Amusement centres and social risk: a survey into the social risks that amusement centres pose for young people who use them

Howard Sercombe


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AMUSEMENT CENTRES AND SOCIAL RISK

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Howard Sercombe

April 1991
Technical Report No 29
ISSN 1036-319X
ISBN 0-7298-0102-0
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This report summarises the findings of a survey amongst respondents connected with the amusement and leisure centre industry in the inner city area of Perth in April 1988.

The survey canvassed perception of the social composition of users of the amusement centres and the pattern of centre usage. It asked questions concerning a number of areas of social concern that are sometimes raised in connection with centres, and canvassed opinion regarding the need for regulation or licensing of centres.

Briefly, the survey found that:

There is no evidence to suggest that amusement centres are in any way connected with drug dealing or usage, nor prostitution or sexual exploitation of young people. On the contrary, such activities are less likely there than at many other venues.

Disorderly conduct of various kinds is rare within centres but is associated with groupings of young people outside some centres with reasonable frequency. This is usually of the order of a fight or of loud abusive language. The cause of this cannot be sheeted home to amusement centres with any surety without significant further research.

Amusement centres satisfy various social and psychological needs of young people which would need to be catered for in other ways if access to these centres were restricted.

There appears to be little call for licensing of centres. Centres within the inner city area appear to be sufficiently rigorous in their own application of adequate standards of behaviour and it does not appear that formal regulation would achieve much further benefit.

Generally, while it is appropriate that the State government maintain a watching brief on centres, little in the way of social policy imperatives seem necessary for inner city centres at this stage.
1.0 INTRODUCTION

From time to time, concern is expressed in the community about the potentially negative effects that amusement arcades may have on the young people who use them. In this context, this survey was carried out amongst informants close to the industry to determine the level of social risk posed to young people. Proprietors of amusement centres, people with close contact with amusement arcades and their clientele such as youth workers and police officers, and users of such centres were targeted for interview.

The issue has been the subject of recent Government inquiry on two occasions in Australia. The results of those inquiries are available in An Inquiry into Amusement Machines (South Australian Department for Community Welfare, December 1981) and Pinball and Electronic Amusement Machines (Department for Community Welfare, Western Australia, 1981). In addition, also in 1981, a series of studies was conducted by the Urban and Social Research Centre at the Footscray Institute of Technology, led by Harry Van Moorst. Dr Van Moorst was also responsible for an earlier study (1974) commissioned by the Sunshine City Council. While not in any way comparing with those studies in scope, this survey does serve to localise the information and to offer up to date comparative and corroborative material.

The terms of reference of the study were given by the context of media comments which raised a potential possibility for drug dealing or sexual exploitation of young people in association with amusement arcades and mooted some form of regulation for the industry. Since the study was completed, further articles in the popular press have appeared, including a feature article in Woman's Day (Gersbach 1988) and an article in The West Australian (Thornton 1990) reporting some comments of a British researcher concerning addiction to machines and the potential for a link between crime and amusement machine use.

Briefly, the task was to survey proprietors of amusement centres in the Central Business District of Perth and key informants (Perth Inner City Youth Service [PICYS] personnel, police officers) familiar with the inner-city youth population, focusing on drug dealing, sexual exploitation, and the question of regulation. Suburban centres and businesses that may have amusement machines but whose primary business is something else were excluded from the survey.
2.0 METHOD

Within the limited scope available for the study, it was not possible to conduct any extensive empirical or quantitative research. This kind of research has been done extensively in the studies already mentioned, and duplicating these studies would not be justified unless the study indicated different conclusions.

The study therefore sought to tap the opinions and perceptions of the people most familiar with the industry and its users by means of structured interview techniques. In some cases, (interviews with Split Second, PICYS streetworkers, the young people, Sgt. Colman) up to three persons were present at the interview and contributed. The views in those schedules should therefore not be seen as individual opinions but to varying degrees a corporate view.

Three groups of respondents were interviewed:

1. Proprietors of amusement centres. All inner city proprietors were interviewed, except one. An interview was sought with the proprietors of Vultrek, but a mutually convenient time could not be arranged within the research deadlines. A copy of the interview schedule was left with an invitation to fill it out as a questionnaire and return it to me.

2. Key informants working in the field were interviewed. They were:

   Rev. George Davies (Uniting Church Youth and Community Services, member and ex-Chair Perth Inner City Youth Service Streetwork Management and PICYS Council)

   Phil Connors (coordinator, PICYS Streetwork team)

   William Kickett with Maria Buckton (streetworkers, PICYS)

   Sgt Bob Colman with Cst. Marcus Murray (Truant patrol, City Police Station)

   Cst Marcus Murray (police officer on beat, City Police Station)

3. Some young people who are regular users of the centres were interviewed at a cafe in Northbridge. Surnames were not recorded. The principal informants were:

   Leslie, 13 yrs;
   Michael, 16 years;
   Jeremy, 13 years.
Coverage of the first two groups was adequate for a study of this scope. Only one interview was conducted with centre users - time lines were too short, and the difficulties of conducting interviews with this group too large to make any comprehensive coverage possible. Even in that interview the form of the schedule had to be abandoned and the discussion allowed to range freely. Nevertheless, this interview provided valuable corroborative evidence.

A separate interview schedule was drafted for each group, though the thrust was similar. The schedules themselves are displayed in Appendix 1.

3.0 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The study is extremely limited in its scope and therefore great care should be taken in generalisation or extrapolation from it. In particular, the following limitations apply.

- The time lines for the research were very short. Further information may modify the results, though the findings are consistent with more extensive studies conducted elsewhere.

- The survey covered only amusement centres in the inner-city area. Suburban centres are now more common and may be worthy of further inquiry, and many instances of cafes or bowling alleys that house a number of amusement machines exist.

- The total number of people surveyed is small.

- The method is able only to expose an association between variables, not a causal link. Thus, for example, there may be an association between truancy and amusement centres, but it would be most unwise to read a causal link without a significantly greater amount of data.

- A study such as this really needs some control studies as well: to look at these questions in association with other places where young people congregate (for example, discos, football matches) and at similar places where adults congregate.

However, it is important to note that even given these limitations, this research corroborates independently and in detail more extensive studies done elsewhere.
4.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

4.1. Inner City Amusement Centres

In April 1988, there were six amusement centres in the inner city and two more in Northbridge. They were as follows.

Timezone. Timezone has premises in William St (between Hay and Murray St intersections), 114 Murray St, and 181 Murray St. Timezone also has centres in Fremantle, Innaloo and Rockingham and is also involved, through its parent company, Leisure and Allied Industries, in the manufacture and distribution of machines.

Split Second. Split Second has premises in William Street (downstairs from Timezone above) and 126 Barrack St.

Club 2000, which is located a couple of doors down from Split Second in Barrack St.

Vultrek, which is located at 106 James St, Northbridge

Quasar Space Games operates from 160 Beaufort St Northbridge. This centre is really outside the hub of the inner-city and will not be considered further.

There are strong similarities and some differences between the centres. The Perth centres all look about the same in size and layout. They have similar machines, though Club 2000 would have fewer of the newest and most advanced games. Vultrek has a kind of combat game worn by the player using an electronic beam/reception system. Vultrek also uses a membership system as a part of its marketing strategy.

Hours of operation in these centres conform closely to the maximum allowable under shop regulations which are 8am - midnight Monday to Saturday and 10am - 8pm on Sundays. Club 2000 and Timezone close an hour earlier in the early part of the week.

Some differences exist in the house rules of each centre which may appear insignificant but have strong consequences. All city centres forbid the consumption of food and drink, and smoking, in the centre, though this is a relatively new thing in Club 2000. Timezone also requires neat dress, which excludes certain kinds of young people. Swearing is forbidden in certain centres. Vultrek allows smoking, eating and drinking in an area set aside for the purpose, and has some foodstuffs on sale, but not in the proximity of the machines.
There is a perception that the degree to which certain classes of young people are welcome in different centres varies. The “lower end of the spectrum” would be least welcome in Timezone, then Split Second, then Club 2000.

4.2. User Profile

A series of questions was asked proprietors and key informants about the social profile of people who use the centres. The data is impressionistic and approximate, but nevertheless indicative. Questions on gender, social class, age and ethnicity were asked.

Generally, Timezone and Split Second cater for a broader clientele with some exclusion at the lower end practised by Timezone. More specific user characteristics are as follows.

Gender
The centres serve a preponderance of young men. Most respondents put the ratio of young men to young women at four to one.

Age
Respondents reported the range of customers to be about 10 to 35 years, with most customers being between 14 and 20. The median age is probably about 15 or 16. No difference is observable between centres.

Ethnicity
The whole range is reported. Asian young people use the centres in good numbers, usually in groups of friends. Southern European young people and other ethnic groups are also regular customers. Aboriginal young people use Club 2000 in larger numbers than any other ethnic group and go there more than any other centre. No ethnic group predominates in any other centre.

Social Class
There is no clear class profile of patrons. It seems that the whole social spectrum uses the centres, though most respondents identify a lower middle class user as typical. Lunchtime office workers form an important source of custom. Some difference in social class appears between centres, with Timezone attracting many middle class young people and Club 2000 catering for many Aboriginal and unemployed young people. In the case of Club 2000 it is possible to speak of a certain clientele that frequents the centre.

The causes of this distribution are complex, but include:
- the degree of tolerance for non-middle-class behaviours;
- some elements of tradition or history associated with Club 2000 in particular (in much the same way as certain hotels become customary for certain social groups, become known as "working class pubs" etc); - other customary venues in the vicinity. (For example, Club 2000 is close to the Railway Hotel, a popular Nyoongar rendezvous), and,
- possibly the perceived social class of the proprietor.

As might be expected, high Aboriginal usage of Club 2000 and of the bottom end of Barrack St in general is not always welcomed by other shopkeepers (including Split Second) and by passers-by.

4.3. Patterns of Usage

Time spent in centres
The amount of time spent in centres varies widely and many informants could not answer the relevant question with any surety. Where answers were given they vary widely. The most likely order of things is that a single visit would last from 10 minutes to 1 1/4 hours. The average time spent in a centre by a regular user might be about 4 to 6 hours a week, with a maximum usage of perhaps 10 hours. Usage is by nature transient, though most users appeared to the respondents to stay for a time then leave rather than to be in and out all night. Most proprietors try to discourage "hanging around" for strictly commercial reasons: it discourages other potential patrons, particularly those likely to have money, and while users are not playing, they're not putting coins into machines either. The terminus of use is dictated by the centre's own closing time and the last bus from town, even for the most dedicated user groups.

Parental Supervision
Users rarely go to centres with parents. Even Timezone, which advertises their premises as Family Leisure Centres, does so in order to promote an image rather than a serious play for an adult market.

Spending
Again, perceptions vary. Timezone's own research indicates that the average amount spent per visit is of the order of $1.40, but the range would be significant. Between $2 and $10 is the likely normal range in an evening for a serious customer.

Day Usage
Daytimes, particularly in the early part of the week, are sparsely attended, except for lunchtimes and some traffic between 8am and 9am.
4.4. Positive Values of Amusement Centre Use

The most common positive value for the centres is that the games they provide are “fun”. They provide for relatively cheap, user-controlled entertainment.

In his interview, Davies suggested a range of positive values: relief from the rest of the world – “a mini-holiday”; an alternative to boredom and inaction; a sense of adventure; psychological benefits of a sense of control or feelings of empowerment; a way of gaining esteem and confidence amongst one’s friends; “an antidote to failure elsewhere” (machines provide clear and tangible measures of progress and skill). He notes the capacity in modern machines for users to write their names if a certain standard is reached, and the affirmation and experience of success that involves.

Many respondents reported values that had little to do with the machines themselves but rather the social facility the centres provide: a rendezvous point for users travelling independently to town, a social venue where participation and therefore expense is not obligatory – you can be with your friends even if you can’t keep up financially.

For the young people, the development of skill in playing machines was regarded as a value in itself, much as a sport might regard an ability to hit an offensive lob or a cover drive as an end in itself.

4.5. Questions of Community Concern

4.5.1. Truancy

At various times in the past (police suggest “about 2 to 3 years ago”) truancy in amusement centres has been a problem.

Proprietors generally discourage use by truants because they are image-conscious, but are faced with the general difficulty of guessing ages, negotiating sports carnival days or dentists appointments, and school refusers. Timezone has an active policy of excluding school age users during the day, even with a dentist’s appointment. Split Second actively warns users of the frequent Truant Patrol visits while Club 2000 simply waits for the patrol to visit.

Most respondents say that the problem of truants using centres is not a significant problem in the inner city, at least since the deployment of the Truancy Patrol.
4.5.2. Disorderly Behaviour

All respondents said that disorderly behaviour within centres is generally limited to expressions of frustration directed at the machines—either expletives or banging the machines. Very occasionally there may be an attempt to open machines to steal from them, or incidents of patrons fighting. There are sometimes problems with patrons who are drunk—most significantly in Club 2000. Mostly problems are solved by a request to leave, or, failing that, by police foot patrols which are generally in close attendance. All sources report that public order is not a problem within centres.

Rather more frequently, problems are experienced in the street outside centres. This is still infrequent, but not rare, outside the William Street venue. It is common outside the Barrack Street places, where often large numbers of people of varying ages gather: police report incidents on most Friday and Saturday nights. Police are called to officiate on average four or five times a week. Fights or loud swearing are the most common incidents.

It should be stressed that no causal link between the activities within the centre and disturbance outside has been asserted by any source, and that both places are close to other possible venues—Hungry Jacks in William Street, the Railway Hotel in Barrack Street.

4.5.3. Drugs

Although the theoretical possibility of drug dealers using centres was admitted, no respondent had ever come across any incident, inside or outside a centre. One proprietor recounted one example of suspicious behaviour early in his proprietorship in which he rang the police—this was the only example available. Most saw centres as too public, too brightly lit and too well policed to be attractive, (even conventional drug use was made difficult by no smoking etc rules) and found the suggestion a little ridiculous.

4.5.4. Prostitution and Sexual Exploitation

No knowledge of any incident, or cause for concern, was recounted by any respondent, whether inside or outside a centre. Other better known and less public venues are available for this kind of activity.

4.5.5. Other Problems

Some other problems were put forward. Some users harassing others for money was a problem if not controlled. One saw cost, and the need for cost-free options in the city as important. Most concern was raised about the situation that sometimes develops with
large and sometimes unruly crowds at the bottom end of Barrack Street, though the link between this and the centres themselves needs further investigation. Some suggested that the situation was a function of the closure of Albert's Tavern anyway, and that congregation there was out of the main pedestrian traffic and probably preferable to many of the alternatives.

Generally, the level of risk that young people were subject to was regarded as minimal. By more than one person, the greatest risk was seen to be spending one's bus money. Amusement arcades were considered a safe place to be.

4.5.6. Regulation

The most prevalent opinion on the question of regulating the industry was that the industry was presently regulating itself very adequately. Some saw a need for having an agreed set of minimum standards and a role for non-industry input into their drafting, but that compliance should still be a matter of self-regulation.

Two respondents favoured licensing (though none liked the possibility of fees) – one proprietor who thought it could contribute to public confidence and remove the lower end of the market, and one police officer.

The proprietor of Timezone emphasised that market forces would ensure that good standards were enforced. The capital investment in the current generation of machines is extensive, with machines costing up to $20,000 each, and ongoing investment in new games is imperative in the face of competition from the home computer. Maintaining high turnover is therefore essential. Centres with a poor public profile have low turnover, and will not survive.

In the opinion of this researcher, policy must take into account the fact that many disadvantaged young people are structurally or formally excluded from many venues, and therefore venues that are accessible and acceptable to them should not be regulated out of existence without acceptable replacement. The problems will not disappear with the disappearance of a venue.
5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The results of the survey itself really need to be prefaced with some introductory comments on the developments within the industry itself.

Much of the disquiet about the amusement centre industry has historical roots in the time of its birth – in the Prohibition period in the United States, and its association there with organised crime and gambling (South Australian D.C.W. 1981: 12-13). A perception of centres being a lucrative part of the seamier side of street life remains. However, for the inner city centres at least, much of that perception appears outdated. Since the development of computer technologies in the 1970s the variety and complexity of games and the realism of computer simulations has increased exponentially. If the old pinball machines are carried at all by the shops, they are now relegated to the back corner in twos and threes.

In the process, the industry has changed. Ownership rather than leasing of machines is more common and a standard investment on a shop floor would be in the vicinity of $150-200,000. With new technologies, game circuitry alone is exchanged when a change of games becomes necessary. A pretty well constant turnover of games is required not only to keep customers interested and their taste for novelty satisfied, but also to keep up with the latest generation of computer realism in the face of stiff competition from within the industry and from the home computer.

In this context, market leader Timezone has developed marketing strategies that depend on community acceptance of centres as “Family Leisure Centres” and is attempting to mainstream amusement centres within the broader leisure industry, to do for amusement arcades what Macdonalds did for hamburger joints. They are therefore extremely sensitive to criticism and spend significant amounts of money on their corporate image. Centres have moved upmarket, and the formula has been successful to the point that other proprietors have been forced to follow, especially in the inner city.

5.1. Social Concerns

It can be safely concluded that young people are in no danger from exposure to drugs or sexual exploitation in amusement centres in the inner city. There are less exposed places for young people absent from school to go: truancy within centres appears not to be a problem at least while the Truancy Patrol is active in the inner city.

Problems associated with interpersonal conflict within centres like harassment for money or arguments appear to be easily managed by effective supervision within the centres.

The only outstanding area of community concern appears to be occasional disorderly behaviour outside the premises, particularly in Barrack Street. There is no suggestion that centres are responsible for these events or contribute in a causal way to them.
Similar kinds of occurrences are observable outside many kinds of late night venues. The Barrack Street situation appears to be partly a subcultural phenomenon associated with the Aboriginal people who meet there, and therefore is probably not threatening to them, though non-Aboriginal users of Split Second and passers-by may well feel intimidated. The actual risk to non-involved users appears not to be significant.

Because amusement centres do cater for a young clientele usually not under parental supervision, it is appropriate for the Government to maintain a watching brief on the industry, either through its welfare officers, police officers or non-Government youth workers. Regulation or further control does not appear to be called for at the present time: not only were the expressed concerns not found to be justified but the operation of market forces in the industry leads in the direction of responsible proprietorship. There would be significant definitional problems with deciding what was an amusement centre and what was not, given the number of businesses that carry small numbers of machines as an adjunct to their main line of business.

5.2. Researcher's Comments

Finally, some comment on the issue itself. There is a significant weight of sociological research and analysis now in evidence on the way that the community reacts to youth issues and behaviours (Mungham & Pearson, 1976; Pearson, 1984; Cohen, 1972; Hall et al, 1978). Van Moorst's 1981 study of "moral panic" about amusement machines highlights this social phenomenon.

Decision makers on youth issues generally need to be aware of the fear and suspicion, and vulnerability that the wider community feels about young people, and to measure their reactions accordingly. Too often youth venues and resources are closed down in response to difficulties which would never result in closure if they happened in association with adult venues. Inadequate and transitory provision for youth is part of the consequence of this kind of reaction.
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6.0 APPENDICES: Interview Schedules

6.1. Proprietors.

AMUSEMENT AND LEISURE CENTRE SURVEY

INTERVIEWING: FROM:
DATE:

1. Can you tell me a little about your own position in the industry and how long you have been involved.

2. What hours are you open?

3. How many staff are in attendance at any one time?

This group of questions is attempting to get a picture of the kinds of young people that use the centre - a customer profile if you like.

4. What would be the approximate male:female ratio among your customers?

5. Do a high proportion of particular ethnic groups use your business? Percentages?

6. What social class would most of your customers fall into?

7. What age group would most of your customers fall into?

Could you draw a diagram of the age profile of your customers?

e.g.

... 10 12 14 16 18 20 ...

8. How much money would most customers spend at the centre in an evening?

This next set of questions asks about the pattern of customer usage - whether they come and go, when they use the centre etc.
9. How much time (total) would most young people spend at your centre in a week?

10. Do school age people come in during school hours? If so, do you have a policy of taking any action?

11. Do customers usually come and go, or stay for a time and leave? For how long?

Now we come to the sensitive areas, areas where there has been social concern raised in various quarters. The survey is confidential, so your views will not be identified, and I would like you to state the case as openly and factually as you can. If you don't know, by all means say so.

12. Do you ever have any problems with disorderly behaviour in the centre? What is the most usual kind of situation that might develop? How do you deal with it?

13. Do situations like this ever develop outside the centre? Or at closing time?

14. Do you believe that drugs are ever traded in your centre? Have any such incidents ever come to your attention? How did/would you act if such an incident came to your attention?

15. Do situations like this ever develop outside the centre? Or at closing time?

16. Have any incidents of people soliciting for the purposes of prostitution (either prostitutes or clients) ever occurred within your centre? Have any such incidents ever come to your attention? How did/would you act if such an incident came to your attention?

17. Do situations like this ever develop outside the centre or at closing time?

18. Have you thought of any problems besides these that you have had to face? How have you responded to them?

19. Concerns have been raised about young people attending amusement centres being at some risk. What do you think is the level of risk?
The next group of questions relates to how the industry might satisfy the concerns that have been raised periodically in the community.

20. Is there a need for guidelines governing conduct in the industry? If yes, whose responsibility do you believe that it is?

21. What form should such guidelines take? (eg regulation, voluntary compliance, licencing of centres etc)

22. Should compliance with an agreed set of standards be compulsory? How should this be enforced?

23. Do you belong to an amusement centre operators association? Which one? Does the association have a code of standards?

24. Does your centre have its own written code of practice? If so, could we have a copy?

25. Would there be any advantages to proprietors or customers if centres were licenced?

26. Are there any other issues that you would like to discuss that haven’t been raised adequately in this interview?
6.2. Key Informants.

AMUSEMENT AND LEISURE CENTRE SURVEY

INTERVIEWING:

FROM

DATE:

1. Can you tell me a little about your own involvement and experience with pinball parlours etc

2. How often would you visit them?

3. Which pinball arcades would you visit regularly?

4. Are all pinball arcades much the same or are there large differences? Could you describe the differences?

This group of questions is attempting to get a picture of the kinds of young people that use the Pinnies.

5. What would be the approximate male:female ratio among the people who go?

6. Do a high proportion of particular ethnic groups, like Italians or Nyoongahs go to any of the centres? Percentages?

7. What social class would most of the people who go fall into?

8. What sort of age would most of them be?

Could you draw a diagram of the age profile of the people who go? e.g.

.... 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24....
9. Do you have any idea of how much money would most young people would spend at arcades in an evening, say?

10. What do you think attracts the young people to the arcades?

11. Do many young people go with their parents?

This next set of questions asks about the pattern of customer usage - whether they come and go, when they use the centre etc.

12. Of those young people who go, how much time (total) would most of them spend at arcades in a week?

13. What would be the maximum time spent at arcades in a week?

14. Do many young people use the centres during the day?

15. Do school age people come in during school hours? If so, does the proprietor do anything?

16. Do people usually come and go, or stay for a time and leave? How long would they stay?

17. Do you think that centres attract young people into the city? Why?

Now we come to the sensitive areas, areas where there has been social concern raised in various quarters. The survey is confidential, so your views will not be identified, and I would like you to state the case as openly and factually as you can. If you don't know, by all means say so.

18. What are the positive contributions that centres make for young people?

19. Are there ever any problems with disorderly behaviour in the centres? What is the most usual kind of situation that might develop?
20. How do the staff deal with it?

21. Do situations like this ever develop outside the centre? Or at closing time? How often?

22. Do you believe that drugs are ever traded in the centres? What sort of drugs? Have any such incidents ever come to your attention?

23. Do you think the management is aware of the problem? Why?

24. Do situations like this ever develop outside the centre? Or at closing time?

25. Do any incidents of people soliciting for the purposes of prostitution (either prostitutes or clients) or of older people wanting to pick up a young person for sex ever occur on the premises? Have any such incidents ever come to your attention?

26. Do you think the management is aware of anything like this? Why?

27. Do situations like this ever develop outside the centre or at closing time?

28. Are there any other problems associated with pinball places that you are aware of?

29. Are the police often called in to deal with situations at centres? How often?

30. Concerns have been raised about young people attending amusement centres being at some risk. What do you think is the level of risk?

The next group of questions is about regulating the industry or setting down guidelines for it.

31. Is there a need for guidelines governing conduct in the industry? If yes, whose responsibility do you believe that it is?

32. What form should such guidelines take? (eg regulation, voluntary compliance, licencing of centres etc)
33. Should compliance with an agreed set of standards be compulsory? How should this be enforced?

34. Would there be any advantages to proprietors or customers if centres were licenced?

35. What is your general opinion of the industry, and its standards of operation in W.A.?

36. Are there any other issues that you would like to discuss that haven't been raised adequately in this interview?
6.3. Users/Young People

AMUSEMENT AND LEISURE CENTRE SURVEY

INTERVIEWING:

AGE:

SUBURB:

OCCUPATION:

DATE:

1. Do you go to the pinnies much?

2. How often would you go?

3. Which pinnies would you go to regularly?

4. Are all the pinnies about the same or are they different? What's the difference between them?

5. How much money would you spend at the pinnies in a night, say?

6. How much would most people you know spend at the pinnies in a night?

7. What do you like about the pinnies?

This next lot of questions is about how kids use the place: whether they come and go, when they use it etc.

8. How much time (total) would you spend at the pinnies a week?

9. How much time would most people you know spend there?

10. Do many young people go there during the day?

11. Do school age kids come in during the day? If so, does the manager do anything?
Now we come to the touchy questions, where people have been asking questions. The survey is confidential, so you can say what you like— as long as its 100% true. No one will ever find out. If you don’t know, that’s OK, just say so. If things happen in one place but not others, let me know, OK?

12. What’s good about the pinnies?

13. Are there ever any problems with fights or hassles or people running amok in the centres? What is the sort of thing that happens?

14. How do the staff deal with it?

15. Do situations like this ever develop outside the centre? Or at closing time? How often?

**********MARS BAR BREAK************

16. Do you believe that any dealing in drugs ever happens in the pinnies? What sort of drugs?
   Have you ever seen it happen?

17. Do you think the management knows its going on? Why?

18. Does dealing ever happen just outside the pinnies or at closing time?

19. Do people cruise the pinnies to pick up a young person for sex at all?
   Have you ever seen it happen?

20. Do you think the management knows that it goes on? Why?

21. Do this sort of cruising ever happen outside the centre or at closing time?

22. Are there any other problems around pinball places that you know about?

23. Are the police often called in to the pinnies? How often?

24. Are any of these problems worse at the pinnies than at other places where young people hang out?
25. Do you think that owners and managers of pinnies should be held to a set of rules on how pinnies should be run, or are they doing ok without it?

26. Is there anything else you want to talk about about the pinnies and how they are run?


24. **


This publication was originally produced by the Western Australian College of Advanced Education's Centre for the Development of Human Resources in November 1990 under ISBN Number 0-7298-0095-4.
