



## Media Release

June 19, 2007.

### Forum reveals the impact of drought on young people in Victoria

The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic) and the North Central Local Learning and Employment Network (NCLLEN) are hosting the *Talking about the big dry: A forum for young people to discuss the impact of the drought on them and their communities.*

'Whilst the effects of the drought on rural communities and on the economy have received much media attention, we need to know more about the ways in which drought in Victoria has impacted on young people,' said Georgie Ferrari, CEO, YACVic.

Initiated by young people involved in YACVic, the *Talking About the Big Dry* forum will bring together young people from Melbourne, Bendigo and North Central Victoria to share their stories and present a new perspective on the effects of drought.

'The information we do have tells us that the drought is impacting on young people's access to education and employment, that many young people are working long hours on farm properties to help out. While there are many challenges that previously existed for rural young people many are now feeling the emotional pressures of the stress drought has put on their families and community' said Jerri Nelson, Executive Officer, NCLLEN.

A shearing shed on an active farm near Boort will provide the setting for this important forum, through which young people's experiences and perspectives of drought will be heard.

'For a teenager, the drought has existed for a substantial part of their life. Not only has drought been a strong influence on young peoples experiences to date, but it can also have a strong impact on their sense of optimism for the future' said Georgie Ferrari.

The findings of this forum will be disseminated in a report to government and community more broadly and will assist in improving understanding about the impacts of drought on young people and how they can best be supported.

#### Event Details:

Forum: *Talking about the big dry.*

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2007

Time: 12pm - 3:00pm

Venue: Southerton Vale (a rural property 5 km from Boort).

For further details contact Jen from YACVic on 0402 822 488 or Jerri from NCLLEN on 5491 1144.

**For media comment: contact Georgie Ferrari, CEO YACVic 0411 484 428 or Jerri Nelson, EO North Central Local Learning and Employment Network on 5491 1144.**