A longitudinal study of behaviour-disordered adolescents and the effects on them of a wilderness-enhanced program

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Chapter 4
The Problem of Finding a Successful Treatment Program for Juvenile Delinquency

There seems to be no 'best' response to juvenile delinquency. Many responses have been tried over the years and, until quite recently, the outlook for remodeling the delinquency problem was pessimistic. The success of programs was limited in alleviating the number of young people involved in at-risk and delinquent behaviour. However, as the complex nature of juvenile delinquency was revealed, it became apparent that different responses were needed for different situations and different individuals.

Incarceration, often the end point of program failure, is not the answer. This seems to create more problems than it solves. Diversion, which usually involves processing the young person outside the juvenile justice system, is a more acceptable alternative. There are many different ways that this is carried out. Some involve police in the sentencing of the young offender, whilst others involve the family of the young person or the victim of the offence. There are some community-based and school-based programs in operation for juvenile delinquents and adolescents at risk. A few of these have a wilderness component. Many of the responses remain univariate and do not reflect the idea that a multivariate approach to intervention may be more suited to dealing with a complex issue like juvenile delinquency.

The problem of juvenile delinquency is an age-old one. Yet the best response to this problem remains undiscovered. Until the mid 1990's there was a pessimistic view about reducing juvenile delinquency. Nothing seemed to work and the tide of juvenile delinquency was not even stemmed let alone reduced despite the large amounts of time and money spent on it (Potas et al, 1990). Then some evidence started to filter in that lightened this gloomy conclusion. Some approaches, on more detailed appraisal, were in fact producing positive results. These tended to be some of the diversion approaches now in accepted use and some non-traditional programs, such as wilderness and job skills programs.
It is now widely accepted that no one response will be effective over the whole gamut of delinquency and that different responses are best in different situations. Generally, responses vary along a continuum from the use of corrective institutions and punishment to counselling and a alternate approaches, with the emphasis being somewhat dependent on public opinion at the time.

4.1 Formal Processing: The Judicial System and Incarceration

It seems clear that formal processing in the judicial system and incarceration are not helpful to the majority of juveniles who find themselves caught up in this process (Juvenile Justice NSW Parliamentary Report, 1992). Incarceration is commital to an institution. Reasons given to justify it include incapacitation, deterrence, punishment, rehabilitation and the protection of society. However the research does not support these ideas. Thomas & Bishop (1984) found no evidence to support the notion that incarceration acted as a deterrent. Research by Kraus (1984) in Australia concurred with their findings and also found no support that detention acted to rehabilitate young offenders. So, in recent years, incarceration has been viewed as a less than acceptable way of working with young offenders.

Placement in a detention centre is generally used as only the last alternative and, in the vast majority of cases, after all else has failed. It is widely acknowledged that incarceration fails to rehabilitate or divert most young offenders from law-breaking careers. Recidivism rates of incarcerated young offenders are high and there seems to be little difference between detention centres and institutional care (Winterdyk & Griffiths, 1984; Jones, 1987; Roberts, 1988). Incarceration can increase antagonism towards authority rather than decrease it. It can also be counterproductive in that the institutions can encourage criminal associations rather than rehabilitate as they are meant to. RD Elliott, cited by Vardon (1988), Magistrate of the Adelaide Juvenile Court, South Australia, argued

'It must be remembered that in the outside world a juvenile lives and works in.....a dilute solution of delinquency.....In an institution, he lives in..... a strong or saturated solution.....where the few leaders are often really bad types'. (P101)
This clearly reflects the differential association theory of Burgess & Akers (1966) discussed in Chapter 3. Another difficulty with incarceration is that the condemnatory labels attached to incarcerated young offenders can cause stigmatisation on return to society (Lemert, 1969).

Incarceration is also very costly. In NSW in 1990, 82% of the Department of Family and Community Services' juvenile justice budget was spent on residential supervision, that is, incarceration. Yet this amount was spent on only 7% of the young offenders who went to court; the other 93% were sentenced in other ways. For the same year, the annual cost of keeping each young person in detention was $A54000 (Potas et al., 1990). Most incarcerated youth are male and have a prior record, that is, they are repeat offenders. The majority is serving sentences for break, enter and steal offences (NSW Department of Juvenile Justice, 1993).

A significant problem with incarceration for young offenders is that the detention centres are usually in the major cities. This means that a great number of the inmates are great distances from their families and communities, thus reducing visits and communication with family and friends. Young offenders cite this loneliness as a key issue (Youth Justice Coalition, 1990).

Perhaps the most important point to realise here is that the great reduction in institutionalisation over the last twenty years has not caused any significant increase in either the general juvenile crime rate or the incidence of serious violent crime (Vardon, 1988). Obviously, incarceration is not effective.

With regard to entry into formal processing system, irrespective of incarceration, West & Farrington (1973), in their study of working-class boys in London, found that a court appearance increased the likelihood of continuing delinquent acts. Latter research reinforced that for many adolescents, the formal processing of deviant acts, through the judicial system, could actually harmful to their development. Tannenbaum (1986) noted this although his insights were given scant attention until more recently. He thought that processing had the capacity to do the opposite of what was intended by labelling the offender, causing an adverse social reaction to them and so perhaps pushing them
further into deviance. Polk (1990) reiterated these thoughts; he warned that any program designed as intervention for delinquent adolescents should above all else do no harm. Because it is now known that most juvenile delinquents do not go on to become adult criminals and they simply grow up and grow out of delinquent acts, less intrusive ways of dealing with offending behaviour are deemed to be more appropriate (Gibbons & Krohn, 1986).

In NSW up to the mid 1970's, most responses to juvenile crime followed the hard-line approach. A report on Juvenile Justice by the Standing Committee on Social Issues to the NSW Legislative Council in 1992 stated that previous policy had consistently focussed

't on the 'end' result, that is, when the offending behaviour has already occurred. Specifically, responses to juvenile crime have tended to concentrate on the policing, adjudication and sentence of the offender rather than on finding consistent and effective strategies to try to prevent offending behaviour ......... such responses have done little to minimise offending behaviour or to curb the costs associated with such behaviour' (p 28).

In latter times other methods of dealing with young offenders have been implemented and incarceration rates have fallen significantly.

These more recent programs had the intention of basing their intervention on some of the clearly linked causative factors of problem behaviour. However, many of these well-intentioned programs have not been adequately formulated in theory and have therefore not gained the desired results. It was outlined in the previous chapter that univariate or atheoretical accounts of juvenile delinquency are inadequate and programs need more than a 'best guess' approach. This indicates again that the best approach to this multivariate phenomenon of juvenile delinquency and problem behaviour is a psychosocial theory which accounts for the many variables identified by the above researchers and others.

All these reasons have lead to considerations of alternative ways of dealing with these young people. In Australia, there has been a move towards decarceration and deinstitutionalisation, that is,
minimising the time young people spend in detention centres and moving them away from institutional care and imprisonment altogether. This has led to a reshaping of public policy and the emergence of a process referred to as diversion (Alder & Polk, 1985).

4.2 Diversion as a More Appropriate Way of Dealing with Juvenile Delinquents

Diversion involves processing juvenile delinquents outside the juvenile justice system and so avoiding the more formal processes, procedures and sanctions of that system. The rationale behind this is twofold. Firstly it avoids the harmful stigmatisation associated with the formal court and detention process. Young people seem to be particularly susceptible to negative labelling, such as 'bad' or 'criminal', and may adopt the attitudes and behaviours expected of someone with that label. Secondly, diversion assists the young person in making reparation for the wrongdoing by trying to bring the offender and victim closer together (Cunneen & White, 1995). There is a growing feeling that sentences should be more proportionate to the crime and should be reconciliatory rather than punitive (O'Connor, 1990).

Diversion is extremely broad in concept and young people can be placed in a wide variety of programs as reparation for their misdoings. Unfortunately, most programs are atheoretical, that is they are not based on specific theories for which evidence is available to suggest that they work. Many programs that are in place have been established on 'gut feelings' or anecdotal evidence, and, as a result, do not fulfil their aims. Much of taxpayers' money is wasted by well-meaning people who simply have not done their homework on what really works. As Short (1986) said 'There is also considerable evidence that community-based programs and interventions for delinquent youth typically experience very high rates of in-program failures' (p246).

This is true in Australia where, even though anecdotal evidence is strong, there is little hard empirical evidence to support this approach. No long-term evaluations have been done to assess the
effectiveness of diversion. Reports from USA are mixed. Most evaluations tend to support the
diversion programs and conclude that delinquency is reduced (Kloury, 1987).

Diversion has received some criticism, as well, through the belief that they are net-widening
processes, bringing many young people, who would otherwise have escaped, into a system of social
control (Binder & Geis, 1985; Alder & Polk, 1985). However, much of this remains conjecture due to
the lack of solid evaluative work.

It is common practice in Australia for young offenders to be so processed in a number of ways. These
include simply a caution or a good behaviour bond, a fine, a number of hours of community service or
a directive to attend counselling or a specific program. Community-based programs are a cheaper
alternative to incarceration and have other advantages. These include less disruption to all facets of
the young person’s life, such as family, schooling, peer relations and life experiences, as well as the
chance to immediately try out newly acquired skills and behaviours and to receive feed-back on their
effectiveness.

4.3 Types of Diversion Programs

4.3.1 Police Cautions

Most cautions by police are given directly to the misbehaving youth on the spot. The problem with
their behaviour is explained to them and they are warned of the consequences that will befall them if
they choose to continue with it. It is felt that this approach has many advantages. It is simple,
immediate, uses few resources and has a high level of success (Carroll, 1994). More formal police
cautions are also used. These involve summoning the offender and their family to the police station
and cautioning the young person in their presence. The caution is officially recorded, so that there is
the implicit threat of a 'record' should any future offences occur.
In South Australia the police have been given powers under the Young Offenders Act 1993 to sentence the offender as well. The victim can be brought into the discussion process and the young person can be directed by the police to apologise, pay compensation to the victim or carry out community work. However, this is really only diversion to another type of formal processing, rather than away from formal processing altogether, so it must be of questionable value.

### 4.3.2 Panels

Panels are used in NSW for minor offences or first offences where the young offender has pleaded guilty. They are a more informal way of dealing with them than the children’s court. The panel generally consists of a police officer, a solicitor, a couple of community members and the offender and their family. Following discussion, the panel may warn or counsel the young person and their family, or ask for a written undertaking to follow specific directions or programs for up to six months.

It seems that this approach is quite effective with Koori offenders. In Victoria, this more culturally-sensitive way of dealing with young aboriginals has been linked to the reduction in the number of Kooris in the juvenile justice system over the same period, in particular the number in detention or in community-based supervision programs (Carroll, 1994).

South Australia and Western Australia were using panels in recent years rather than the children’s court. The rationale behind this was that it was a more informal approach, with many young offenders only being warned and counselled. These panels are now being superceded by family conferences, with an associated shift in emphasis to make the young offenders more responsible for their actions.

In the USA, peer juries are used as essential parts of diversion programs in some places. They hear charges and adjudicate them according to the evidence presented. In Columbia County, Georgia, the jury consists of five jurors under the age of seventeen who are trained by the juvenile court staff. Available evidence suggests that these peer juries are quite capable of dispensing appropriate punishments in non-serious as well as serious cases (Seyfrt, Reichel & Stutts, 1987).
4.3.3 Family Group Conferences

Family group conferences are now a popular approach in dealing with young offenders, although it is uncertain whether the practical applications of this approach are reflecting the true philosophical base of the model in all instances. Again, this intervention appears to be lacking a firm theoretical foundation and evidence based in such theory is not forthcoming.

New Zealand led the way with this innovative diversion scheme (Maxwell & Morris, 1994). The process involves the juvenile offender becoming more accountable for their misdoings by considering the needs of the victim, and empowering the family of the young offender to take responsibility by increasing their participation in the intervention. A family group conference is arranged where the young offender is confronted with their misdoings. Then actions that they can do to make amends are discussed and decided upon. It embodies the notion of shaming them for their action whilst maintaining respect for them as a person. Every effort is made to devise an outcome that is related to, and is proportional to, the offence. Two advantages of this approach are that justice is actually seen to be done, and that it empowers the people present by involving them in the decision-making process. Part of its effectiveness is that it is a culturally-sensitive approach with cultural elders being an important part of the process. This method of dealing with young offenders is also being used with Kooris in the Northern Territory of Australia.

The program was reported in 1989 to be very effective with first-time offenders, but it appeared to have difficulties in successfully managing repeat offenders (Juvenile Justice in NSW, 1992). However, Cunneen reported that New Zealand was using this approach with more serious and persistent offenders, usually after police warnings have already been issued (Cunneen & White, 1995). One can only assume that evaluation over a longer period of time has found the process successful with repeat offenders. It also has resulted in less than 10% of juvenile interventions now entering the Youth Court.
This approach is also on trial in the United Kingdom (Blagg, 1985) and in some states of Australia. In Australia it has been used as a first resort, so has attracted criticism for the time involved and the associated financial burden, as well as net-widening, where more young offenders are more formally processed than they otherwise would be (Cohen, S, 1985). Also it does not appear to be grounded in any theory of problem behaviour and so effective evaluation is lacking.

4.3.4 Probation

When a young offender is released on probation it really means that they are released on a good behaviour bond, that is, they are free to return to their community and family on the proviso that they do not reoffend. Part of their release agreement may be a directive to check in regularly with a parole officer during the time of their probation. This method is also in use with suspended or deferred sentencing, where the young person can avoid the sentence given if they remain ‘clean’ for the entire parole period.

Another approach that was used to try and keep young people from offending was the Day-in-Prison scheme. It was based on the USA ‘Scared Straight’ model. Juvenile repeat offenders spend one day in a gaol, where they are subjected to a body search, spend time alone in a cell and take part in an encounter session with a group of prisoners. Research has not supported this approach. It has been shown to have little impact on recidivism and has traumatised some of the young people involved (Hil & Moyle, 1992; O’Malley, Coventry & Walters, 1993).

Conditional release orders are also used as a transition from incarceration. The rationale is to get the young person back into their community as quickly as possible so reintegration can begin. Day leave and weekend leave are two examples of this approach.
4.3.5 Attendance Centres

This is a type of half-way approach which offers more extensive intervention than probation but less than incarceration. The young offender is allowed to live with their family and is required to attend a local centre every day for a variety of classes in areas such as employment skills and life skills, with counselling and group work sessions. They are required to remain in their homes when not attending the centre. This is an attempt to remove negative peer group pressures that may lead to criminal behaviour. They usually offer specialist counselling as well, in areas such as drug and alcohol abuse.

These programs can be interpreted as punitive because the young person is required to spend time there, however they also represent a more positive approach, as they encourage better use of work and leisure time by providing positive alternatives and by providing positive role models at the centre. However, because there is a wide variety of courses offered in these centres, there is a need to constantly evaluate them to ensure their quality (Muncie & Coventry, 1989). These programs appear to acknowledge that problem behaviour can be a result of thwarted goals and aspirations and mixing with deviant peers. They seek to overcome both these factors by providing education in a more socially-acceptable environment. However, there are many other factors involved in delinquency, and this form of intervention may not be addressing all of the crucial issues.

4.3.6 Community Service Orders

These are a direct alternative to detention. Young offenders may be directed to serve a certain number of hours in community service work as reparation for their wrongful behaviour. These are usually carried out with a community organisation, a local council or a charity, but can sometimes involve working directly for the victim of the offence. This approach is only effective, however, if such organisations are close to the young person’s home. A case worker is now assigned to each young person individually as a key player in the process.
Community service orders have also been criticised for two reasons. They are seen as far more intrusive than the bond or fine that may previously have been used to deal with the young offender (Warner, 1991). Secondly, a breach of the community service order may see a penalty imposed that is more severe than the initial offence warranted (Muncie & Coventry, 1989). However, they are attempts at making juvenile delinquents more accountable for their actions and, for this reason, are gaining wider acceptance today.

4.3.7 Adventure Therapy and Wilderness Programs

Adventure therapy is a broad term used to encompass many forms of an experiential education approach to intervention. Adventure therapy seems to have evolved into three general areas of implementation. The first of these is the adventure-based therapy approach which usually occurs at or very close to the therapy centre. It usually is only part of the total intervention program and is frequently used in conjunction with counselling sessions, group discussions and other approaches deemed effective for that particular problem. The actual adventure experiences tend to be 'contrived', that is, they are designed specifically to meet a certain expected outcome. Typically they include a ropes course, or a day’s canoeing or abseiling. Also, the group members involved in adventure-based therapy can fluctuate, as participants come into and leave the program, as well as just being absent at some of the sessions. Maizell (1988) reported significant improvement in school grades and self-esteem, and a significant reduction in disciplinary referrals, in a twelve-month follow-up following adventure-based counselling with court-involved adolescents. However, Parker (1992) and Ulrich (1992) both reported little or no change after a fairly brief intervention using a ropes course. Because every program is unique, it is difficult to generalise in ascertaining the worth of this type of intervention.
The second area is that of long-term residential camping, where participants are placed in outdoor residential camps or mobile travel units, such as wagon trains or sailing ships, for a considerable length of time. These camps encourage responsibility in providing basic life needs, in fostering cooperation and interdependence and in confronting and dealing with problems encountered in day-to-day living, including coping with consequences of the decisions taken. Studies of this type of intervention are few. One by Caram (1994) dealt with at-risk elementary students and found that the positive effects of the program were largely due to the leadership of the executive director.

The third area of adventure therapy is that of wilderness therapy. Here the intervention takes place in a remote setting and tends to consist of a small, discrete group of participants who learn to co-exist and co-operate over a number of days spent together away from their usual setting. Due to the distances frequently involved in reaching the wilderness area, wilderness therapy is usually limited to one intensive experience with only sporadic if any follow-up therapy.

It focusses on placing adolescents in activities that challenge dysfunctional behaviours and reward functional change. This entails the participant becoming involved in the change process rather than a spectator and this, in turn, results from the adolescent being a voluntary participant. It also means that the activities must be real and meaningful, with natural consequences for all decisions taken, and include time for reflection in order for the change process to be initiated and to continue.

However, a number of programs in existence appear be a mixture of two or three of these areas of adventure therapy rather than a pure model of just one. There are a number of wilderness-type programs for at-risk adolescents and juvenile offenders in Australia. The at-risk population is generally more accessible to social workers and other community groups so more programs are offered to this group. The programs offered are very diverse in nature, evaluative work is generally poor or non-existent and many programs are not based on a sound etiological model. However they
do report anecdotal or short-term results which appear encouraging, and so they are worthy of more rigorous study.

An example is the Shaftsbury Youth Program in South Australia. It runs a term-long program offering weekly sessions with a recreational focus and a guest speaker and culminating in a two-day camp. This is only one of many programs in operation in Australia, most implemented by youth workers earnestly trying to help at-risk youth. The Shaftsbury Youth Program carried out its own six-month evaluation using a self-report questionnaire. The results indicated that the participants felt their behaviour improved and the school counsellors' anecdotal reports supported this (Novick & Glasgow, 1993). However, the program was not based on a sound theoretical footing. It was merely felt by the instigators to be worthwhile. While the participants were reportedly improved, the study lacked a control group, pre and post tests and a lengthy follow-up period. As a result, the conclusions drawn about the success of the program must be, at best, tentative.

This is generally true of many other programs in existence in Australia. They do not have a sound etiological base and their evaluation procedures are questionable. The evidence of success is usually anecdotal or short-term and many use a variety of evaluative instruments whose reliability and validity are a concern. They generally do not have a control group, do not carry out pre and post testings and do not follow up the participants for a considerable time afterwards.

Another example of this type of program is a wilderness-based program run by Bowling & Williams (1993) on the Gold Coast. They reported success but experienced problems in running the program. This was probably a result of insufficient prior research into successful programs in existence, which are based on a sound theoretical framework. The staff afterwards commented that they should have begun with a mission statement. Again no control group was used and no pre and post testing carried out. In fact no testing of any kind was done. Anecdotal evidence of attitude change was reported, although there is no evidence to suggest that this was lasting change as no long-term evaluation was done and no follow-up was included in the program to reinforce the lessons learned in the wilderness.
Most wilderness programs do try to develop skills, knowledge and confidence in the young person. They have been criticised, however, for the difficulty in transferring the new knowledge and attitudes gained in the wilderness back into their family and community life on their return (Cunneen & White, 1995). It seems obvious that follow-up should be an essential ingredient if wanting to ensure the lasting success of a program.

However, even if these and other outdoor and wilderness programs offer promise as a workable method of dealing with young offenders, there are three serious problems to be overcome with the programs before any strong conclusions can be drawn from the literature (Mason & Wilson, 1988). There was evidence of these problems in the two Australian examples just cited.

Firstly, there is a very great variety of programs in existence. They range from one week to months in length, they offer mild to rigorous physical challenges encompassing a broad spectrum of activities. Some may be much more complex programs and may include group discussions, debriefings, problem-solving and goal-setting. Some use wilderness as merely a catalyst to enhance a program focussing on cognitive restructuring. This variety inevitably reduces the generalisation of any research findings. Some are reporting good results, whereas others are not. Most appear to lack a sound theoretical base and so there is a lack of hard evidence to support the anecdotal reports that they are having success.

But this highlights the second problem: that of evaluation. Most lack rigorous evaluation. Most evaluation is anecdotal or short-term (Cianchi, 1991; Mason & Wilson, 1988). There is a decided lack of any long-term research that can show that short-term changes are sustained over time. There is a lack of rigorous research method. There is no control group, no pre and post testing and usually no long-term follow-up testing. The instruments used are often not standardised and are lacking in validity and reliability.

The third problem is the atheoretical foundation of many of these programs, that is, there is little clear explanation of why these programs might work in terms of juvenile delinquency theories. Many are
based on gut feelings and anecdotal evidence, rather than on soundly-based programs which have been proven effective in the past.

Despite these problems, however, Mason & Wilson (1988) conclude

"In summary, it appears that great results have been claimed to emerge from wilderness and survival programs for delinquents. To a lesser extent, program evaluation has revealed that some of these claims are valid and reliable..........(they) do lead to improvements in self-concept and reductions in recidivism rates..........To date these results have only been clearly evidenced within a short time span. Long-term results (over a number of years) are not sufficiently conclusive‘ (p 84).

Despite the harsh criticism of most Australian programs outlined above, there are some wilderness programs in existence that have tried to overcome these problems. The first is a wilderness program in Tasmania called Project Hahn. It does have a sound etiological base and has had fairly rigorous evaluation. With its focus on prevention rather than rehabilitation, it reports success with juvenile offenders (Sveen & Denholm, 1991). It is a program incorporating a wilderness component with an emphasis on positive group dynamics. The project reports a reduction in social alienation and an increase in positive lifestyle habits of most of the participants over a two-year follow-up period. Pre and post testing was done however there was no control group used.

The second program, again with a sound theoretical base, is the South Coast Wilderness Enhanced Program. It uses a wilderness experience as a catalyst and then behaviour modification theory, through cognitive restructuring, social skills and communication, to challenge the attitudes and behaviours of the adolescents in the program. It has been in operation for over five years and has reported short-term success (Rudzats,1991). Their model has been copied in many other parts of Australia. They report great success with their at-risk clientele. Again, however, the evaluation of these programs has been largely anecdotal or short-term. No long-term study has, as yet, been done.
4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the current practices for processing young people who have fallen short of society's behavioural expectations. When the interventions that currently exist are examined, many are found to be atheoretical or simplistic. They are lacking in substance and in an awareness of the need to develop a multivariate solution to juvenile delinquency, which is a complex problem with multivariate origins.

In the last quarter century there has been an over-riding desire to emphasise the welfare side of intervention rather than the punitive side. Incarceration has been shown to be largely ineffective in both deterring youth from engaging in deviant behaviour and from repeating their offences.

Diversion programs have become widespread and their diversity makes generalisations difficult. However, many appear to be atheoretical, that is, not grounded in theory that seeks to explain the nature of juvenile delinquency. For this reason it is difficult to evaluate them efficiently and rigorously. It is difficult to know whether they are, in fact, having a positive effect on delinquency rates or whether they are simply processing youth in another way.

Delinquency is a very complex issue and every individual has different needs and problems. This suggests that a multivariate approach is needed to deal effectively with all the young people presenting themselves for diversion programs through their deviant behaviour. However, many responses remain univariate. For some young people, police cautions may be seen as the most effective deterrent, whereas for others, presenting themselves before a panel or family group conference may be seen as the answer. And for others, the formal processing through the children’s court may be seen as the best alternative. From there, they are mostly directed into some type of program that is hoped will be helpful and redirect them away from their previous misdoings. These programs include attendance centres, community service orders and wilderness or outdoor programs. Most of these approaches are not multivariate. All this is summarised in Figure 4.1.
Figure 4.1 Current Processing Pathways of Juvenile Delinquents
There seems to be an overall lack of substantive evidence of success for all of these intervention programs in existence. All of them seem to experience limitations or problems that can probably be traced back to poor conceptualisation of, or poor development of, the theories of problem behaviour. However, there is the recognition that, whilst most programs have been unsuccessful or only partly successful, there is a need to further explore the nature of the programs that are currently being trialled and that appear to offer some promise. The wilderness-enhanced programs in NSW are worthy of such scrutiny. Some of these programs appear to have a sound theoretical base and, as such, offer hope of surviving rigorous evaluation that may give support to their anecdotal success. The sentiments and conclusions reached so far are very tentative and this long-term, rigorous evaluation is definitely needed.

The following chapter will explain the theoretical base of the wilderness-enhanced programs based on the South Coast Wilderness Enhanced Program in detail. Wilderness programs alone are probably insufficient, but used alongside other elements and incorporated into a multivariate approach, could prove to be a very valuable technique in intervention with juvenile delinquents.