

Media Release

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A Voice for Young People at the Federal Level

The 2008-09 Federal Budget includes long overdue investment in young people and the sector that supports them, and puts a much-welcome focus back on young people and the youth sector on the Federal Government's agenda.

The Budget's announcements of \$6.9 million for the establishment of an Office for Youth and \$8 million over four years for the establishment of an Australian Youth Forum will enable ongoing communication to be established between young people, the youth sector and the government.

For many years, young people and the youth sector have struggled to be heard at a federal level in the absence of any office within government dedicated to youth affairs or of funding for a non-government policy advocate.

The Budget indicates that this government is taking young people and the sector that supports them seriously.

YACVic has long advocated for the reinstatement of funding for a national youth peak body that advocates for the youth sector and that supports and enables the direct engagement of young people in policy making.

"Investment in an Office for Youth and an Australian Youth Forum will ensure young people and the issues affecting youth services will be considered in the development of policy at a federal level," says Georgie Ferrari, CEO of the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria.

"YACVic is excited by the new possibilities for meaningful engagement between young people, the youth sector and the Federal Government that these initiatives represent."

“Australia has lacked this kind of independent national structure since the de-funding of the Australian Youth Action and Policy Council in the late 1990s. Now we have the opportunity to ensure that a meaningful voice for young people is reinstated,” says Ms Ferrari.

The substantial investment in education is also a win for young people. YACVic is particularly pleased to see a focus on improving access to vocational education and training options in schools and the phasing out full-fee paying domestic undergraduate places at public universities.

YACVic welcomes initiatives that promote equitable access to higher education for young people and investment in alternative learning pathways.

YACVic notes the significant windfall of \$3.14 billion that the Federal Government anticipates receiving from the “alco-pops” tax and hopes that a good portion of this is used to fund youth initiatives at the federal level in years to come.

“Essentially this is a tax on young people, so it makes sense that this money is used to fund youth services across the country,” says Ms Ferrari.

Georgie Ferrari
Chief Executive Officer, YACVic

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***For comments, please contact Georgie Ferrari, CEO YACVic, on
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