

SECOND REPORT

PROGRESS TOTALS ARC RESOURCE DELIVERY

MAY 1980 TO JANUARY 1981

Housing Resource Area

Legal Resource Area

Income Security Resource Area

ARC RESEARCH AREA:

Shirlee Williams

Sharyn Taylor

Maureen Miller

AR0919

PREAMBLE

The following tabulations have been compiled manually by the ARC Researchers. The purpose of this report is to provide current progressive totals of the ARC Service Delivery. The information from which the tables were compiled was collected by the service deliverers between May 1980 to January 1981. With the exception of 'number of contacts', and the 'number of people requesting assistance' from the Housing, Legal and Income Security Resource Areas, the statistics from each of these areas have been combined. This provides an overall view of the service delivery users, their problems and the subsequent actions taken by the service deliverers.

Table 1 indicates the number of contacts and the number of people to the Resource Areas (Housing, Legal and Income Security).

Table 1 TOTAL CONTACTS TO RESOURCE AREAS COMPARED WITH THE NUMBER OF USERS MAKING THE CONTACTS

Resource Areas	Number of Contacts % N	Number of Users % N
Legal	46.7 (N=379)	45.4 (N=227)
Housing	28.3 (N=230)	27.4 (N=137)
Income Security	25.0 (N=202)	27.2 (N=135)
Total	100.0 (N=811)	100.0 (N=499)

Total number of contacts to the Resource Room = 432 (53.2%)

Total users to the Resource Room = 272 (54.5%)

Users often request help from more than one Resource Area. This means an individual user may be counted once in the Legal totals, once in the Housing totals, and once in the Income Security totals. To eliminate this duplication the number of users was recalculated, counting each user once, regardless of how many areas were contacted. This method indicated that 403 people contacted the three Resource Areas a total of 811 times.

Table 2 summarizes the family types of service users.

Table 2 SUMMARY OF FAMILY TYPES OF SERVICE USERS

Family Type	% N
Single Parent Family (female head)	34.5 (N=139)
Single Parent Family (male head)	3.7 (N=15)
Two Parent Family	15.1 (N=61)
Single person	31.8 (N=128)
No data	14.9 (N=60)
Total	100.0 (N=403)

The single parent family continues to be a majority group using ARC's services. The high percentage of single people requiring help is probably a reflection of the current unemployment levels.

Users within these categories are generally dependent on low pensions and benefits. Users receiving a pension or benefit face increasing difficulties as the number of dependents increase. Table 3 indicates the number of dependent children under 16.

Table 3 NUMBER OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN UNDER 16

	Number of children per family						
	1	2	3	4	5	6 and over	No data
Number of children under 16	70	57	45	18	10	9	66

The average number of children under 16 was 1.4. This is a decrease to the 1979/80 figures. At that time the average number of children under 16 was 2.0¹. This reduction could be due to an increase in young

¹ Williams, S.A., *Resource Delivery Report*, 1980 (unpublished).

single mothers using the ARC services.

Table 4 illustrates the users income source.

Table 4 THE USERS INCOME SOURCE

Source	May 1980 - January 1981 % N
Pension/Benefit*	74.6 (N=301)
Wages	14.2 (N=57)
No Income	3.0 (N=12)
No data	8.2 (N=33)
Total	100.0 (N=403)

*Unemployment Benefit (100)
Special Benefit (8)
Sickness Benefit (16)
Invalid Pension (55)
Aged Pension (10)
Widows Pension (32)
Supporting Parents Benefit (74)

Generally the majority of ARC service delivery users received low fixed incomes. The increases (where applicable) in some pensions and benefits did not raise the income levels above the average wage or the poverty line figures. This could be why the percentage of users receiving a pension or benefit (74.6%) has increased since 1979 (64.8%).²

Table 5 (page 5) illustrates the amount of income received by ARC service delivery users. The users incomes ranged from \$36 to \$290 per week. The average weekly income was \$105.20.

² *Ibid.*

Table 5 INCOME LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY USERS

Amount \$	May 1980 - January 1981 % N
Under \$50	1.8 (N=7)
\$51 to \$70	19.6 (N=79)
\$71 to \$90	14.9 (N=60)
\$91 to \$110	9.4 (N=38)
\$111 to \$130	6.2 (N=25)
\$131 to \$150	3.9 (N=16)
\$151 to \$170	3.0 (N=12)
\$171 to \$190	2.8 (N=11)
\$191 and over	2.0 (N=8)
No income	3.0 (N=12)
No data	33.5 (N=135)
Total	100.0 (N=403)

Although a high percentage of users resided in Housing Commission accommodation (38.4%) a similar number (37.2%) lived in the private housing sector. These users were probably at a greater disadvantage, as high rents reduced their low incomes even further. The percentage of users (16.0%) who live in rooms generally reflects the high number of single people using the services. (See Table 6 page 6.)

Table 6 demonstrates the users' type of accommodation.

Table 6 TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION OCCUPIED BY SERVICE DELIVERY USERS

Type of Accommodation	May 1980 to January 1981 % N
HCV Flat	25.3 (N=102)
HCV House	13.1 (N=53)
Private Flat	17.2 (N=69)
Private House	20.0 (N=81)
Room	16.0 (N=64)
Other (mission, share, caravan)	4.0 (N=16)
Homeless	0.4 (N=2)
No data	4.0 (N=16)
Total	100.0 (N=403)

In Table 7 (page 7) a total of 403 users had 994 problems in the period May 1980 to January 1981. The users requests for help with the basics of living (housing, income, food, clothes and furniture) reflects the inadequacies of their income levels. Requests for help with a legal problem (as recorded by the workers) ranged from the need for money, food, support, representations at courts and home visits.

The problems with which users requested help are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7 NATURE OF REQUEST

Type of Problem	May 1980 - January 1981 % N
Legal Problem	24.6 (N=244)
Pension or Benefit Problem	9.5 (N=95)
Accommodation Problem	17.6 (N=174)
Representation to Authorities/Businesses	11.0 (N=109)
Personal and Family Problems (including child care, health, support)	8.9 (N=89)
Assistance to Meet Debts	7.6 (N=76)
Home Help/Food ³	11.0 (N=109)
Material Aid	7.1 (N=71)
Employment	2.5 (N=25)
Transport	0.2 (N=2)
Total	100.0 (N=994)

³ Some resource workers interpreted home help as; a need for a housekeeper. Other workers interpreted it as; a need for food or household goods.

Actions taken by the workers to assist the service users are illustrated in Tables 8, 9, 10 and 11.

Table 8 REPRESENTATIONS MADE BY SERVICE DELIVERERS

Organisation	May 1980 - January 1981 % N
Social Security/C.E.S./Community Welfare	16.4 (N=82)
Housing Commission of Victoria	22.8 (N=114)
Other Welfare Agencies	28.3 (N=142)
Clerk of Courts	5.4 (N=27)
S.E.C., Gas and Fuel	9.6 (N=48)
Legal Aid/Solicitors/Courts/Police	14.4 (N=72)
Boarding Houses/Estate Agents	0.6 (N=3)
Credit Unions	1.0 (N=5)
Other (schools; doctor, taxis, post office)	1.5 (N=8)
Total	100.0 (N=501)

The large number of representations to other welfare agencies illustrates a high level of assistance required by the users for food, clothing and household goods. This is also highlighted in the number of referrals made to other agencies. The users' difficulties with coping with inadequate incomes and high rents, are further reflected by the by the number of representations and referrals to government agencies (e.g. HCV, Social Security) made by the service deliverers.

Table 9 REFERRALS MADE BY SERVICE DELIVERERS

Organisation	May 1980 - January 1981 % N
Social Security/Community Welfare	14.6 (N=47)
Housing Commission of Victoria	25.1 (N=81)
Other Welfare Agencies	40.9 (N=132)
Clerks of Court	2.5 (N=8)
Credit Union	0.3 (N=1)
Estate Agent/Boarding House	0.9 (N=3)
Courts/Legal Aid/Small Claims Tribunal/ Solicitor	5.3 (N=17)
S.E.C., Gas and Fuel	7.4 (N=24)
Other (hospital, school)	1.5 (N=5)
Internal Referral (Legal Unit, family member, Resource Room)	1.5 (N=5)
Total	100.0 (N=323)

A comparison of the figures in *Resource Delivery Progressive Totals* (internal document) with the current totals indicate a substantial decrease in the number of referrals to the Clerks of Court. In contrast the number of referrals to other welfare agencies has increased. The changes in resource workers and the Resource Room Co-ordinator may have effected these aspects of service delivery.

Information provided by the workers has been summarized in Table 10.

Table 10 INFORMATION PROVIDED BY SERVICE DELIVERERS

Subject	May 1980 - January 1981 % N
Housing	47.8 (N=76)
Peoples' Rights	9.4 (N=15)
Police	2.5 (N=4)
Pensions/Benefits	17.0 (N=27)
Other Agencies	11.9 (N=19)
Legal Aid/Solicitors	1.9 (N=3)
ARC	3.2 (N=5)
Other (education, Gas and Fuel, S.E.C., financial assistance)	6.3 (N=10)
Total	100.0 (N=159)

Other action taken by the workers is indicated in Table 11.

Table 11 OTHER ACTION TAKEN BY WORKERS

Type of Action	May 1980 - January 1981 % N
Telephone calls	45.3 (N=260)
Letters	14.4 (N=83)
Legal Aid Forms	11.0 (N=63)
HCV Forms/Insurance, Pension Benefit Forms	1.0 (N=6)
Appointments made	10.5 (N=60)
Agreements made	1.4 (N=8)
Support/accompanying person/home visits	15.0 (N=86)
Advertisement in Bulletin/transport	1.4 (N=8)
Total	100.0 (N=574)

There were nine recorded instances when help could not be provided. The reasons for this included - no suitable accommodation available; rang Clerks of Court, no money; Salvation Army unable to help; and, Clerks of Court refused help.

Generally service deliverers did not record whether their assistance obtained the necessary help for the users. This was often due to the fact that the workers do not see the users after they have been referred to other agencies and organisations.

The actions taken by the workers illustrate a continuing trend of working for the user, rather than encouraging the user to take the necessary steps themselves. The number of contacts during the nine month period does not highlight a diminishing use of the ARC services. Tabulations indicate that the number of contacts are comparable with 1979 figures in *Resource Delivery Progressive Totals* page 1.