

OPERATION FLINDERS

(A 'make me or break me' experience)

(A project supported by the Australian Crime Prevention Council)

Operation Flinders began in 1991 when 36 teenagers who were seen to be either at risk or inmates of (SAYRAC) South Australian Youth Remand Centre travelled to the Northern Flinders Ranges with staff from the South Australian Education Department and the Australian Army for a 8 day "Experience of a Lifetime" - described as an experience in hope for those who have lost it.

The objective of the exercise was to provide selected young people with the opportunity to undertake a learning experience in an arduous outdoor setting, thus developing their personal awareness of self esteem, motivation, team work and community responsibility.

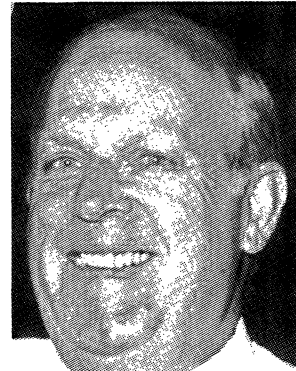
The 1991 initiative was so successful that an expansion saw several other government groups and non-government groups become involved. These included the S.A. Police Star Force, Health Department, Correctional Services, The Adelaide City Mission and the Adnyamathanha Aboriginal Tribe. 1992 saw some 70 young people participate and 1993 hopes to provide places for two groups of 50 each.

Young people spend 8 days in difficult and alien surroundings functioning in a small team with the immediate natural consequences for behaviour opposed to the best interests of the group. Working in a physically demanding team situation, they develop a sense of group responsibility.

The exercise consists of a number of bare bush night camps, at three of which are established specialist stands. The youths are required to walk between the stands carrying all their equipment and two days rations. The walk between camps is some 10-20 kilometres of reasonably difficult terrain. The specialist stands are manned by Police Star Force volunteers (abseiling, rock climbing and bridge building) the Adnyamathanha elders (Bush Tucker, Aboriginal Living and Culture) and an Army Survival Expert (Bush Craft, Water Finding, Trapping and Survival).

The exercises have had very positive results and are being built on all the time. Psychological testing of the youths involved before and after the exercise has revealed that the long term impact of Operation Flinders is most apparent and shows that the aims are being achieved.

The selection process allows nominations from School Counsellors, Specialist Education Department Units, Department of Family and Community Services,



Barry E. Presgrave

Correctional Services, Police, Health and Church and Community Youth Organisations. Nominees undergo a medical and are counselled before and after participation.

The Support Staff are drawn from volunteers from the various institutes mentioned, as well as the Australian Army and South Australian Police Force. All volunteers have the interest of the young people at heart.

In 1992 seventy young people and thirty adults were involved in Operation Flinders, with much help being provided by both State and Federal Government Sources, Business and Community Agencies provided generous support also.

Operation Flinders is seeking sponsorship for this innovative programme. A number of companies have already seen value in providing such support. The project team would like to thank Mitsubishi Motors, Fasta Pasta, Gerard Industries, Paradise Motors, Salisbury Council, Murray Bridge Apex Club, Hindmarsh Youth Services, Family and Community Services, and The Attorney Generals Crime Prevention Unit.

Additional sponsors are welcome to contact:

The Project Manager
Pamela Murray-White
Beafield Education Centre
Gawler Campus
Evanston SA 5116
Phone (085) 226-717
Fax (085) 230-994

or if you would like to help as a volunteer ring Pam, or Contact Bob Kearney - Adelaide Remand Centre on 212-4999, or Barry Presgrave, Elizabeth C.I.B. (08) 207-9400.