

Youth crisis: Australia's time bomb

IN A deserted back lane a young guy is digging into his worn and torn jeans for the money to pay the dealer for his next fix of heroin.

He got the money to keep his habit going from his tricks — he's a 'cracker' — selling his body to hungry men.

In a run-down derelict building, a young girl cries softly, grieving over the loss of innocence and the abortion that took place only hours ago.

She paid for the abortion with money made from working the streets as a prostitute.

The scene is Sydney or Melbourne. The time is today.

In Bidwell, a satellite suburb of Mt. Drutt, 40 kilometres west of Sydney, two days of rioting by at least 500 children and teenagers terrifies the residents of this Housing Commission Estate. Extremist organisations surface and exploit the situation, recruiting new members to support their racist ideologies.

These scenes represent the hard edge of what could be the greatest social upheaval ever to threaten this nation. The youth of Australia are in trouble. And our future is at risk. In every major city — every capital city and country centre — of Australia the growing problem of our disaffected youth remains unsolved.

Unemployed, bored, the streets become their home

the chemist, the newsagent, the butcher and the supermarket — in a few seconds. The milk bar, where youngsters normally congregate has no seats. In all of Bidwell there is nowhere to sit, except at the pub.

The total population of Bidwell primary and high schools is 2300 — all of whom live within one and a half miles of each other. In Mt. Drutt and the surrounding satellite suburbs there are more than 35,000 chil-

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Police control of young Britons was stepped up this year during the riots

Both the State and Federal Governments have yet to realise the enormous pressure and tension that is building. It's the kind of pressure that contributed to the riots in Britain during the past year. Already social and youth workers here are seriously considering the possibility of a deteriorating social situation that could trigger the same sort of violence in Australia.

Many issues are involved: economics, education, community facilities and support, adequate communication between local communities and governments, unemployment and the role of the family.

Everywhere you look the system is breaking down. Children today face the bleakest future "the lucky country" has ever offered its young with little or no support from anyone.

The suburbs explode

The NSW Housing Commission built thousands of 'ideal' homes in one large sea on the outskirts of Sydney (Mt Drutt), and more than 100,000 people were dumped there — without adequate Government services and facilities and with few local job prospects. Parents often have to be away from home for up to 12 hours a day to earn a living. One in every three families in the area is a single parent family (the largest concentration of single parents in Sydney). In families with two parents, usually both work.

The environment provided by planners is as flat and empty as some of the residents' lives. There are inadequate recreational and cultural facilities in the area. In Bidwell there's not a swing, not a slippery dip, not a seat, not a cricket pitch, not a garbage bin, nothing. No natural features apart from a random planting of straggling trees.

You can see all there is — the milk bar,

Shock Caucus move on NSW reform bill

SYDNEY: Moves within the NSW Labor Party Caucus to present a watered-down version of George Petersen's Bill for Equal Rights for homosexuals has angered Sydney's gay community.

Informed sources say that a new Bill which decriminalises homosexual acts above the age of 18 and, possibly, includes provision for private consensual acts may be presented to the NSW Parliament before the end of the year.

At a meeting called by the Gay Rights Lobby (GRL) more than 25 groups and organisations passed the following resolutions:

1. Equality before the law for male homosexuals is a fundamental and non-negotiable right;
2. Any move in the NSW Parliament which seeks to partially repeal the anti-homosexual laws will and can only be seen as an affirmation of decriminalisation, and is unacceptable and will be opposed totally.

Those at the meeting discussed tactics that could be implemented in the face of the threat posed by an inadequate and discriminatory piece of legislation. Speakers denounced any government moves that would provide an age of consent of 18 years for homosexuals when the age of consent for heterosexuals is 16.

The meeting also discussed a strong media campaign to present the gay community's position, and affirmed support for a rally/demonstration on Wednesday, November 4, at 12.30 p.m. outside Parliament House.



Gerald Leslie Cuthbert

Peter John Parkes

Brutal knife attacks shock community

SYDNEY: Two gay men were brutally murdered in the Eastern suburbs within a three-day period. As Campaign went to press, detectives in charge of the investigations are understood to have few if any leads on the first murder, but have narrowed the killer of the second victim down to two suspects and are hopeful of an arrest soon. Although the murders are similar, there is no evidence to link them.

On Sunday, October 18, the body of Gerald Leslie Cuthbert was found in a friend's flat in Paddington. He had been stabbed 64 times and his throat had been slashed.

According to police, Cuthbert was last seen alive at The Exchange Hotel on Oxford Street in the company of two young men. It is possible Cuthbert went to the friend's flat in Stephen Road, Paddington, with one of the men. The occupants were out of town at the time. When they returned on Sunday night they discovered the body.

The second victim, a 41-year-old schoolteacher, was found gagged, bound and stabbed to death in his Potts Point flat. The post mortem showed Peter John Parkes had eight stab wounds. Detectives think a carving knife missing from a scabbard on the wall was the murder weapon.

Parkes' car, a 1978 Toyota Corolla, was missing and police later found it abandoned near Burwood Park.

Police believe the car was driven away from the flat by the killer. A neighbor saw a well-built man aged about 20 leave the flat at 7 a.m. Wednesday morning.

Members of the gay community are trying to help police find the killers. Warnings have been issued by community leaders. The message is: "Don't go home with strangers." People who may have seen the victims on the nights they were killed are being asked to come forward with any information they may have.

Informed sources say identikit pictures have been prepared of the suspects. Police are now circulating them through the nightspots hoping someone will be able to identify the men.

Homocide Squad detectives on the cases have been to a private showing of the movie *Cruising*, which raised protests from gays around the world when it was released in 1979. It depicts the murders of gay men by a psychotic killer who is being traced by an undercover policeman.

The movie was shown aboard a visiting American naval ship berthed at Garden Bay, Sydney, on October 18 — the night of Gerald Cuthbert's murder. On October 21, detectives are believed to have made inquiries aboard four U.S. ships after learning that several Sydney men were invited aboard and saw the film.

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SYDNEY: A group of 40 demonstrators picketed the American Consulate to protest discriminatory, homophobic US immigration policies — namely Section 212 (a) (4) of the US Immigration and Nationalities Act. The demonstrators were joined by the Gay Liberation Choir who provided a musical message to people passing by and the media. The protest, on September 25, was only one of the scores of protests around the world that weekend. Reports compiled by the Demo Communications Centre in Washington, DC indicate that support was small but widespread. In Amsterdam 100 protestors held a four-hour picket of the US Consulate. Embassies and consulates were also picketed by 10 in Berlin, West Germany; a dozen in Dublin; 10 in Oslo, Norway; 60 in Stockholm, Sweden; 25 in Vienna, Austria and 65 in Toronto, Canada. Some 25 people endured rain in both Wellington, New Zealand and Ottawa, Canada. In the US, protests took place in eight American cities. The New York City protestors were addressed by several city officials including two New York Council members, and the Manhattan Human Rights Commissioner. The Acting Mayor, John Molinari, issued a statement supporting the Parade Committee protest and calling for an immediate end to the Government's discriminatory practices.

"Brutal Knife Attacks Shock Community." Campaign, no. 71, Nov. 1981, pp. 5+. Archives of Sexuality and Gender, link.gale.com/apps/doc/PMVSOS113786081/AHSI?u=slnsw_public&sid=bookmark-AHSI&xid=56b46ed5. Accessed 27 May 2022.