-old male)

coordinator is a role model – gives you something to try and become – "hope in life" … she's done it (young woman)

[the mentor] models ways to do things (17-year-old girl)

she has a positive encouraging attitude … my mentor is helpful, makes you be positive, not be down, do what you want to do (young woman)

One young male believed his mentor was a role model for him as the mentor had left school before Year 12 and now had a good job. He felt that the mentor must have worked it out, "how to do it", so the mentor was helping him out.

It was clear that while some young people thought of the program leaders or mentors as role models, others, even within the same program, didn't. Some even gave similar reasons as to why the leaders or mentors were or were not role models. For example, within the same workshop program a number of young people (around 14 to 15 years of age) thought the leaders were role models because they were really fun, cool, modern, out there, open to everything and non-judgmental. Several other young people used very

similar language to explain that they thought the leaders were cool to be around and would do anything for you, but didn't see them as role models. One of these young people said that she didn't really have any role models. There are several possible interpretations for the different views. It could concern how the young people view role models or who they thought could be a role model as discussed earlier in this section. Alternatively, perhaps the young people who saw the leaders as role models or recognised the way they modelled attitudes or behaviours were the young people for whom these people were relevant role models at that point in time. Few of the young people were able to articulate these distinctions.

One Scout hinted at an important distinction when he said "I don't think actual personalities are role models in Scouts". He found it hard to explain what he meant, but the modelling was more about the way you did things in Scouts. One of the Rovers said his leader in Scouts had been a role model for them in their attitude to life. The way the leaders approached things encouraged the Scouts to do more with their lives than they might have. He thought it was only in reflecting back that he had come to this realisation as he didn't think he thought of the leader as a role model at the time. One young woman thought that her mentor was not a role model, but had encouraged her and modelled for her how to carry out decisions, which she had decided herself. Her role model was Natasha Stott Despoja.

Although not all young people viewed the leaders or mentors as role models per se, all but a few acknowledged the way they modelled certain skills and ways of behaving.

Characteristics of leaders and mentors

The young people frequently commented on the characteristics they saw in the leaders and mentors that were important to them. Many of these were ways of behaving that the leaders were modelling. Ways of communicating and interacting with people were a key element in the descriptions the young people gave about the program leaders and mentors. Being available and willing to listen was mentioned across the programs and age groups:

the leaders listen to you, you can tell them anything – will understand and help you … they have lots of respect for little kids and don't treat you badly (12-year-old girl)

will listen if you just want to talk

can relate to them and have a good conversation

can talk to the youth worker about problems – can talk to all the people who run it (19-year-old male)

Being able to relate to the young people on a non-judgmental and trusting basis:

doesn't make you feel stupid if you don't know how to do things (17-year-old)

He doesn't judge people, everyone's the same, equal … otherwise falls apart

can trust him, he won't let me down (14-year-old boy)

helps you without doing it for you

always have time for you, be there for you

The leaders and mentors had certain characteristics:

passion for young people

have their own personality and don't care what others think

open to discussion but then can make up their own mind

always friendly and happy – will cheer you up if upset (15-year-old)

They also compared the leaders and mentors with other people:

[leaders are] like kids in grown-up bodies (14-year-old girl)

not like teachers who are too strict and bossy don't judge you for what you have done – others judge you for what they hear. [In this program] they take you as they find you (19-year-old male)

Other terms the young people used to describe their mentors and program leaders were "normal", "confidential", "patient", "unshockable" and people the young people could "relate to". The idea of relating to young people in the longer interaction programs seemed to be closely tied to how the young people perceived that the leaders and mentors perceived them and consequently how they treated them.

An issue raised by a few young people was that of payment of leaders, mentors or other workers. The programs varied as to whether or not these people were paid, and in some programs some were paid and others were volunteers. From young people's comments, the element of mentoring because you care was of critical

importance. Several said that they would like the mentors or leaders to have more time to spend with them, irrespective of whether or not they were paid. A willingness to give time as evidence of caring was clear in the comments of young people who had access to an unpaid mentor or leader. They didn't like the idea of someone being paid to spend time with them. For those who were paid, young people thought effective mentors and leaders "put in a lot of time – more than paid for" and consider that "it's not just a job". The very act of putting in more time showed the young people that they cared about them. They also thought that mentors and leaders needed to "care about the program".

In one of the programs in which mentors were paid and mentored a number of young people in one-to-one settings, the young people were generally in favour of their mentors being paid. They were aware of the benefits to themselves and that they may not have been able to call on a volunteer in the same way:

> *paid [mentors] gives more incentive, not just "giving" … if paid they have to do it*

> *24-hour availability is a bit hard to ask, but good to know you can call someone*

Very few young people mentioned the age of the role models, leaders or mentors. One group of young people who did raise the issue suggested that mentors needed to be "not too old as they need to know what you are going through", but they agreed that it does depend on the person.

Peers as role models

It was not only the leaders and mentors who were considered to be role models. The young people clearly related to other young people in the programs. In many of the programs, young people explicitly mentioned peers as role models:

> *kids learn from older kids – they are role models for younger ones … learn how to play snooker or basketball* (18-year-old male)

> *lots of talented people who wasted their time … one of the things they model for each other* (21-year-old male)

> *you can watch how people handle situations … I just panic or can't be stuffed doing anything for him* (young mother)

> *you realise that others have "been there"* (young woman)

> *have contact with other kids and mums and see how other mums interact* (young mother)

> *young people need the support of each other … It was good to have the girls [they are] just as good I suppose* (21-year-old male)

The program and outcomes

The program and activities

Many of the young people's comments about the medium interaction programs (i.e. extended workshop programs and drop-in centres) focused on the importance of something to do in a relaxed environment:

> *get a chance to hang out with your own age group*

> *there's always something to do but you don't have to do an activity*

> *when you are off your head [on drugs] you don't seem bored, when straight time drags … [the program] keeps you off the streets … mind off other life styles* (21-year-old male)

> *chance to get away from stuff – a retreat*

> *it's a relaxed environment*

> *[having the centre] kills the boredom, it's peace and quiet* (19-year-old male)

> *[the program provides] sanity from everyday life, it's better than being at home* (young woman)

> *it's challenge by choice* (15-year-old girl)

> *better than sitting at home watching television or going to the mall* (15-year-old boy)

The theme of "something to do" or "better than sitting at home watching TV" was evident in comments across programs from the minimum interaction sporting events to the extended drop-in centres. Even in the mentoring programs similar ideas were expressed as the reasons for having a mentor:

> *young people get bored and then do stupid things* (17-year-old boy)

There was also an emphasis on activities or facilities that they may not have access to otherwise:

> *there's always something new happening* (14-year-old girl)

> *meet lots of new people … and chance to do things wouldn't normally do* (15-year-old)

having computers benefits families as kids don't have computer games at home (18-year-old)

most young people like it [the centre] – easy to walk to (19-year-old male)

Others compared the activities with other away-from-home activities they had been involved in. One young male enjoyed a weekend away, as it was with "people you can trust". He said he had never liked similar school camps as they had seemed to him to be "a power struggle" with teachers.

One interpretation of these comments is that the actual activity doesn't matter a great deal. Comments from other young people, however, suggest that the type of activity might be important for raising their interest or initially indicating to them that the mentors and leaders are in touch with young people and their needs. When young people commented on the kinds of activities they often included the impact of the program on them personally. These comments are discussed in the next section.

The outcomes

The young people's comments suggest a wide range of outcomes from the programs, but even with very different programs similar outcomes were apparent. Common themes were meeting people and supporting each other, having fun, doing new and different things, learning about yourself, and gaining information:

you learn stuff, get to know more people and go on fun excursions and have activities in the holidays (10-year-old girl)

you get to know a lot of different people (21-year-old male)

I made a couple of friends and got to know others better (13-year-old girl)

I got to know … [a leader] she is going to write me a letter – I need to talk about things (13-year-old girl)

you get support from people your own age, obtain information about things you don't understand and about people in the community (young woman)

helped stabilise emotions … can think about problems (15-year-old)

helped us learn not to fight – to work together and work things out (14-year-old boy)

learn new ideas … teach ideas like believe in yourself and don't be scared … how to tie a knot (14-year-old boy)

there are probably heaps [of benefits] but I can't say it in words (15-year-old boy)

Another important theme was the gaining of confidence and a willingness to change or try things that hadn't been possible before:

[my mentor] helped me build self-confidence … helped heaps with home problems … I moved out of home to live with my grandmother (15-year-old boy)

I looked back at what I was doing on different days – showed me that I didn't have to go out stealing – if I didn't have to do it one day, I could do it other days (19-year-old male)

As expected of a role model program, all the programs raised young people's awareness and demonstrated some ways to do particular things. This was mentioned frequently by young people. The longer-term programs provided opportunities for support and practice and this was observed by the researchers on a number of occasions and is explored more fully in the next chapter. There was also the awareness that there were other ways to think about one's self and others. It was clear that a majority of the young people interviewed believed that they had changed in some way, as evident in their comments. The young people's comments gave little sense of forced change in these programs:

You can watch people change … I've gone from a quiet little wallflower to someone who's confident (young woman)

A young man talked about how his mentor had helped him get a job at a local café (through knowing the owner), helped him develop study tips and write in a diary to remember homework. He felt that he was "gradually getting up".

Continuing participation

An important issue for the drop-in centres and voluntary longer-term programs is why the young people continue to attend or participate. Most talked about the relevant centre as a place to go and participate. "A place where anyone can come", one young boy added "[while being] supervised by responsible people". A 10-year-old said that he went every day on the bus and participated in a range of activities. He goes to the homework centre, is on the Youth Committee and plays around on the trampoline, participates in basketball, chasey and dancing. A 14-

year-old said that he was enrolled at school but was not going, but went to the centre because everyone knows each other, play games and "it's real fun". Other reasons included

most of the people I know are involved (19-year-old male)

meet more friends (15-year-old girl)

someone comes and collects me in the bus (15-year-old boy)

Participating in centre activities could also provide a point of contact while the young person was developing activities outside the centre. An 18-year-old said that he had come since primary school when his mother used to come but now does other things (like play basketball, pinball and snooker) so doesn't come as often. He still comes weekly because there were "lots of things to do" (like excursions, the TV room and seeing his cousins). Others expressed similar ideas. A 19-year-old male from another program said he had been away on a casual job but had just come back.

Consultation

Allied to continuing participation is the sense of consultation and "being listened to" indicated by a number of young people. There was a real feeling of ownership expressed by the young people who felt their views were sought, valued and implemented:

I can go to youth committee meetings, write ideas, make plans and end up doing them – this is helpful (14-year-old)

… he asked me what I would like to do … I said I'd like to kick a football around with a few mates … and that was the beginning … (20-year-old male)

we tried to find activities that we both liked … (mentee)

and mutual benefit in mentoring relationships:

he says he likes that I listen and help him with his girlfriend and work and that … (15-year-old boy)

Suggestions for improvement and future programs

More of the program

Many young people would like more of the program they presently enjoy – more time, longer programs, and greater interaction:

once a week would be better [than every second week] (young woman)

need more youth workers as many young people out there need help (18-year-old male)

In some cases, where a program had just finished, some of the young people seemed let down, and wanted to participate in another program as soon as possible. In one case it may not have been the view of all the participants as some had not been seen since the end of the program.

A place

Some of the programs had a dedicated venue and, in some cases, a centre where the young people could go at some set times during the week. Others didn't have this, but it was frequently mentioned by young people who were looking for something to do. One young person mentioned the need for a "place" in their town. It was variously described by others as a "youth outreach shop", "Centrelink with a mentor", somewhere so the mentor was in one place for easier contact, and a resource place with lists of jobs around the area, crisis information and a computer for writing letters. In programs that did have a centre, these were the elements included in most. They do, however, require staffing for set times each week.

One of the participants in a program for at-risk young people also talked about a place but in a different way. When asked about what he'd suggest to others about setting up a similar program, he said, "having somewhere where young people can feel relaxed and don't have to worry, where police don't come and harass you – young people can feel at home". Going back to the present set up he added, "but there is nowhere at night – everyone scatters". At the place there needed to be someone to listen, care and help with issues, "everyone's got different issues" and "he's [the youth worker] great, if he can't help he knows someone else who can help".

Computers were mentioned frequently by young people who were searching for work (casual, part time or full time). Many did not have access to a computer and printer or, in some cases, a phone. A computer was important for writing job applications. In one centre, the printer had been stolen recently and young people were disappointed that someone had done that. In another town, the young people mentioned access to a computer as something that would greatly help them in their search for work.

Opportunities for peer interaction and modelling

Opportunities for peer interaction were mentioned as an important element in programs, and one that young people thought needed to be incorporated in future programs. Peer interaction allows young people to gain support from others with similar interests or difficulties, broaden their friendship networks and professional or career networks (where relevant), and model the development of skills, attitudes and behaviour for each other:

> *You realise you're not the only one* (14-year-old boy)

> *Realise there are lots of nice people … lots turned out to be really friendly*

Training of leaders and mentors was mentioned as an important point:

> *… so they can find out about young people*

Advice to others

A variety of responses were given to the question about what advice they would give to others setting up a program or other young people participating. Some young people talked about relationships. One boy who had a mentor mentioned that it takes time and you have to be prepared to "wait a while because the relationship builds up and after a few months you'll become friends and trust each other". He also thought that match ups didn't always work and although it might be scary, he thought it was important to "have

another go". He also expressed the view that it was a bit scary at first and that he was "angry at mum for putting me through it again". He added that "at first you have an obligation … don't want to do it", but that had changed over the time of his involvement with his second mentor.

One young adult expressed a feeling that suggests a word of caution for many of the programs that set up the potential for close relationships. He thought it would be hard with someone else as the youth worker had "built up the trust with the guys now". This relates to the importance of building the development of independence into programs, so that young people don't become dependent on the program or on specific individuals in the program.

Conclusions

The young people had views about the programs in which they participated and were very willing to discuss what they thought was important and the kinds of issues they thought needed to be addressed to ensure the effectiveness of similar programs. One key concern was being listened to and having the opportunity to engage in decision-making. Another was the importance of relationships with others, including role models, in their lives.

The next chapter presents an analysis of the case study programs using the views of role models and others, in addition to the young people. The findings of both chapters are summarised in Chapter 9.

What makes a role model program effective

Introduction

This chapter reports an analysis of the case study data and is based on the views of all the participants, observations made on visits and available documents. The analysis used the theoretical framework devised for the project to guide interpretation. The issue of role models and role modelling is discussed first, and mainly focuses on the views of the role models and program staff. This allows a comparison with the young people's view of role modelling presented in the previous chapter.

The findings suggest there are a number of elements that contribute to the overall effectiveness of a range of role model programs, and these are addressed in the following section. Then follows a discussion of elements that appear to be important for particular types of role model programs, although each element may have some relevance across program types. Examples from case study programs are given throughout to illustrate the way in which elements may contribute to or limit the effectiveness of a particular type of program. The program types have been grouped using the levels of interaction introduced in Chapters 2 and 4 in order to highlight the key elements of effectiveness of programs at different points in the interaction continuum.

Role models and role modelling

The role model function

Chapters 1 and 2 detail the many different ways in which role models are defined in the literature and the different people considered by young people to be role models or who fulfil that role. The comments by young people in the previous chapter cover a similar range of views. It is clear that not all the young people participating in the case study role model programs identified the role models in that way (i.e. as a role model). This is presented here from the perspective of the role models and program staff.

Leaders and mentors as role models

The coordinators and role models were less diverse in their views about role models, and many were aware of their position in the program implicitly making them a potential role model. One coordinator maintained that young people are exposed to positive and negative role models constantly. Another suggested that everyone in the community is a role model – "everyone has that responsibility". Most of the programs made the assumption reiterated by one of the program coordinators that "all kids need a good role model" and that in the programs, "you hope to provide positive role models" for the young people concerned. A role model

was variously described as someone you "look up to and respect", someone who is "loving, a concerned person, honest and trustworthy" (grandparents and neighbours were given as examples), and "people that you know". But role models also model specific ways of behaving and relating to others – for example, they model communication, manners, treating people well, working cooperatively as a member of a team, punctuality, valuing of trust, honesty and keeping your word. Some programs had the role model function explicitly identified in programs' documentation:

The role of mentor is to be a positive role model and friend to the young person … Their role … is to guide, listen, care, and model positive behaviour. (BS/BB)

In one day, you can … meet and work with self-made adult role models who are running their own businesses or working in business. (Australis)

… with the assistance of a personalised mentor who provides a comprehensive assessment, one-to-one support, positive role modelling information and resources. (YOP)

Sporting Partnerships entitled the information brochure in their pack for athletes as 'Guidelines for role models speaking to young people about drugs and alcohol'.

Most of the coordinators, leaders and mentors saw themselves as role models for the young people or for other workers in the program. Some saw that in terms of their position:

I'm a role model through past sporting achievements, and I'm well-known in the town. (youth worker)

Young people at risk are easily influenced and you are a role model because of the position that you are in. (leader)

Lots wouldn't think about uni – I have talked to the younger ones about this … being exposed to someone from the city might make them more aware. (volunteer student worker)

Others thought of themselves as role models because of their personal characteristics or ways of behaving:

I'm a role model – this is very important … I'm calm even at the most stressful times. (coordinator)

[I] show [the kids] different ways of behaving.

I don't drink often and there are no drugs in my house –

kids and adults know this … I'm a role model – lots of kids come through my house … we respect each other here and at home … I know everyone here and get on with them – [they] call me uncle. (youth worker)

The kids know what to do [treat others with respect] but they don't know how – we can show them the skills to get along. (trainee youth worker)

The staff are role models because of their attitude, the environment they create, they are caring and warm, they are Aboriginal people in a responsible position. They come to work – young people see the way the staff conduct themselves here and in the community … young people can see the staff studying … (administrator)

And, as evident in many of these comments, they considered role modelling in terms of the way they interacted with the young people or their attitude to life:

Kids like to hear about my own experiences in life … I've gone through what they are experiencing … I'm easy to approach – they can ask me anything. (youth worker)

Being with the leaders lets them see another positive environment … they see the way we treat them and what we ask of them in general behaviour … they ask questions about our beliefs and our relationships as they get to know us at a deeper level. (leader)

[We model] … a hope for the future … there's more out there. (mentor)

Everyone needs aspirations – with everyone if they have a goal (not just sporting) they can get there if they try. (role model)

Role modelling is not "the thing" of the program but it's there. (coordinator)

Also, they were often role models for each other:

The coordinator is a role model – I wouldn't mind being like that … I want to do it too. (volunteer worker)

The administrator is a role model – she allows staff to express themselves … you can trust her … she doesn't run from conflict. (youth worker)

Youth committee [members] have become role models … I have seen them show others how to resolve disputes … [they are] role models themselves but don't realise it. (youth worker)

But not all of the leaders or mentors had thought about their role in that way:

I haven't really thought about staff being role models … the kids have their own role models. (trainee youth worker)

A lot of times people don't understand they are a role model for kids. Those working in this industry need to know they are role models. For example, they must treat young people with respect if they want it. (youth worker)

One mentor, who was considered by his mentee to be an excellent role model, didn't want to be thought of as a role model. He had clearly not thought about his role in that way and seemed to be unsettled by the inherent responsibility in the role. His description of a mentor, however, included a role modelling function, "someone who leads positively by example". Another mentor in the same program was very comfortable with the concept of being a role model, and articulated clearly the areas in which she believed she was able to provide role modelling.

As discussed in the previous chapter, many of the young people either saw the leaders and mentors as role models or acknowledged their modelling of attitudes, skills and behaviours. There was a feeling expressed by young people and leaders that "if they can do it we can".

The outcomes for young people

All programs had outcomes that they expected from the program, and most used markers of some kind to gain some indication of the extent to which the program was achieving its goals. Specific tangible markers, such as badges, attainment of a particular goal and change in measurable behaviour (e.g. attendance or participation), and less tangible markers, such as changes in attitude, behaviour and lifestyle, personal feelings of confidence and competence, and improvement in relationships, were documented by most programs, the latter often from verbal and written feedback. As would be anticipated, the expected outcomes differed with the type of role model program.

Organisers of the minimum interaction program didn't really expect the programs by themselves to be "life changing". The manager of Australis thought it would be a "big ask" of a one-day workshop and said that the program's aim was for young girls to remember the primary message of the workshop. The coordinator of Sporting Partnerships thought the program may be a "catalyst" but didn't expect a huge impact on young people unless other influences

supported the message of the program. These kinds of programs may be very important in sowing an idea or motivating young people to follow a certain direction in life, but it would be impossible for these kinds of programs to gauge their impact in the longer term. It would not be possible to disentangle their impact from that of the support mechanisms and other influences that may be just as crucial for an idea or plan of action to come to fruition in a young person's life.

Similar themes were mentioned by those involved with programs over a longer time span:

Even if there is no immediate change … hope for change later … it's something they've had the opportunity to do, it's stored, another tool in their kit bag – perhaps one day they'll have the opportunity to use it. (school counsellor)

One of the frustrating things is that you don't see a lot of clear change but do get feedback … they make contact, run into them around town, positive feedback from schools – they want more programs … from youth group leader – about mellowing attitudes … (leader)

Many of the comments inferred that the programs were about strategies, ways of being and doing leading to a more positive outlook. This following comment shows one of the ways this occurred:

Adults being positive with young people leads them to becoming positive with each other. (youth activities officer)

Some of the comments from participants in the shorter programs suggested an immediacy about the action. An Australis mentor thought that girls had "an air of excitement around them as the day progresses". Several of the young people's comments also suggested this:

Taught me to manage my finances better. (14-year-old girl)

My future is more important now – I should buckle down. (13-year-old girl)

Specific programs had specific benefits for the young people. The SHEIRA coordinator maintained that the number one benefit in that program was prevention of child abuse, as well as prevention and intervention for postnatal depression and suicidal behaviour. SHEIRA, RecLink and YOP programs all reported similar positive feedback from community agencies, partners and parents in that young people

were able to get secure accommodation, employment, manage to have healthy lifestyles and choose supportive partners, and recognise when they are being abused. They also documented available statistics that covered these aspects of the young people's lives.

GAP staff had seen "incredible" changes in attitudes and responsibilities of the young people. They said that young people were now willing to talk about feelings before fighting and were beginning to respect each other. Other programs found similar changes:

Immediate benefit is that it's a wonderful experience. (school counsellor)

Can see relief and a sense of accomplishment in students. (director)

In the better groups … see them start to reflect on themselves, more confident, communicate better. (leader)

Kids build good relationships with adults … they often don't have this. (school counsellor)

Kids don't degrade each other but say "come on we can do it again" – then do it again and succeed. (teacher)

One of the desired outcomes of most of the programs was the development of networks, both of peers and others who may be able to assist the young people:

Introduces girls to others just like them – other girls and mentors. (mentor)

Young people become a support for each other – once they get to know each other. (leader)

After about 12 months they become confident, open, friendly and able to support others. (coordinator)

I made a couple of friends and got to know others better. (14-year-old girl)

As the BS/BB program aims to have a longer-term relationship that is ongoing so that a young person can move from dependency to independence, the workers approached the matter of outcomes in a variety of ways. For example, they calculated the percentage of matches that go for 12 months and the regularity of contact (80% was considered a good outcome). They also documented less tangible outcomes, such as how a young person's behaviour changes, how he or she interacts with family and friends, takes part in or goes to school, decreases angry or violent behaviour and feels more comfortable with themselves. The latter type

of anecdotal information was obtained from feedback at three-month and 12-month reviews, from parents, volunteers and observation of workers. They have found that informal interviews are the best way of gauging what was happening in a mentoring relationship. As one of the expected outcomes is to "give them skills so that they don't need us anymore", this is important in understanding the progress of the young people.

Scouts had a system of achievement badges and awards to mark the attainment of particular skills and knowledge, and community service. Other awards, such as Queen's Scout awards, and positions of responsibility within a troop were evidence of leadership.

The Lunch Box leader maintained that the program was not outcome related – "it isn't sport, it isn't school … it's really about them and having a good time, it's about change".

The next section considers more fully the features of the programs that contribute to the range of positive outcomes discussed above.

Features of effective role model programs

General elements of effectiveness

Young people-sensitive administration and management of the program

Management needs to be professional yet people-oriented and attuned to young people and their culture. This is not easy to achieve. Programs need to have a clear rationale and aims, and be planned with input from young people and other relevant community groups. Effective programs develop mechanisms that enable the young people to have some ownership of the program, and assist the young people to be empowered, not feel they have the program "done to" them. In many of the programs, evaluation was often part of a continual consultation process.

In some of the programs, considerable time has been spent talking with particular groups of young people about their needs and culture, and other relevant community groups, as well as researching program possibilities. It was clear from the young people's general attitude to these programs that the program organisers had succeeded in developing young people-oriented programs.

In many of the programs, coordinators and leaders

talked informally with young people about their needs and the kinds of activities they wanted. Others had formalised the consultation process to empower the young people. SHEIRA involved the young women in brainstorming ideas for workshops every three months. The coordinator explained, "you change to what they want, don't get them to change to what you want". In GAP, a youth committee was a core part of the decision-making process. In YOP, the young people developed action plans for themselves with the assistance of their mentor, and in other programs the young people were assisted to set goals for the immediate future and the longer term. The Sporting Partnerships coordinator thought that engaging young people in goal setting was the next step to be developed in the program.

In many cases there was a strong sense of ownership by the young people of the program or of the centre (in programs with a fixed venue such as the centre). Nearly everyone interviewed at the GAP mentioned the centre being like "home", "our place", or "their place" (in reference to the young people) and their behaviours confirmed this perspective. One of the indicators of ownership of GAP by the young people that staff mentioned as a positive outcome was that the centre had not been broken into or vandalised in recent times. The participants in RecLink expressed similar feelings of comfort when referring to the outreach centre and talked about the program as if it was a part of them. One of the young people proudly spoke of the origins of the program and his part in its beginnings.

Some programs had multiple leaders or high turnover of staff, while others had had the same staff over a long period of time. The RAP program had high staff turnover and this was seen in a positive light as each leader saw the program in a different way and brought new ideas. Others considered that a high turnover rate was problematic especially if suitable replacements were hard to find.

As programs increase in size there are additional issues that need to be taken into account, especially with respect to management of the program. The roles of those involved may change, so that each worker or leader may have expertise in a specific area and take advisory responsibility for a particular area of the operation. As size increases, programs often expand into different communities, which may have different needs, issues and ways of working. As organisations get larger, it is possible for some decisions to be made away from the interface with young people. Coordinators,

who may have been in touch with the young people involved initially, may find keeping in tune with young people and their needs more difficult in a larger organisation. Scouts Australia has an extensive network of personnel and committees at district, State and national level with well-tried communication processes, but many decisions are made at some distance from the young people. One of its present initiatives is to increasingly involve young people in decision-making at all levels of the organisation.

Flexibility

The program is developed within a basic structure that incorporates flexibility to adapt to the needs of the young people involved. These different types of flexibility may include the types of activities, sensitivity to needs of individual young people, and a range of possible types of interaction within the one program or context.

The one-off and workshop programs had a set format that was adapted to the particular context. For example, Australis had a sequence of set activities but the way it was organised allowed for mentors to explain some aspects more fully or answer girls' particular questions. The Sporting Partnerships role models were able to adjust the amount and type of interaction as seemed appropriate at each venue, even within the short time frames allocated. The Lunch Box program involved a series of planned workshop activities, but they could be carried over from week to week to allow different working times, and young people could choose whether or not to participate in each. The activity setting also allowed for informal interaction between the leaders and the young people, so the leaders were able to address young people's issues as they arose.

Scouts is part of a large organisation with set structures and ways of working. Within that framework there are different types of activities for each level, and each Scouting group has freedom to work out their programs within the basis format. BS/BB is based on a program from USA, but has been adapted to the Australian context and to meet the needs of the young people concerned. The programs in new locations have further been adapted to suit a slightly different set of requirements and needs, and the coordinators anticipated they will be continually adapted as new issues became evident.

Several programs were set up to provide different levels of role modelling and support within the one program. For example, RecLink explicitly provided a

variety of group recreation or sporting activities, liaison with other agencies and one-to-one support. GAP and SHEIRA worked in a similar way. The Migrant Resource Centre also provided a range of services. Many of the activities were those that the young people would not otherwise have the opportunity of being involved in, or, at least, not within a supportive environment of the kind provided by the programs described. Similarly, they may not otherwise have had the opportunity to meet the people that they met through the programs. Several programs found that getting a balance between activities that young people wanted to do and those that provided new experiences was not always easy. For example, RecLink started with football as young people suggested that sport and many had not been keen when cricket was first suggested for summer. Some of the young people admitted that they hadn't liked the cricket at first, but thought it was enjoyable "when you got into it", and they thought it was good to have contact with the other young people. They reported that some others only came to particular activities.

Programs also have to adapt to the youth context and the climate. RAP had to consider the impact of rain and extreme heat on the types of outdoor activities that were possible and the general level of activity expected. This kind of flexibility may be particularly important for programs that are developed in one setting and may be extended to another setting or group of young people.

The development of networks

Programs that develop networks to include other significant people and organisations in the lives of the target young people (e.g. parents, welfare agencies, community groups) provide an ongoing support base for the young people. The involvement of a range of people also contributes to changing community attitudes about young people and community processes as well as providing opportunities for particular groups of young people and recognition of the role model program. The development of networks also promotes change at the grassroots level.

When parents, friends and other community members are involved in some way, they can be encouraged to provide ongoing support for the young people. It also provides them with information, the opportunity to meet others and to observe role modelling of ways to support the young people.

The activities organised through Sporting Partnerships usually included coaches, teachers or parents, depending on the venue. This meant that

these people also had opportunities to meet the role models, observe their interaction with the young people and learn about the aims of the program. One of the local organisers commented that it was great to have packs for coaches to take with her when she approached local sporting clubs as they provided an introduction and led to discussions about the program and involving role models in club events or presentations. Scouting groups also involve parents in some of their activities, as well as organise for Scouts to regularly participate in community events.

Several programs have developed strong connections with schools. School sporting groups are among the teams targeted by Sporting Partnerships, and GAP and the Migrant Resource Centre have conducted homework support after school. Australis and the Migrant Resource Centre Youth Support program have run workshops for particular school groups as well as workshops or activities for school-aged and post-school-aged groups outside of school time. In some areas, Scouts have developed groups within or connected with particular schools, and RAP has worked in conjunction with local high schools. In the case of RAP, these connections have enabled schools to identify students who would benefit from participation, liaise with parents and follow up young people after the program.

The RecLink Program encouraged community involvement and created new partnerships to assist displaced young people in the community. RecLink involved collaborative action achieved by networking the communities young people live within, mainstream support workers and agencies, mainstream sport and recreation officers, and mainstream health and welfare workers and agencies. GAP has developed a partnership with TAFE to provide on-site training for staff. The administrator noted that this benefited everyone as the staff received important and relevant training, the young people saw the staff involved in education and TAFE saw the work being done with the young people at the centre. The latter was an important part of raising the profile of the program and its acceptance in the community. Several staff explained that the community was recognising the good work being done and could see they were making an effort to keep the young people off the street (and away from the shops) and helping them learn life skills.

Programs that operate across a variety of sites may need to have some staff at each site. Located in the eastern States, Australis had found it difficult to develop the networks necessary to promote the

program and communicate effectively with local groups at each site across Australia. They were currently appointing people in various locations to coordinate the program at each site. In this way local needs could be taken into account.

Many programs encouraged young people to keep in touch with each other or facilitated this in some way. For example, RAP had a follow-up camp, RecLink provided a drop-in outreach centre and BS/BB organised regular social activities for all participants.

Comments are often made in the media about young people frequenting malls and shopping centres as a negative. Young boys, in particular, are often deterred from hanging around by centre management, and participants of several programs mentioned this phenomenon. It is interesting that the local shopping centre played an important role for the young women in the SHEIRA program. It provided a clean and safe place to go where they could meet up with friends and other young mothers, the necessary facilities for feeding and nappy changing, as well as medical, health and other government agencies.

In one of the country towns running YOP, the young people thought being seen with a mentor about town had changed the attitudes of some community members towards them in a positive way. A mentor explained that others in the community thought that the young people were doing something about their lives.

Mechanism for ongoing feedback from participants (young people, role models and other significant people), and evaluation for program improvement

All programs need to have clear aims and a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the program. Although some programs can identify short-term outcomes or markers of ongoing development, many programs with longer-term life skills, career or personal development aims have difficulty in evaluating outcomes that may not be evident in the short term (or in the life of the program). A program plan needs to include appropriate processes for gaining feedback from participants and for gathering data relevant to the aims.

The aims of each of the case study programs were readily accessed in written form from their brochures and paraphrased by program coordinators or leaders. All the programs had some mechanism for evaluation and were able to cite evidence to demonstrate that the program was achieving its aims. The type of evidence varied and not all the coordinators were happy with the type of evidence they were able to provide to demonstrate program effectiveness. Physical evidence

such as the number of mentoring relationships of 12 months duration or number of young people participating in or completing a program were easily calculated but gave little insight into program effectiveness. Measures to determine the development of knowledge and skills, and behaviour or lifestyle changes were more difficult to devise, implement and interpret. Unless a control group was also involved, changes were not necessarily attributable to the program. Many programs tried to balance the use of scarce resources and thus carried out less formal evaluation than funding bodies may have deemed necessary because coordinators thought resources were better spent on the young people.

Obtaining verbal feedback from young people was difficult in some situations. Although some programs did use formal evaluation forms or questionnaires, many preferred ongoing feedback from participants through discussion with individuals and groups, and committees. BS/BB had ceased using written questionnaires and instead regularly interviewed participants for feedback. Some of the RAP participants thought filling in the questionnaire afterwards was the hardest part of the program, and the school counsellor suggested that the students often didn't "have the language" to give "deep and meaningful comments". One participant told the researcher that there were "probably heaps [of benefits], but I can't say it in words". The coordinator of another program believed "that you can damage everything by throwing a survey at them".

Whether the information was gathered from ongoing, first-hand knowledge of coordinators, feedback from participants or formal evaluation, all programs had some issues to work on to improve the program. These differed with the type of program and the particular young people and role models involved. Some difficulties were clearly obvious to coordinators, such as finding appropriate male mentors, while other areas for improvement needed to be identified by feedback from young people, leaders, mentors or from others known to the young people (such as teachers, parents, employers etc.). These types of difficulties included suitability of role models, areas of training for role models, types of activities and support for the particular young people, and ways of interacting. One of the problems experienced by one-off programs and those that invited speakers was that sometimes the role models were unable to come at the last minute or wanted to change the time. This occurred at one of the sites visited. With programs of variable groups there

may be small or large numbers turning up. RecLink found that with success of the program (young people finding employment) they sometimes had insufficient players to mount a team. Mentoring programs often had difficulty finding appropriate mentors, especially male mentors, and working through issues if a mentoring relationship was unsuccessful.

Sufficient resources for the program to achieve its aims

The resources needed to run programs varied widely, as shown from the results of the survey, and depended on size, location, level of interaction between role models and young people, and sometimes the extent and appropriateness of volunteerism in the program. Resources included ongoing financial and relevant in-kind support, and dedicated coordinators and role models.

Most program coordinators mentioned a lack of funding. Many had visions of how things could be if there were more funds available – for involving more young people, employing staff for administration or paying volunteers, expanding the program to another location or developing the program in some way, following up young people and improving program evaluation. All programs required some funding and most programs had funding from a variety of sources as they had found that often one source could pull out. Funding sources included sponsoring organisations (e.g. YWCA, schools, Youth for Christ, PCYC), service clubs (e.g. Rotary), corporations, foundations, government (Commonwealth, State and local), fundraising by parents and young people, and donations and subscriptions from individuals. Many programs aimed to be self sufficient through sponsorship. One coordinator suggested that in programs where referrals were from government agencies, the government ought to be paying for the program. Funding is often for a short period of time (e.g. one year) and not necessarily renewable. This is often insufficient time for programs to get up and running and to demonstrate outcomes, and makes program planning difficult. Also, in order to secure funding, someone has to take the time and have the expertise to write a proposal to the funding body. Several coordinators expressed frustration at having to continually change programs or "add funny little bits" just to be innovative in order to secure funding. They believed that the changes necessary to secure funding were not always those that were best for the program or the young people concerned.

Mentoring is at an early stage of development in Australia – most people only know a little about it and don't really know what is involved. Sponsors and others often think that mentoring is an inexpensive option because it frequently makes use of volunteer time. All programs involving young people require a lot of time and commitment from the coordinators, leaders and mentors. One-to-one mentoring programs usually involve vulnerable young people and their families. As one coordinator put it, "screening has to be done well and if matching is done without the necessary experience, it is possible to end up harming people". Similar issues were discussed in the literature review in terms of "drive-by mentoring".

Many of the programs had both paid and volunteer participants. For example, the organisers in BS/BB and Australis were paid as part of their work, and the mentors were volunteers. Scouts Australia was at one extreme with volunteers predominating, and YOP at the other extreme with all organisers and mentors being paid (at least for part of their time).

Scouts Australia had a range of resources. As a consequence of being part of the largest international youth organisation in the world, State organisations and individual Scouting groups had access to a wide range of expertise, training resources and emotional support. Costs (e.g. equipment, printing, electricity etc.) were met by annual membership fees (each year each young person or their parents paid around $100), part of which went to the organisation and part to the local group, supplemented by fundraising carried out by Scouts, leaders and parents, and sponsorship for specific projects. As Scouts usually meet once per week, volunteer leaders would put in at least one night per week plus camps and training commitments. A majority of the leaders are parents of present or past Scouts or young people who have been through Scouts, and most have financial support through paid employment. At the State level in Tasmania, some of the men and women involved were retired.

Some of the programs were free to the young people while others charged a subscription or fee to cover some of the costs. In Scouts, RAP and Australis the young people pay (although costs are kept to a minimum) and there were usually avenues for assistance for those unable to pay. The RAP program concluded with a one-day expedition that cost $60 and covered food, fuel, a certificate and a T-shirt. A day workshop with Australis cost $54, which included all materials, meals and refreshments, a gift bag with make-up and other sponsors' products, and subscrip-

tion to a newsletter released three times a year. Girls experiencing financial hardship may be sponsored through the Trust for Young Australians or by individuals or organisations. It is interesting that these programs were all preventative programs, set within an educational framework that challenged the young people to explore possibilities for their lives.

Australis and Scouts have web sites to assist with dissemination of information and promotion. To make full use of these resources, ongoing time and funding is needed.

Programs with minimal interaction that focus on observation and modelling

To grab young people's attention, the initial focus may be on the role model's celebrity status or position, but the main focus of the program needs to be on the role model's relevant personal characteristics, attitudes, skills and strategies.

Role model has relevant, accessible and coping characteristics

As the role model is a key focus of these programs, he or she must appear to be real to the target group of young people. The role models need to be able to build an instant rapport with young people, be energetic and motivated, and be appropriate to the age level.

Both minimum interaction programs (Sporting Partnerships and Australis) focused on young people having opportunities and making choices. In the case of drugs and sport, the program was being realistic in talking about choices, rather than the idea of never drinking, for instance. Sporting Partnerships provided an opportunity for the young people to meet a well-known sportsperson who had made the choices promoted through the program. With Australis, girls met women who had made choices and were independent financially, listened to the women's stories and became aware of work force issues for women.

To be effective, a brief program has to have a positive impact. In the "meeting and greeting role", the role models in the programs examined needed to appear approachable and quite normal. The role models were encouraged to talk about aspects of their lives, who they were, how they got where they were, the opportunities and choices that they made. Both programs provided opportunities to talk informally with the role models. The sporting role model observed spent a short time shooting goals, then organised an informal competition, followed by another to win a cap. In the Australis program, round robin workshops provided girls with an opportunity to speak informally with a number of different role models and ask questions.

Even though these programs had minimum interaction, the intention was to "make contact", "connect" and "not be condescending" as explained by a celebrity role model. He said,

> I just try and have fun and keep it real – people seem to pick up on that. … If you're just there to show a face and not make an effort, you're bigger than life – not real.

He added that the role model needed to talk, relate and let young people ask questions so "they know that you can understand".

The Australis "mentors" were used as role models in a number of ways. Each mentor facilitated the activities at one table and each had their own set of instructions and materials. Three mentors were (pre)selected and one at a time stood out the front. Girls were invited to ask questions in order to guess their occupation. The mentor then explained what they did and, briefly, how they got to that position. In the workshop observed by the researcher, they came from quite different contexts – a marketing manager in a large bank, the owner of an outer metropolitan metal fabrication business, and a person owning and operating her own business running educational and recreational camps and outdoor activities. The coordinator believed that the workshop gave young women exposure to positive role models and, consciously or unconsciously, they would be trying to work out what it was that worked for them. Both the mentors and the facilitator of Australis talked of opening girls' minds to possibilities. One mentor thought that the program had great scope for motivating girls to think about new ideas they may not have thought of, and to follow their dreams.

The role model also needs to be "not perfect" but show that they have had to work through difficulties and make mistakes. A celebrity role model said that "kids think you are super rich" and drive a great car, but "everyone has problems – it's how you deal with them that counts". He told stories about how he'd slid and got back as he thought it was important to get their interest – "they're not going to listen to preaching". He maintained that role modelling was in terms of how you conducted yourself and handled yourself, had respect for yourself – "kids can see this, as a sportsperson you can play with desire and be aggressive but still walk away and shake hands". You

had to "lower your guard" as "kids love to be able to laugh at you". He added that you had to show you're vulnerable and he had various tricks to achieve that like "making mistakes". The researcher observed that the basketballer developed an easy rapport with the young people, and appeared no more skilful than the better members of the team. From the enthusiasm and smiles, everyone appeared to have had a great time interacting with the basketballer.

Particularly in programs where the role model function is explicit, the role model may be judged (or perceived to be judged) as to their validity in that role by the young people. An Australis mentor thought that the girls judged them on their appearance and conversational skills.

An organiser of Sporting Partnerships commented that in her experience "young kids were in awe of the role models" whereas older ones fobbed them off as not cool – they don't want to be seen to be impressed. She found the 14- to 16-years-olds, the "ones you really want to get", to be "the hardest" as "they're anti everything". Consequently, the program was now focusing on a younger age group, in order to "get in before" and try to cover everyone.

Parents, coaches and siblings were present at the Sporting Partnerships venue observed, and young people of all ages and both genders participated in the game. The sporting role model, who had attended many such events over the years, said that from the feedback he had received he believed there was an impact. He thought that sometimes the impact was with the parents and teachers, as much as with the young people.

Role model has an approach consistent with the program's philosophy

Although the role model may have minimal interaction with young people, it is important that the program coordinator and role model have an opportunity to determine whether their approaches are consistent. The role model may require induction and/or training.

In Sporting Partnerships, the participating State-level sporting organisations chose athletes appropriate for the program. For instance, they targeted athletes with sensible drinking habits who didn't smoke, drink or use illicit drugs while in uniform. The role models also needed to use an appropriate approach with the young people. Before joining the program the role models were briefed for about an hour in small groups from each sport. They received a role model pack and

discussed ideas of what to talk about with the young people. A local organiser said she had found the role models to be very approachable and amenable, open to trying a lot of things and happy to do what was asked of them. At the site visited, the role model developed an easy rapport with the young people, and the atmosphere was relaxed and friendly. Because many of the sporting organisations arranged a variety of similar promotional activities for their athletes (often as part of their contracts), these role models had access to support on talking to groups and the media, and information on healthy lifestyles.

Australis mentors were volunteers and had a wide range of backgrounds and experience. There were no age, professional or educational requirements. Although they were not specifically screened or checked out in terms of their attitudes and values, they did attend a briefing session the evening before the workshop. The coordinator admitted that the lack of screening had created a few problems from time to time. It was an issue for a non-government school once, and on another occasion a mentor had tried to use the workshop to promote her business. At the workshop visited, the girls were treated as adults by the role models.

Provision of ongoing support for young people and ongoing concrete reminders of the message or role model

As these kinds of programs generally aim to motivate young people to take up a particular career, healthy lifestyle or positive approach to the future, there needs to be ongoing support for young people in developing and implementing strategies to achieve the desired outcomes. Depending on the focus of the program, parents, teachers, coaches or other community members need to be included to assist in this regard and will also need some form of induction or training. As part of the ongoing support for young people, there needs to be concrete reminders of the role model and/or their message. These might be in the form of booklets, poster, emails or T-shirts.

The sporting role model thought it could be difficult for parents and teachers to work with the excitement generated by a brief visit by a role model. The Sporting Partnerships program worked hard at building up support around the young people. To this end they developed information packs for the adults who had influence on young people's lifestyle choices. There were packs for coaches, and some coaches had attended training courses, and information for parents so that

they had contact phone numbers if they had concerns or needed support to address a child's drug-related problem. There was also support available to the sporting clubs to develop drug policies and guidelines.

The basketball team members were each presented with singlets with the drug-free message. Several members of the team thought that the singlets gave a message to others about being drug free, and one summed it up "we've a good team but we're not taking drugs". The coaches' packs, as well as being a support resource and reminder to the coaches, provided the LADGS with something to offer to the local clubs and to initiate discussions about the involvement of role models at presentations and the like. RAP used photos from the expedition and program as a debrief, and to assist in the transfer of perseverance to everyday situations. The participants also received a T-shirt and certificate of recognition for successful completion of the course, which was usually presented at a school or year-group assembly acknowledging participation in a wider context.

The development of web sites and magazines can also provide ongoing support for the young people as well as reminders of the message. Australis had a web site and sent a magazine to all girls who had participated in the program.

Programs that focus on short- or longer-term interaction through scaffolding and feedback

The role modelling may be less explicit in this type of program, and there will generally be a variety of role models, including leaders, coordinators, community members and older and same-aged peers. Generally they are the people involved in running and participating in the program.

The young people are less likely to view the program as a role model program than in terms of the activities or particular knowledge, skills and attitudes that may be developed through participation. Many of the longer-term interaction programs also need to take account of some of the issues addressed in the previous section as well as those below, which greater interaction necessitates.

Role models who can relate to young people and display a range of relevant knowledge, skills and personal characteristics

The role models need to be selected for their relevance to the particular target group of young people, their

sincerity and positive outlook, and their knowledge and skills (including life skills). They are likely to require some initial and ongoing training, including communication skills and education on youth issues.

The coordinators, leaders, workers and other role models all displayed behaviours that suggested they were competent, caring, committed and viewed young people in a very positive way. They also modelled acceptance and welcome. They explained their perspectives in the following ways:

> *Have got to really care – not just a job … kids know this … you have to allow yourself to be vulnerable … need to be able to listen and be in a neutral space.* (leader)

> *Treat kids in a particular way that respects them.* (leader)

> *… be honest, straight and consistent. (youth worker)*

> *For some kids it is the first time people have taken notice of them.* (school counsellor)

> *Kids respond to someone who is positive and friendly.* (leader)

> *All kids need a good role model – someone who is loving, concerned person, honest and trustworthy – like grandparents and neighbours … people that you know.* (organiser)

Their attitudes combined inspiration, motivation and enthusiasm in varying degrees and many spoke passionately about the program they were involved with and the young people.

A role model said: "I see the young people have so much and I want them to see what I see". Another similar comment that exemplified many of the comments made by coordinators, leaders and others was that the program activities, "[let] them look positively at themselves in a different way". This seemed to be a key to many of the programs. Some of the coordinators qualified their statements with, "if the young people are not getting a role model at home then …".

The comments of many of the leaders showed that they were open to learning and changing themselves. Some mentioned the way that being involved in activities with the young people enabled them to, "gain insight into the way young [people] think". Another maintained that she learnt "something new everyday from these young people".

One of the leaders in the RAP program explained that although the young people may not see them as

such, leaders were role models because they modelled communication, manners, treating people well, team and group work, and because young people saw leaders working cooperatively, punctually and keeping their word. Certainly many of the coordinators and role models focused on ways of being, ways of thinking and ways of relating. A YOP mentor thought that she mainly modelled attitudes and values.

It is always possible that some people who become part of a program may be inappropriate or model inappropriate behaviour. Several coordinators mentioned the difficulty of finding suitable guest speakers, volunteers or mentors, especially for at-risk groups. They mentioned the difficulty of finding "youth-appropriate government people" and always turned away people with judgmental attitudes. Similar comments were made about people in agencies that young people often needed to contact. Many mentors or coordinators would ring first and talk with the agency person to pave the way for the young person. In some ways they were modelling appropriate ways to speak with young people in particular situations.

Provision of a safe and supportive environment and opportunities for support and encouragement of a variety of role models, including peers

Young people need a safe and supportive environment to practice skills etc. over a period of time. Many young people mentioned the importance of having somewhere safe to go where they were not judged but were listened to and accepted as they were. As well as providing a network of support, different people might model and support the development of different dimensions.

For example, the GAP centre was a place where everyone (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) was welcome, and brothers and sisters could come together; a place that was "safe, friendly and fun", that gave families peace of mind.

Even in the programs that claimed that "anything goes" there were some rules or provisos and plenty of positive expectations.

The program is a safe place where anything goes as long as they don't hurt themselves. (leader)

Best thing here is you don't have to censor what you say – nothing is too small, too silly or too terrible. (peer volunteer)

Many of the programs included a meal in their activities. This could add to the informal relaxed feel.

The Lunch Box program was offered after school and usually included a meal such as pizza. SHEIRA meetings included lunch, RecLink had a barbecue at half time or at the end of a game, and BS/BB organised food at their regular get-togethers of participants.

Many of the peer workers were clearly role models for the other young people. In many of the programs, peer workers were selected from those young people who had been through the program or who had had similar life experiences. Most coordinators were careful to select peer support workers who were "easy to talk to", "non-judgmental" and had a "good idea of confidentiality" as well as other program-specific skills. For example, the female peer support workers in SHEIRA and RecLink had good parenting skills, and the peer support workers in the Migrant Resource Centre Youth Support program had relevant language and cultural skills.

Fulfilling the role of a peer support volunteer or worker usually had positive outcomes for these young people. They gained confidence, felt good about themselves and were empowered about having the requisite skills. Comments included:

People must have noticed … I've gone from a quiet little wallflower to someone who's confident. (peer volunteer)

I'm starting to gain confidence in listening to people … if I'm asked I can say what I did … I always talk about strategies with my friends. (peer volunteer)

The coordinator of SHEIRA maintained that peer workers didn't have to be perfect, so that others could see that life has its ups and downs and could see what you could do with lives if you choose to – "if they can do it, I can too".

The peer workers were usually assistants and thus took other than an organising role. This may have assisted in their ability to build effective relationships with the other young people. Similarly, an activities officer who was present but not organising the particular activities said it was nice not to be part of a program, as she could "have fun and relax". It meant she could take a more low key role "like a mentor … and just try to blend in with the young people".

Another factor in providing a safe environment for young people is the actual safety of the young people. When young people are under 18 years of age, programs need to ensure they have the consent of parents or guardians for the young people to participate. This was handled by the school in the RAP

program, and schools were usually well set up to administer these aspects. Some of the programs involving at-risk young people had difficulty obtaining written consent. The other side of the safety issue is that of ensuring that the role models and leaders are "safe" people to interact with young people. This is not always straightforward, and some people had difficulty asking others to provide evidence of their good character. Most Australian schools now require people visiting the school to provide statutory declarations concerning criminal activity and, in some cases, federal police clearance. It was easier when the role model or leader was an employed member of staff as employees usually had to undergo a selection and clearance process. This issue is addressed in more detail in a later section.

Focus on purposeful activity

Programs that involve interaction of young people with role models over a short or longer period of time need activities around which to focus. These activities provide the opportunity to observe, practice and gain feedback on skills. They need to be activities young people perceive as fun although they may provide "something to do", something different from their usual activities or something challenging.

The RAP program provided students who exhibited limited social skills and lack of interest in current options available to them in the school context with an opportunity to engage in adventure activities that were "challenging, exciting and achievable". Students described the activities as "fun" or "really exciting" and thought that they would not have had the opportunity to try them otherwise.

Scouts groups organised activities on a weekly basis that involved a short ceremony and skill-based group activities. As Scouting was organised into groups of young people with an age range of three or four years, each Scout had the opportunity to progress through the skills, supported by the leaders and older peers. The patrol system provided opportunities for a variety of leadership roles within the group. Scouts were also encouraged to carry out individual projects of interest in a range of areas. Scouting handbooks outline age-appropriate skills but each group has scope to organise activities in a way appropriate to the particular young people involved. At each level, Scouts could work towards specific awards and older Scouts could work towards a Queen's Scout award. Scouts Australia had experienced a decline in numbers of young people joining Scouting groups over the past few years and one of the reasons cited to explain this was the increasing number of organisations offering young people access to the type of activities Scouting had offered at low cost. For instance schools now offered courses of study in physical recreation and outdoor education, and adventure parks and recreation centres offered one-off and short-term access to a range of exciting activities, without the need for long-term commitment to an organisation. Even so, the young people involved in Scouts believed it provided something they couldn't get anywhere else.

RecLink is also organised around physical activity and considerable effort was made at the outset to find activities that the young people wanted to do. Since then, other recreational sporting activities have been introduced to include recreational activities of interest to other young people, but initially with not as much success as with the original activity of football.

The Lunch Box program was an activity program with a more culturally based content. The young people explained to the researchers some of the activities they had completed and showed them some of the pieces they had made. The activities had clearly engaged and interested them. When they talked about the program, however, they talked more about the leaders and the way they interacted with them, and how the experiences had made them feel about themselves and their families.

The one-off programs also involved purposeful activity, career-oriented games in the case of Australis, and sport in the case of Sporting Partnership. Like the programs with more time for interaction, the activities provided an avenue for the role models to model and explain their goals and strategies.

Provide opportunities for developing independence

Independence can be of two types: the gradual development of the actual skills of the activity, and the development of ongoing support networks to cope with transition to the next phase or program.

Informal modelling no doubt occurs in all the programs, but in many cases the role models paid particular attention to the modelling of skills that the young people might observe and copy. In one of the programs a researcher observed a young woman, who appeared angry and upset on arrival, dump her baby on the floor and tell him to "go away" throughout the meeting. The peer volunteer picked him up, cuddled him, gave him his bottle and cleaned up. Later that day, the researcher observed the young woman in a shopping centre attending to her baby in a manner

similar to that modelled by others over the course of the meeting. It is not possible from the observation of one event to attribute her actions to the modelling but similar observations were made by the researchers throughout the study and many coordinators related similar observations.

Scouts have developed a program that gradually involves young people in decision-making and leadership, at the same time providing opportunities for developing relevant skills in a supportive environment. The patrol system in Scouts with patrol leaders (PL) and assistant patrol leaders (APL) who meet with the Scout leader regularly to plan group and individual patrol activities exemplifies this approach.

The Lunch Box leader spoke of the ways that she developed responsibility in the young people:

Throw responsibility at them, give them a purpose, give them something to do … looking after the dog, making the cups of tea … if kids are having a go at each other, bring that out immediately so everyone can be open and honest … always try to resolve things. (leader)

Developing independence was a key focus of BS/BB, and considerable time was spent in training the big sisters/brothers in how to work with their little brothers or sisters to develop strategies for decision-making and relating to others. One of the big brothers said that training had assisted him to look at different ways he could assist his little brother to explore options.

Providing a transition at the end of a program is very important, especially for the programs that run for a finite time. The Lunch Box program had to deal with this issue as it ran for 12 weeks and then the leaders moved on:

When the program finishes this is difficult for some … they get shocked, angry and upset and feel that we abandon them. This is a major issue for these kids. (leader)

Ending is a problem … need to think about a formal finishing then referring on. If they come back to other programs they'll expect it to be the same and it won't be. (youth worker)

At the venue visited, this was handled by providing a transition period when the young people were able to complete unfinished works that they had made and start on some new projects to brighten up the area planned to be a regular meeting place. It was also possible for them to say their farewells to the leaders in their own individual ways.

Programs that focus on the development of supportive relationships

These programs may overlap with the longer-term programs above, and share many of the same key elements for effectiveness. They may involve an activity or development of particular skills, but the main focus will be on the needs of the young people and providing the support needed for the young person to achieve their own goals. The additional key elements are discussed below.

Focus on the needs of the individual young people involved

Mentoring or role modelling needs to be tailored to the individual needs of particular young people. This requires that programs are organised in ways that allow for the development of trusting relationships between the role models and the young people, and provide opportunities for young people to express their views and their needs and the means of following up on these needs.

The mentoring programs provided one-to-one tailored support, and achieved their aims in a variety of different ways. YOP and BS/BB provided one-to-one support for young people on a regular basis following careful matching of mentor and young person. The difference between the services was that YOP had one mentor for several young people on a (semi-) paid basis and BS/BB had one unpaid volunteer (big sister/brother) to one young person (little sister/brother). RecLink also provided one-to-one support for young people as required, but through the provision of a paid youth worker whom any young person could "drop in" on and talk with when the outreach centre was open or when other RecLink activities were operating. Each program seemed to be working in a way that effectively met the needs of the young people concerned.

Where programs were set up to cover a specific target group, they screened the young people to ensure that the young person fitted the criteria for inclusion in the program and to assess the individual needs of the young person. Where possible, the programs shared responsibility for decision-making. BS/BB accepted inquiries from parents or professionals, and held a team meeting to discuss whether or not the young person fitted the guidelines. Alternatives were suggested and discussed with the person making the referral if the young person was not accepted in the program. If they were, application forms were

completed by the family or referring professional after which an interview and assessment was made. In YOP and BS/BB, the coordinator or case worker interviewed the young person and family (if appropriate in YOP). In these programs the young people were carefully prepared for the relationship and were taught protective behaviours.

Many mentors spoke of very structured meetings at the beginning of their relationships with the young people:

Initially I would first contact him by phone during the week, say Wednesday, and work out precise details for an outing on Sunday … now he is happy to come over and figure out something to do, Saturday or Sunday, day or evening. (mentor)

I used to make all the contacts, now he rings sometimes – not quite 50/50. (mentor)

I wanted it to be big buddies quickly, but it is really a much longer-term thing … not many friendships that start from nothing – friendship naturally takes time. (mentor)

It helps to keep an idea of what's important to a young person – you can forget that – but you need to keep that in focus. (mentor)

We tried doing lots of different things together … until we found something we were both interested in. (young person)

It's not about changing a young person – but forming a relationship. (coordinator)

Others look for opportunities to access youth issues and identify young people's needs:

It wasn't really friendship at first … we did lots of different things … didn't really have any ideas about each other … we didn't know what each other liked … [now we have found a common interest] we trust each other a lot more. (young person)

At first I was worried that it wouldn't work … have another person that didn't like me. (young person)

Best part – talk to him … he is there to listen to me. (young person)

There was also a need to gain the trust of other people in the lives of the young people – such as parents and grandparents. Her grandmother "trusts me more and is not so concerned if we are late".

There was a range of aspects of relationship-building evident from young people's comments:

He totally replaces my father … don't really have one … I don't class him as that but the best adult male friend I've had.

Get to go out more and play more outdoors … use more energy and do lots of exercise.

Meet other people and see his life and how it's going on.

Gives a lot of social experiences … including getting to do interviews!

Great to be with – loyal.

I can trust him, he won't let me down.

Many of the programs that had group activities also offered one-to-one mentoring when appropriate. The coordinator of SHEIRA frequently went to the hospital to support young women through the processes of giving birth, abortion or adoption. Her attitude was similar to other role models in that it was the young people's choice, and she supported them in that choice. RecLink incorporated open time when the youth worker could see young people as needed. At games, the organisers and other role models were careful to allow opportunities for young people to approach them and speak with them, and opportunities to model ways to participate. They also assisted in organising community work orders that provide young people with opportunities to develop skills and to experience and observe others working in areas in which they expressed an interest. Some mentors talked about sometimes finding it difficult to fit in time and have their own lives – "some weeks it seems hard to fit it in".

Many of the young people's comments suggested that a fairly mature relationship had developed between them and their mentor. Both mentors and young people talked about the relationship in the future, ways it might change as the young person grew up and the mentor changed jobs, married etc., encouraging each other to take important steps in their lives (e.g. going overseas), but generally added "but we'd keep in touch". One of the little brothers talked about his big brother's future plans in the way his big brother may have spoken about his own opportunities and possibilities. It was clear that the mentors told the young people of the benefits they derived personally from the relationship.

All the mentors talked about positive outcomes for themselves from the relationship:

It's fun, get to do things you wouldn't do.

Learned about myself.

It's two way – it's not one person gets everything.

I learn something new every day from these young people.

Special attention to selection and training of mentors/role models

Clear rationale and procedure for recruiting, screening and training of mentors, which has multiple methods to ensure safety of young people.

Screening of role models is mainly carried out to ensure that the role model (leader, mentor etc.) has values and attitudes appropriate to the program, and to ensure the safety of the young people. Who carries out the screening and the nature of screening depends on the type of program. The case study programs approached this in a variety of ways.

In cases where a group of people or organisation knows potential role models, they may be in the best position to recommend suitable role models. This assumes they are cognisant with the aims of the program and have the skills to discern the appropriateness of role models. In Sporting Partnerships, the State sporting organisations effectively carried out the initial recruiting and screening by choosing athletes with attitudes, values and lifestyles they knew to be consistent with the drug-free focus of the program. The RAP program included teachers as role models under similar assumptions, and other programs included appropriate (past) participants as peer support volunteers or assistant leaders (e.g. SHEIRA, RecLink, Migrant Resource Centre, Scouts). Where people carried out their role model function as part of their paid employment, usual job advertising and selection procedures were carried out. In many programs this was the case for the program directors or coordinators (as well as additional staff in some programs), although some of them had been involved in the initial development or redevelopment of the program (e.g. Lunch Box, BS/BB, YOP).

Although many programs were able to use their own networks to recruit potential role models, others had to develop a range of strategies to recruit a sufficient number of role models (e.g. BS/BB, YOP and Australis). For example, BS/BB had developed a recruiting strategy which included contacting local volunteer agencies, colleges, universities and businesses, word of mouth through other care agencies

and existing participants, using local media outlets and drawing on the awareness raised by the inclusion of Big Sisters and Big Brothers in the plots of American TV shows. Although attention in the media brought inquiries from potential volunteers, the program manager believed there could be a downside to media publicity. The philosophy of BS/BB could easily be misrepresented by being portrayed in simplistic and patronising terms. Therefore, he tried to maintain a balance so as not to exploit people on the program, and, so far, had had mainly good experiences by being selective. Potential volunteers were usually asked how they found out about the program. Many were friends of volunteers, had seen brochures, read articles in newspapers or heard stories on radio. Most had heard about the program more than once but hadn't followed up initially.

Of the mentors interviewed, one had considered becoming involved after talking with a social worker friend, another had considered volunteer work and contacted a Volunteering Australia office.

It sounded exciting and required me to be an active participant … and I could contribute as me … It feels quite different when you are in it – lose sight of the big picture when you have a relationship. (mentor)

At first it appeared that the RecLink program did not have a screening process for those involved with the program. The program coordinator said that people tended to self screen by not becoming involved at all or not continuing to be involved if they thought they didn't fit the program's aims or philosophies. A similar comment was made by the GAP coordinator in relation to staff participation after a major reorganisation of the program. It seemed in the case of RecLink at least, that the organisers had wide networks of their own and invited people they thought would be appropriate to come and join in the football, cricket or volleyball games, or to participate in some other way. Some of these people were police officers, parole officers or sportspeople, but others had been in prison or been unemployed or been through personal difficulties of various kinds. Although anyone could participate in the program, the young people drew the line at people who had been convicted of certain serious crimes against young people. Still, many of the screening procedures of other programs would have eliminated some of these people as inappropriate role models, but they were clearly suited to the aims of the particular program, which relied on coping role models and identification with the young people concerned. Most of

the activities involved small and large groups of young people and role models and, apart from the youth worker and the program coordinator, it was rare for the role models to be alone with the young people.

In programs that involved one-to-one relationships, and in which the role model and young person met in unsupervised surrounds, screening was a major concern and was carried out rigorously. The fact that young people would be with their mentors away from supervision was a major consideration in the screening of mentors in BS/BB and YOP. Both used a range of strategies to ensure the suitability of the mentor for the program and to provide sufficient knowledge of the person to create a suitable match. Both programs had similar procedures. The BS/BB procedure is described in detail from information received from staff, mentors and program documents.

BS/BB had a set procedure for screening and training that took about three to six months. The potential volunteer could self screen out or be screened out at any stage. Initial screening occurred when potential volunteers phoned to inquire about the program. They were interviewed for five to 10 minutes and if they lived out of the area or were thought to be otherwise unsuitable another avenue of volunteering might be suggested to them. An information package was sent out which gave detailed information about the program, requirements for volunteers and the screening procedures. The potential volunteer must then phone for an interview, and a number of applicants self screened out at this stage by not taking this step. Those that did were considered motivated to proceed.

The first interview was one-on-one and took about an hour. The purpose was for one of the case managers to get to know the person and get an idea of their belief systems, and to answer any questions the applicant might have about the program. Discussion focused on the person's motivations for wanting to be a Big Sister or Big Brother, their interests, education and employment, and the meaning of relationships and friendship for them. The interview was discussed with another member of staff "as selection is a big responsibility for one person", although staff agreed it was pretty rare not to be able to make a judgment on suitability at this stage. An application form must then be completed and returned. It requested the names of four referees (employer/supervisor, a person of the opposite sex, a friend and a character referee) to be contacted directly by program staff, and written permission to carry out a police check. If that all checked out, a psychological profile was conducted at the YWCA to assess suitability for the particular program and to assist with the matching process.

Then there was a second longer interview with the case manager (a person different from the first interviewer) that might revisit some areas covered in the first interview but mainly discussed areas necessary to develop more insight to support the volunteer appropriately and make a suitable match. A live-in training weekend was then arranged for a small number of potential volunteers and program staff. Activities explored the role of the volunteer and the program, and provided skill development. One of the volunteers found the weekend very "confronting", but an opportunity "to get to know people well". There was lots of "talking about experiences, handling different issues, different things that were successes and not successes". Then the case manager visited the volunteer's home to meet other members of the household and to observe whether or not the home environment was child friendly and suitable for home stay in the future.

The volunteers considered this lengthy process to be frustrating, as having made a decision to be involved in the program they wanted to get started. They also realised it was important and believed the lengthy process allowed time for the BS/BB staff to get to know them and make an appropriate match.

In a separate process, the young people were referred to the program and their needs assessed as described previously. They might then be placed on a waiting list until matching with a suitable volunteer.

If after the screening process the case manager and volunteer were still keen to proceed, the case manager started thinking about a suitable match. They would liaise with the volunteer, the child's family and maybe a referring professional. The case manager then talked with the volunteer about the particular young person and answered questions. They also contacted the child's family and professional to say they may have a suitable match, and gave them a little information about the volunteer. They then arranged a match meeting at the young person's house attended by the young person, parent(s), case worker and volunteer. It was usually fairly brief as the first meeting could be a bit awkward. One of the young people described it as "a bit scary". Each part of the written match agreement was discussed and clarified and then signed. The young person might show the volunteer around providing a brief activity for their initial time together. There was a cooling off period of 24 hours, after which the case worker would phone the volunteer and young person and see if they felt okay about the match.

The mentors' comments reinforced the importance of the screening process:

I think the program is effective because of the quality of the people – about doing it right – taking time to screen, train and support.

I enjoyed the training, the interviews were good – extensive probing – I got the feeling that I had to be open and say how I felt about it.

I had to talk about it to the people – if I wanted a reference I needed to talk about it – so it was not done in isolation from the rest of my life – have to be committed.

As mentioned above, the actual procedure of having a screening process could in itself be a screening mechanism. Most program organisers could relate instances where individuals had applied or had been approached to be involved in a role model program but had withdrawn after being asked to complete an application form, read an information booklet or attend an interview or induction session detailing the aims and expectations of the program. Some organisers were hesitant about insisting on federal police clearance of people whom they knew or had been recommended, but participants usually accepted this aspect of screening when its purpose of protecting young people was explained.

Induction and training is an important extension of the screening process and an opportunity for both role models and program organisers to test their match to the particular program, its methods and its aims. Training was considered to be an essential component for the mentoring programs. The young people felt that one of the reasons the mentoring programs worked effectively was that everyone was so well trained. The mentors appreciated talking through practical issues in training sessions and mentor meetings as they felt they came in with an expectation that was not always correct. Learning skills to deal with young people and talk about yourself were important parts of the training.

The GAP staff talked about the importance of training and acknowledged that through training they were learning skills and gaining confidence so that they could better help the young people. One said that the training had opened up new issues. Sometimes he went home thinking "What should I say?". He thought training helped and that he was now more enthusiastic and energetic and looked forward to going to work.

Role models with a non-judgmental caring approach

Although the role models in any of the types of programs need to be caring and have a positive non-judgmental approach to young people, those involved with young people on a one-to-one basis particularly need to be able to meet young people "where they are" and guide them in their journey.

Several coordinators said that they could usually tell whether or not a potential volunteer, mentor or guest speaker presented an approach appropriate for the young people concerned. A non-judgmental approach was considered to be particularly important for programs involving young people at risk.

The mentors had clear strategies for approaching issues with the young people. They did not judge by saying what you are doing or thinking is wrong or inappropriate, but said, "here is another way or other possibilities", "here are some activities you might like to try" or "what do you want to do – here are people who can assist you to work that out and develop ways to achieve that". This approach can also be seen in the following comments by mentors:

I have changed the way I deal with other parts of my life – I am more inclined to say "What do you think you could do?".

I can see how the relationship has developed. Firstly, he was very interested in seeing I was happy – maybe an issue of making sure I would stick around – now he is more comfortable to say what he is thinking.

The word mentoring suggests a role that tells someone how they should be. But it is about giving the kids another option and seeing how you act in certain situations – not about "how you should be".

I tell him that I get a lot out of it.

It is not always heavy stuff – you deal with those things – it is 90% about being yourself and letting that person be involved in your life. The best times are when we come back to my place, cook up lunch and watch videos – just ordinary stuff.

You can't change someone's life – their circumstances are still their circumstances – can offer them a choice, this is a different way to lead your life.

The mentor meetings help you to look at thing in different ways – help little brothers to explore.

Many of the young people in all of the programs said that the activities were "great", "OK", "better than doing nothing" etc. It appeared that the key thing that

came across from a range of comments was how the young people perceived that they were treated by the role models.

Provision of ongoing support and feedback for mentors/role models

Role models need ongoing support and training to further develop their skills and knowledge about developing a mentoring relationship. They may need ideas and activities to get them started, and access to resources and other networks. Where role models and others in the program are volunteers, support of one kind or another is very important to maintain a positive approach. Many volunteers are busy people.

Across the role model programs, many of the organisers considered that they might be role models for others in the program, "supporting the supporters" as it was described. Many of the role models and other workers, especially volunteers, mentioned organisers as role models for them.

Regular meetings of coordinators and mentors or of all the mentors were mentioned as critical in ongoing training and support. It was an opportunity to speak about their relationship, share difficulties and ideas, develop skills and confidence, as well as deal with specific issues such as drugs, sexuality, juvenile justice, school and school/workplace transitions. Mentors, whether volunteer or paid, could feel isolated and out of their comfort zone. Meetings allowed them to hear about what other people had done and any problems they had:

> The mentors meeting is great, especially in the early stage as you don't have a concept as to whether what's going on in your match is "normal" – it's reassuring.

> Sometimes I have doubts about how I'm handling a situation – the case worker is good at giving you confidence.

> The case worker can pick out positives in a situation – always feel affirmed.

Some programs also had formal processes for providing support. For example, for the first six weeks to three months in BS/BB, the case worker kept in weekly contact by phone with each of the participants, with an occasional catch up over coffee. They found out how things were going and provided positive feedback to each. A case worker explained that the structure allowed everyone to feel safe, including the parents who often found the concept scary. At three months there was a formal review and the case worker

visited the big sister/big brother and the little sister/brother and family separately. Another review occurred at 12 months. One of the case workers explained that it was important to maintain contact and give feedback to volunteers who had been around for a long time – "they need to know the time they are giving up is worth something".

With both mentor programs, YOP and BS/BB, there was peer support or mentoring of each other at every level of the program. YOP had to develop particular strategies to ensure that this occurred as the mentors were isolated by distance in rural towns. The coordinator of each region visited each town monthly to support mentors and young people, and to follow up new cases. They were also available at other times on a needs basis.

Get-togethers of all participants also provided support and a sense of being part of something bigger, "get-togethers are really important and useful". The "older kids" mentored the younger ones, the staff mentored the volunteers and the volunteers supported each other, and they all got to observe other people and other relationships:

> Helps you get used to other people. (young person)

> Lots of the people turned out to be really friendly … you realise there are lots of nice people. (young person)

> Always go to parties where there is a lot of food. (young person)

> Talk to other little brothers and little sisters, some of them anyway, eventually get to know big brothers and big sisters – see others getting on well – I'm not the only lucky one … as these people are well trained. (little brother)

> It is hard to grasp the significance of get-togethers … it is more important than just the activities … it is a part of the program that is often missed in mentoring programs … more than each having a significant relationship … all know that they are part of a community. The volunteers get it through mentor meetings but the kids get it through get-togethers … they see their experience isn't unique. (coordinator)

> At weekend camps a Big and Little can get up and speak about their relationship – it is an opportunity to reflect on their own experiences and give that back to others. (coordinator)

Involving parents was often difficult in these kinds of programs. It might be hard to get them to meetings

due to child-care issues and some parents felt that their parenting might be being "judged". But they could be invited to a Christmas party and costs provided. A number of programs had newsletters or bulletins to keep role models and others informed, and as a means of connection and support (e.g. Australis, BS/BB). These also kept parents informed.

Several mentors expressed some feelings of doubt as to whether they were helping to make a difference for their young person. This was despite receiving positive feedback and encouragement from coordinators and young people clearly being upset if they missed a week of contact. One mentor surmised that it was partly due to some of the young people not being able to articulate their feelings. Articulation of feelings was clearly one of the skills worked on in mentor training. This allowed mentors to model appropriate ways of expressing feelings and, by doing that, the importance of expressing feelings.

Finishing a mentoring relationship was an important issue, as an untimely ending may leave the young person with a sense of rejection and, for some, another failed relationship. Many of the Big Sisters and Big Brothers in BS/BB and YOP mentors stayed in touch with the young people they mentored for many years after the relationship has formally ended. Other matches were closed because of problems, sometimes because the mentor wanted out. If problems arise, the case worker may work through the problems with each of the parties, and if a match has to be closed, a match meeting is organised, if possible, so that the participants can talk about the friendship, what they enjoyed and that sometimes ending is the best thing. BS/BB has the philosophy that these things can be a positive and it is necessary to work through that.

Conclusions

This chapter has explored the key elements of effective role model programs and some of the difficulties faced by different types of programs in developing and implementing programs to achieve the desired outcomes for young people. Obtaining the views of a range of participants gives a more complete picture of this complex area.

The key elements of effective role model programs and the characteristics of programs that can limit a program's effectiveness are summarised in the next chapter.

Chapter 9

Summary of findings and policy implications

Introduction

This chapter summarises the findings from the literature review, survey and case studies to answer the question set for this project, "What makes an effective role model program?". The key features of effective programs are summarised, followed by a brief discussion of the characteristics that may limit the effectiveness of role model programs. The remainder of the chapter addresses issues raised by the research that address other key aspects pertaining to the effectiveness of role model programs and the development of future programs.

Key features of effective role model programs

The findings from the literature review, survey and case studies suggest that there are a number of features that contribute to the overall effectiveness of a range of role model programs. The key elements of effectiveness, however, differ from program to program, although each element may have some relevance across program types. The program types have been grouped in order to highlight the key elements of effectiveness.

Common elements of effectiveness

Young-people-sensitive administration/management of the program

Management needs to be professional, yet people-oriented and attuned to young people and their culture. This is not easy to achieve. Programs need to have clear rationale and aims, and be planned with input from young people and other relevant community groups. Effective programs develop mechanisms that enable the young people to have some ownership of the program and assist the young people to be empowered, not feel they have the program done to them.

Flexibility

The program is developed within a basic structure that has sufficient flexibility to adapt to the needs of the young people involved. These may include the types of activities, sensitivity to needs of individual young people, and a range of possible types of interaction within the one program or context.

The development of networks

Programs that develop networks to include other significant people and organisations in the lives of the target young people (e.g. parents, welfare agencies, community groups), provide an ongoing support base for the young people. The involvement of a range of people also contributes to changing community attitudes about young people and community

processes, as well as opportunities for particular groups of young people, and recognition of the role model program. The importance of supportive contexts and the developing of community are echoed in recent reviews (Freedman 1993/1999; Rhodes 2001).

Mechanism for ongoing feedback from participants (young people, role models and other significant people) and evaluation for program improvement

All programs need to have clear aims and a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the program. Although some programs can identify short-term outcomes or markers of ongoing development, many programs with longer-term "life skills", career or personal development aims have difficulty in evaluating outcomes that may not be evident in the short term (or in the life of the program). A program plan needs to include appropriate processes for gaining feedback from participants and for gathering data relevant to the aims and the way these aims are achieved.

Sufficient resources for the program to achieve its aims

Resources include ongoing financial and relevant in-kind support, and dedicated coordinators and role models.

Programs with minimal interaction that focus on observation and modelling

The initial focus may be on the role model's celebrity status or position to grab young people's attention, but the main focus of the program needs to be on the role model's relevant personal characteristics, attitudes, skills and strategies that assisted them in achieving their goals. These programs rely on the young people perceiving the role model as a relevant role model for them at that particular time.

Role model has relevant, accessible and coping characteristics

As the role model is a key focus of these programs, the role model must appear to be real to the target group of young people. The role models need to be able to build an instant rapport with young people, be energetic and motivated, appropriate to the age level (younger group may be more influenced by celebrity role models than older groups). The role model also needs to be not perfect but show that they have had to work through difficulties and do make mistakes.

Role model has an approach consistent with the program's philosophy

Although the role model may have minimal interaction with young people, it is important that the program coordinator and role model have an opportunity to determine if their approaches are consistent. The role model may require induction and/or training.

Provision of ongoing support for young people

As these kinds of programs generally aim to motivate young people to take up a particular career, healthy life style or positive approach to the future, there needs to be ongoing support for young people in developing and implementing strategies to achieve the desired outcomes. Depending on the focus of the program, parents, teachers, coaches or other community members need to be included to assist in this regard and will need some form of induction or training.

Ongoing concrete reminders of the message or role model

As part of the ongoing support for young people, there needs to be concrete reminders of the role model, their message or both. These might be in the form of booklets, poster, T-shirts, emails, newsletters or follow-up visits.

Programs that focus on short- or longer-term interaction through scaffolding and feedback

The role modelling may be less explicit in this type of program, and there will generally be a variety of role models including leaders, coordinators, community members, older and same-aged peers. Generally they are the people involved in running and participating in the program. The young people are less likely to view the program as a role model program, but view it in terms of the activities or particular knowledge, skills and attitudes that may be developed through participation.

Role models who can relate to young people and display a range of relevant knowledge, skills and personal characteristics

The role models need to be selected for their relevance to the particular target group of young people, their sincerity and positive outlook, and their knowledge and skills (including life skills). They are likely to require some initial and ongoing training, including communication skills and youth issues.

Provision of a safe and supportive environment

Young people need a safe and supportive environment to develop and practice skills etc. over a period of time. Many young people mentioned the importance of having somewhere safe to go where they were not judged but were listened to and accepted as they were.

Focus on purposeful activity

Programs that involve interaction of young people with role models over a short or longer period of time need activities around which to focus. These activities provide the opportunity to observe, practice and gain feedback on skills. They need to be activities young people perceive as fun, and may provide "something to do", something different from their usual activities or something challenging.

Provide opportunities for developing independence

Independence can be of two types. There may be a gradual development of the actual skills of the activity. In addition or alternatively, ongoing support networks may be developed to cope with transition to the next phase/program etc.

Provide opportunities for support and encouragement of a variety of role models, including peers

This is part of the provision of a network, but more specifically in this type of program is the need for a variety of supportive individuals. Different people might model and support the development of different dimensions.

Programs that focus on the development of supportive relationships

These programs may overlap with the longer-term programs above, and share many of the same key elements for effectiveness. They may involve an activity or development of particular skills, but the main focus will be on the needs of the young people and providing the support needed for the young person to achieve their goals. The additional key elements include:

Focus on the needs of the individual young people involved

Tailor mentoring/role modelling to individual needs of particular young people.

Special attention to selection and training of mentors/role models

Develop and implement a clear rationale and procedure for recruiting, screening and training of mentors, which has multiple methods to ensure the safety of young people.

Role models with a non-judgmental caring approach

Although the role models in any of the types of programs need to be caring and have a positive non-judgmental approach to young people, those involved with young people on a one-to-one basis particularly need to be able to meet young people "where they are" and guide them in their journey.

Provision of ongoing support and feedback for mentors/role models

Role models need ongoing support and training to further develop their skills and knowledge about developing a mentoring relationship. They may also need ideas and activities to get them started, and access to resources and other networks.

Characteristics of programs which limit effectiveness

It appears unlikely that any one program will be either effective or ineffective in stimulating the desired changes in young people with respect to improving their life situation, progressing educational and social outcomes, or other positive outcomes. It is more likely that programs will exhibit some features that improve effectiveness and others which limit it. Common characteristics that may limit the effectiveness of a program are summarised below and suggestions are given as to how these limitations may be reduced or avoided.

Inadequate selection, screening, training and support of role models

Programs may not pay sufficient attention to the recruiting and retention of the role models, resulting in inappropriate or poorly trained role models not meeting the needs of young people, or high turnover rates. Recruiting suitable role models and mentors can be difficult for any program (and those recruiting young males usually have particular difficulties), but it is vital that the people who work with young people have the skills and qualities relevant for that particular program.

Although most coordinators would agree on the importance of screening role models, it is surprising

how few programs employ a range of formal and informal procedures. Formal procedures might include an interview, contacting referees, police clearance, psychological testing, suggesting an alternative role in the program, a training weekend or a trial period. One-to-one mentoring programs need to have rigorous processes in place and the time spent carrying them through. Other programs may be able to put less formal strategies in place, such as training programs enabling the coordinator to get to know the role models or mentors; multiple leaders working with young people; activities occurring in a public place where monitoring can occur; obtaining informed parent/carer consent; ongoing training and support of role models; and mechanisms to resolve disputes or concerns.

Burnout can easily occur, especially in programs with high-risk young people. Quality staff may be hard to retain in skill-based programs. For instance, university students complete their qualifications and obtain jobs, or young adult leaders may need greater income than available in a role model program.

Too much reliance on one individual for program success

This may be a common problem in medium to longer interaction programs, especially when a role model, leader, youth worker or mentor has been able to develop a great rapport with the young people. If a young person becomes too reliant on one person it may limit their future independence and desire to form relationships with others. Also if the person leaves the program for some reason or the program ends without provision for ongoing contact, the young person may feel let down and in no better position than when they began the program. This may be particularly relevant to at-risk young people with few support networks of their own. Programs may reduce these kinds of problems by explicitly including in the program strategies for developing independence; giving young people increasing responsibility in the development and implementation of the program; creating networks with family and community members, relevant agencies or organisations; encouraging peer support; preparing young people for the end of a program or providing follow-up after a program ends or both; and ensuring the role models have appropriate training and support, and a manageable workload.

This is always an issue for one-to-one mentoring programs as they are based on the development of a close relationship. Effective programs have mechanisms in place to closely monitor and support the mentoring relationship, encourage the development of networks and independence, follow up if a match breaks down and conclude a mentoring relationship.

Lack of ongoing support in minimum interaction programs

Role model programs based on the common definition of a role model as one who inspires others may focus too much on finding and presenting a relevant and dynamic person, and not attend to appropriately supporting young people to turn inspiration into action. If role model programs are to lead to real changes in the lives of young people, then program planning must work through these issues.

Taking too many young people into the program

It is very tempting for program coordinators to accept into a program all young people who make inquiries, as they want to provide opportunities for as many young people as possible. If a program is set up for a certain number of young people, accepting extra young people may compromise the safety of the young people and the potential outcomes of the program, as well as overload the staff. It may lead to the reduction of other important components of the program such as training and support of role models or evaluation of the program, which may further limit the overall effectiveness of the program. Also, not all programs are appropriate for all young people and entry criteria are usually set for a particular purpose and to match the available resources. If young people with needs different from those for which the program is set up are accepted, it may jeopardise the program for other young people with the possibility of no-one's needs being met. If there is a need for more places in a program or a different kind of program, it is more effective to work on securing more funding or modifying the program.

Lack of adequate funding

This issue has been discussed in a number of places throughout the report. It was raised in the literature and by nearly every program coordinator contacted as the single most important aspect limiting the perceived effectiveness of a program. A common belief of coordinators is that funding bodies perceive the inclusion of volunteers as a means of reducing funding needs. As mentioned elsewhere, the inclusion of volunteers may improve the programs for a variety

of reasons but may not reduce the costs. It poses an ever-present dilemma for coordinators but there are really only two alternatives. One is to limit the program in such a way as to provide the best possible program within the resources available, and the other is to secure more funding.

Inadequate resourcing and valuing of volunteers

Volunteers may be included in a program without due consideration for the resources required and the mechanisms to ensure they feel a valued part of the program. Like paid staff, volunteers need to be recruited, screened, trained and supported. Some volunteers are less certain they are making a difference than are the young people or program staff. They need feedback regarding the changes in young people, opportunities to network with other volunteers and the opportunity to contribute to decision-making.

Other issues

Value for money of programs

This is a very difficult issue to address adequately, as different programs have different aims and cater to different groups of young people. Those catering for at-risk young people requiring considerable support, and those providing challenging outdoor adventures may be more costly but may be very effective in meeting the desired outcomes.

Programs that develop ongoing support networks for young people, especially networks close to the young people (family and peers) or that assist young people to develop strategies of independence and self-reliance may be the most cost-effective in the longer term.

It is tempting to think of programs that utilise volunteers as more cost-effective than those with paid staff. This is not necessarily the case as volunteers still need training, support and other resources, and may require more time input for a coordinator than a smaller number of paid staff. Similarly, Internet programs may seem cost-effective but require young people to have access to computers with appropriate workable software in disparate locations, and may require more costly promotion and ongoing maintenance costs in addition to setting up costs.

Transferability of effective programs

The literature review and audit identified many programs that are delivered in multiple sites or have been adopted in part or in full by others. Evidence suggests, however, that it is not a simple case of transfer from one site to another.

Many of the large programs have demonstrated effectiveness in one or more countries around the world (e.g. Scouting, the Big Brother/Big Sister movement, Perach). One of the advantages of these programs is that over time they have developed effective processes for implementing the program and have extensive expertise and material resources available for the training of role models, leaders or mentors. But each of the individual programs has had to adapt to the local conditions and to the particular role models and young people involved. As the experiences of Big Sister/Big Brother show, it is rarely a case of direct transfer of a program from one location to another. What was important in that case was finding out about the new group of young people, their circumstances, their needs and the adequacy of support mechanisms available to them, as well as the workings of different referral agencies.

One-off (e.g. Australis, Sporting Partnerships) or fixed-term programs (e.g. Journey 1, Sports Challenge) are often presented in multiple locations. For the program to be effective, however, there needs to be discussion between the program provider and local organisation (including input from young people) to ensure the suitability of the role model program for the group, and adequate preparation and follow-up to make best use of the experience for young people. Also, the provider of the program and role model need to be sufficiently flexible so that they can adjust to the group in situ.

In other cases an idea from one program is translated into another program (e.g. RecLink). No doubt many programs develop in this way. This kind of process has the advantage of building a new program based on local issues and concerns around a good idea that has been at least partly tested elsewhere.

Programs for different groups of young people

Minimal interaction role model programs, which aim to create an awareness of possibilities, may be inappropriate for young people who do not have access to opportunities or support networks to assist them in pursuing possibilities or recognising and acting on opportunities when they arise. They may, however, be appropriate for young people who already have the necessary support networks and access to a range of opportunities.

For young people who for whatever reason are not able to make sound life choices in their current context,

the provision of support of some kind seems to be an essential element in a role model program. If the young people have major issues to work through, the provision of intensive support and appropriate referral is critical. It is unrealistic to expect one program to solve or reduce all of a young person's problems or risk factors.

In short, analysis of the literature and case studies would suggest that role models are generally more effective when the young person receives support of one kind or another. The necessary support varies with type of program, the group of young people and their individual circumstances and access.

Features of agencies delivering programs

The literature review and audit showed that a wide range of agencies deliver role model programs for young people. These include educational institutions such as schools and universities; not-for-profit community organisations; federal, State and local government departments and agencies; youth groups; and businesses. They are supported and sponsored by an even greater range of groups including government sources, foundations, service clubs, corporations and other businesses, churches, donations, subscription fees and fundraising. There is nothing to suggest that any particular agencies or funding sources lead to more effective programs, but those agencies that are able to secure adequate funding for two to three years at a time, and involve dedicated staff willing to adapt programs to meet the needs of the young people concerned, are more likely to be able to deliver effective programs.

Development of future role model programs

Many of the comments already made in this chapter could be used as a basis for improving the effectiveness of existing role model programs and for the development of future programs to stimulate the desired outcomes for young people. They principally concern characteristics of the role model programs. The issues discussed below pertain more to the broader context in which role model programs operate.

Appropriate funding and resourcing

While this is an obvious requirement for any type of enterprise, there are a few particular points relevant to programs for young people. Programs of this kind invariably have insufficient funding. This may be

because funding bodies are not fully aware of the funding needed for delivery of effective role model programs or because many program coordinators don't have the background skills or time required to develop a business plan and appropriate budget and apply for funding, or a combination of these. All these possibilities have presented in this research. Also, programs frequently involve volunteers and some in-kind resources and these are often not included in the costing of a program, leading to inaccurate estimates of the funding required.

Thus there needs to be greater awareness of the complexity of implementing effective role model programs by funding bodies, and assistance offered to program coordinators in budget preparation and writing proposals for funding.

Appreciation of the time taken for development of programs and appropriate evaluation models

Related to the funding issue above is the point that programs for young people frequently have long development time frames and may take several years to achieve outcomes of the type associated with role model programs. Thus funding needs to be for longer periods of time than the 12 months common at the present time. Also, appropriate evaluation of role model programs is problematic. The desired outcomes are difficult to measure and may not be evident for many years; and evaluation of programs for ongoing improvement needs to take account of the program characteristics that lead to short- and long-term outcomes. These are difficult issues even for evaluation experts, and program coordinators need to appreciate the importance and value of evaluation and be assisted (through adequate funding and training) in its implementation.

Importance of encouraging and maintaining a diversity of role model programs

The research identified a diverse range of role model programs covering the full spectrum of programs suggested by the theoretical framework. The programs examined covered prevention, intervention and rehabilitation, and all fulfil a particular niche in enhancing the desired outcomes for young people. The prevention programs show the value of building resilience in young people, sometimes before the age of 12 years.

The current analysis suggests that it would be possible to develop effective role model programs for most situations. An exception may be the use of minimum interaction role model programs with

limited follow-up, particularly in settings where there is insufficient structural change occurring in society for the young people to realistically attain the desired outcomes. This issue was addressed in the literature review in reference to the work of Byrne (1989), Irvine (1989), Marqusee (1995) and Verdugo (1995).

A concept that could be integrated into future programs is one similar to that of full service schools. Linking of formal agencies such as schools, family and children's services, health department, police department etc. would provide a more holistic approach and may improve the long-term effectiveness of programs. RecLink involves this kind of model. One possible reason for the current scarcity of this kind of model is that different organisations tend to come from different theoretical frameworks and have different priorities, so find it hard to work together. Negotiation also takes considerable time and energy, but it is possible. GAP has been successful in introducing a business management model rather than a welfare model to empower participants.

Encouragement of programs that have demonstrated effectiveness

Programs that have demonstrated effectiveness need to be encouraged and be able to continue by building on their strengths through ongoing appropriate evaluation, without the requirement to continually innovate to secure funding. They may, however, require assistance to develop strategies for becoming more self-supporting.

Development of networks to support program development and improvement

There are many programs for young people in Australia that could be considered role model programs. A network of people involved in role model programs would provide a resource and support base for improving existing programs and developing new ones. This could take the form of a web site or list serv. An interactive web site would enable examples of role model programs to be disseminated and issues discussed.

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March 9, 1999

The National Youth Affairs Research Scheme Project
What makes an effective role model program?

Dear

    As part of its key priority initiatives for youth the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs has awarded a consultancy to a Murdoch University research team headed by Dr Judith MacCallum to study the extent and use of role model programs for young people aged 12 –25 years, and the effectiveness of the programs.

    Our present purpose is to identify programs that could be considered as role model programs or include role modelling. As there is potentially a wide range of programs that could be relevant, many of which are not documented, we are canvassing organisations or individuals that may know of, or be involved in programs of this type.

    There are many different formal programs that may include the use of role models, such as guest speaker programs, tutoring and/or mentoring in one-to-one or group settings, and programs focusing on the development of skills, values, attitudes or professional expertise. In each case one or more persons would be in the position of a role model to a group of young people or to an individual. The nature of the role may vary and could be motivational, provide social support, expertise or guidance, or that of a person with slightly more experience in meeting specific challenges. The role models may be of a similar age to the young people or older. Most programs would be based on the assumption that they can assist young people to further their educational and social outcomes. Programs may be local, regional, state or nation wide, and may be provided within the government or non-government sector.

    If you are involved in a program of this type, or if you know of a program that might fit the description we would appreciate your assistance. Please complete the Information Request Form attached and return it to the address above. A postage reply paid envelope is enclosed for your convenience. In completing the form, please don't assume that others will identify programs. Include as much information as you can and if you have limited information we would rather you return the form with the information you do know than not return it at all.

    As the time frame for the research is limited, we request that you return the completed form as soon as possible, and by April 8, 1999 at the latest.

    If you have queries or would like more information about the project feel free to contact Judith MacCallum on 08 9360 2344, email jamac@murdoch.edu.au or Susan Beltman on 08 9360 2343, email beltman@murdoch.edu.au.

    Thank you for your assistance.

Research Team
Dr Judith MacCallum
Mrs Susan Beltman
Mr Gary Martin

What makes an effective role model program?

Information request form

PROGRAM TITLE and/or **ORGANISING BODY**	
BRIEF DESCRIPTION Type of program, location of program or coverage (local, state, national, international) characteristics of people involved as role models characteristics of target group of young people	
CONTACT DETAILS **FOR THE PROGRAM** Name of contact person Address Phone/ Fax email	

Please photocopy extra pages as required

Contact details of person completing this form: _____

The National Youth Affairs Research Scheme Project
What makes an effective role model program?

Survey of role model programs

As part of the above NYARS project, we have received some information about your program and would like to find out more details. One of the aims of the role model project is to enhance the effectiveness of role model programs. We are interested in your successes, but also areas of difficulty, problems you have had to address, and constraints that might limit the effectiveness of the program. It would be appreciated if you could spend some time completing the attached survey. Please answer the questions as fully as possible and add additional comments as required. If you have brochures or literature available on the program, you may wish to include a copy, and make reference to relevant sections.

This survey refers to overall information about a program and you may need to consider who the best person would be to complete it. If your program operates at a number of sites, responses to some of the questions may be different for each site. You may wish to indicate this on the survey, or you may wish to photocopy the form and ask a local coordinator or similar to complete it.

In our report, we will give examples of different types of programs to indicate the variety of purposes and locations of programs around Australia. Before completing the survey, please indicate whether you are willing to perhaps have your program identified in our report as an example of a particular type of program, or whether you would prefer no identifying details be given.

I do / do not (please circle one) give permission for

_____ **program to be identified in the**
NYARS Report "What Makes An Effective Role Model Program?"

Signature: .... **Date:** ....

Name: (Please Print) ....

Position in program: ....

We understand that your time is precious, but it would be appreciated if you could return the survey (a reply paid envelope is included for your convenience) as soon as possible to the address below:
Role Model Project
School of Education
Centre for Curriculum & Professional Development
Murdoch University
South Street
MURDOCH WA 6150

If you have any concerns or queries regarding the survey, please feel free to contact
Judith MacCallum: Ph: 08 9360 2344
email: jamac@murdoch.edu.au; or
Susan Beltman: Ph: 08 9360 2343,
email: beltman@murdoch.edu.au.

Thank you again for your assistance.
Research Team: Dr Judith MacCallum
                   Mr Gary Martin
                   Mrs Susan Beltman
                   Associate Prof Sue Willis

What makes an effective role model program? Survey:

(please tick appropriate box or boxes and add further details as required)

Name of Program:

GENERAL

1. How would you best describe the use of role models in is program?	**Details/comments:**
a) visibility only : ☐ (role models are visible through the media, internet etc but have no direct interaction with the targeted young people)	
b) some interaction: ☐ (role models are used as guest speakers, for email/chat contact, for one-off workshops or seminars etc)	
c) optional extended interaction: ☐ (role models are available to various young people over time on a needs basis eg youth workers, accommodation support workers, drop-in centres, youth groups etc)	
d) formal intensive interaction: ☐ (role models work with a specific group of young people in an intensive situation eg camp, one week of workshops etc)	
e) formal extended interaction: ☐ (role models work with a specific group of young people over an extended period of time eg self-esteem groups, health issues support groups, business / enterprise ventures etc)	
f) extended one-to-one interaction: ☐ (one role model works with one young person over an extended period of time eg mentoring programs)	
g) other: ☐	

2. What are the aims of the program?

3. How or why did the program start?	Details/comments:
4. How long has it been in operation? **5. Is the program still operating?** Yes ☐ No ☐	

RESOURCING & ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

6. What are your funding sources? government grant ☐ business sponsor ☐ public donations ☐ other ☐ **7. What other resources do you use and how are these provided?** (eg time, site costs, travel, publicity, photocopying, evaluations, accommodation etc) **8. What is the operating cost of your program?** (optional)	Details/comments:
9. What agency or institution delivers the program? federal government body ☐ state government body ☐ local government body ☐ non-government agency ☐ not for profit organisation ☐ tertiary education institution ☐ other ☐	
10. Does this program focus only on the use of role models? Yes ☐ No ☐ OR **Does it also have other components?** Yes ☐ No ☐	

11. What organisational structures and staff (apart from the role models) support the program? main coordinator ❑ site or other coordinators ❑ administrative staff ❑ publicity officers ❑ liaison officer ❑ other ❑ **12. Please indicate if any of these staff are:** unpaid volunteers ❑ paid employees of the program ❑ working in the program but paid as part of other duties ❑ other ❑	**Details/comments:**
13. What is the geographical location of the program and its area of coverage? (eg town, region, State etc)	
14. Where does the program operate? own dedicated facility/site ❑ in school(s) ❑ 'neutral' community facility/site ❑ any site - depends on the activity ❑ other ❑	
THE YOUNG PEOPLE	
15. Who are the target group(s) of young people? age: under 12 yrs ❑ 12-14 yrs ❑ 14-18 yrs ❑ 18-24 yrs ❑ over 24 yrs ❑ other ❑ gender: males ❑ females ❑ both genders ❑	

		Details/comments:
ethnicity:		
Mixed - not a criteria	❑	
Aboriginal	❑	
Torres Strait Islanders	❑	
Migrant / ESL	❑	
Other	❑	

other features of target group:		
truants	❑	
homeless	❑	
detainees/offenders:	❑	
one parent families	❑	
physical disability	❑	
intellectual disability	❑	
young mothers	❑	
gifted/talented	❑	
rural/remote	❑	
other	❑	

16. How do young people find out about the program?		

17. How are young people selected for the program?		
all can participate	❑	
self-selected	❑	
application process	❑	
selected by program staff	❑	
nominated by an organisation	❑	
other	❑	

18. Is participation in the program voluntary for the young person? Yes ❑ No ❑	

19. Is parental permission obtained for participation in the program? Yes ❑ No ❑ **20. If YES, how is this obtained?** permission letter/form ❑ telephone contact ❑ other ❑	

21. If NO, why is it not necessary?	**Details/comments:**
22. How many young people are involved in the program at any one time? **23. How many young people have been involved in the program in 1999?** **24. How many young people are involved in the program since it began? (if known)** **25. What are their periods of contact with the program?** (eg 1 x 2 hour presentation, week long camp, 1 hr per week x 10 weeks, etc)	
26. Do you follow-up on young people's progress after the program? Yes ☐ No ☐ **27. If yes, when?** within 3 months ☐ 3-6 months ☐ 6-12 months ☐ after 12 months ☐ other ☐ **28. and how?** interview with young person ☐ survey of young people ☐ informal contact ☐ other ☐ **29. What kinds of information do you seek?**	
THE ROLE MODELS	
30. What are the characteristics of the role models? (eg age, gender, occupation, personal attributes, interests, skills etc)	**Details/comments:**

31. In what way are they role models for the young people?	Details/comments:
32. How are role models located? (eg. via a particular organisation, through newspaper publicity, personal recommendation, because of particular characteristics etc)	
33. What methods are used to screen the role models? by invitation ☐ written application ☐ personal interview ☐ character references ☐ police clearance ☐ other ☐	
34. What problems, if any, do you experience in finding appropriate role models?	
35. Are the role models volunteers? Yes ☐ No ☐ OR paid Yes ☐ No ☐ OR paid as part of another job Yes ☐ No ☐	
36. Who decides what the role models actually do in the program? set activities / content ☐ general guidelines then role models decide ☐ negotiated between role model and young person(s) ☐ role model free to decide ☐ other ☐	
37. How many hours of training do role models receive before working in the program? _____	

	Details/comments:
38. What type of preparation or training do the role models receive <u>before</u> working in the program? none ❑ one-to-one assistance ❑ group preparation session ❑ set formal training program ❑ other ❑	
39. Who provides this training? program coordinator ❑ other role models ❑ paid training providers ❑ other ❑	
40. What assistance or training is provided to role models <u>during</u> the program? none ❑ one-to-one assistance as required ❑ informal group sessions as required ❑ regular meetings/training program ❑ other ❑	
41. Are the role models provided with any written materials about the program and their role in it? Yes ❑ No ❑	
EVALUATION	
42. How effective do you think the program is in terms of meeting its aims?	
43. How do you know this? own observations ❑ formal evaluations ❑ informal feedback from: role models ❑ young people ❑ teachers ❑ parents ❑ other ❑	

44. What aspects of the program do you think have been/are particularly successful?	Details/comments:
45. What types of difficulties has the program encountered and how have they been or might they be resolved?	
46. If you were able to make improvements to the program what improvements would you make?	
47. Please comment on anything else that is important to the operation of this program.	

48. Are there any further comments you would like to make?

Name of person completing this survey: (Please Print)

....

Position in Program: ....

Signature: ....

Date: ....

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

Please return it to us in the envelope provided.

Case study details and guide for interviews

Name of program	No. of young people models interviewed	No. of role & others interviewed	No. of locations/sites visited	State
Sporting Partnerships	5	3	4	WA
Australis Self Made Girls WA	4	4	2	VIC/
Lunch Box (Journey 1)	6	5	2	WA
RAP	4	6	3	NT
GAP Youth Centre	4	7	1	NT
Migrant Resource Centre SHEIRA	1	2	1	TAS
	2	3	2	NT
Scouts Australia	12	9	5	TAS/other states
RecLink	6	7	4	TAS
YOP	10	7	3	WA
BS/BB	2	5	1	NSW

Note. At many of the sites there were young people who were not interviewed but were observed in the process of being involved in the program.

Guide for interviews

[similar questions for all – vary wording to make appropriate, use probes where necessary]

- How did you first become involved with this program?

- What is it like for you to be involved in this program? How do you feel about it?

- Are there some experiences you could tell me about that would help others understand what the program is about?

- What sorts of things do you do (responsibilities do you have) in the program? What is your role? Has it changed over time? In what ways?

- What kinds of activities etc. do you do with the young people? Who decides on the activities etc.?

- What contact do you have with other people involved in the program? (nature and extent of contact)

- What are the role models (young people) like? – their characteristics?

- How do you think this helps the young people?

- Do you see the mentor/leader … as a role model? How do the role models in this program compare with other role models in your life?

- Do you see yourself as a role model? In what way? Do you know how the young people see your role? What have they said about it?

- What positive impact do you think this program has on the young people involved? How do you know this? What are the best things about the program for you? Are there other young people that you think would benefit from a program like this?

- Does it benefit anyone else? e.g. role models, parents, peers etc. In what way(s)?

- Are there any things that stop this program from operating as well as it could? Is there a down side?

- Are there ways this program could be (even) better? Are there things that might improve the program?

- What advice would you give to someone considering being involved in a role model program like this?

- Anything else you think would be of interest to others interested in setting up a program to assist young people?

Appendix D

Features of successful mentoring programs

Phase 1: Establishing a program

Purpose/goals
- well-defined, written purpose statement
- agreed outcomes set with involvement of stakeholders

Planning the program
- written administrative and program procedures – a long-range plan that has community input
- inclusiveness of racial, economic and gender representation as appropriate to the program
- risk management, confidentiality policies and generally accepted accounting practices
- paid or volunteer staff with appropriate skills and written job descriptions

Coordinator or team
- good field staff who liaise between mentors, students, schools and families

Resources
- adequate financial and in-kind resources – time, human and material resources acquired
- staffing based on organisation's goals, needs of mentors and participants, availability of community resources, and staff and other volunteers' skill level
- collaboration with diverse groups such as professional organisations and universities

Phase 2: Selecting, preparing, matching mentors and mentees

Recruitment of mentors
- written eligibility requirements for program participants
- appropriate screening, matching and training
- good match between program goals and mentor expectations

Screening and selection of mentors
- careful selection of potential mentors plus ongoing supervision

Preparing and training mentors
- train mentors and mentees, e.g. active listening skills, learning styles, issues in various phases
- preparation of mentors for the mentoring role with ongoing assistance and training

Selecting mentees
- appropriate to program goals and resources
- personal and parental consent

Preparing mentees
- young people prepared before program regarding expectations and behaviour

Matching mentors and mentees
- sensitive pairing, preferably allowing choice

Phase 3: Implementing a program

Practicalities
- regular, consistent contact between the mentor and mentee
- appropriate location for the mentoring that gives the program an identity and allows for supervision

Activities for mentors and mentees
- specific tasks set up: diversity in activities while still allowing for individual choice
- opportunities for program-supported social activities for mentors and youth

Ongoing support for the program participants
- support system provided for mentors – adequate communication and training
- confidentiality in relationship
- support for mentoring process from school or system e.g. reward system for mentors and mentees

Parent involvement
- family or guardian of the participant support program

Conclusion of the program
- appropriate conclusion and recognition

Phase 4: Evaluating a program

Why evaluate?
- program evaluation and ongoing assessment conducted

Who should do the evaluation?
- all participants involved – preferably independent evaluator

Process and outcome data
- data collected throughout program
- relates to program goals

Using the evaluation data
- used to provide feedback and assess impact

From MacCallum & Beltman (1999, pp.29-30)