

YIKES!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE YOUTH AFFAIRS COUNCIL OF VICTORIA INC.

Victorian Youth Strategy YACVic's Initial Response for Discussion

As we reported in the last edition of YIKES, the state government has released a discussion paper on the development of a Victorian Youth Strategy. The discussion paper raises issues of direct concern to young people and the youth sector and poses a number of questions.

Responses to the discussion paper will guide further development of the strategy and are due on 18 April 2001. Over the next few weeks YACVic will be preparing our submission to the Minister for Youth Affairs about the development of the Youth Strategy. YACVic has prepared an initial response to provide a starting point for discussion within the sector and we will be running a series of consultations with YACVic members and supporters before we submit a final paper to the government.

On the YACVic website: www.yacvic.org.au you will find our initial response paper and info on the consultations. You can email in your comments or come along to one of the consultations which will be held as follows:

27th March Wesley House, 136 Maude St Shepparton, 10am - 12.00pm (lunch provided)

2nd April at the YACVic Youth Participation Summit, 2pm. North Melbourne Town Hall, cnr Queensbury & Errol Sts. See back page for more info. A specific workshop which is part of the Summit will be held for consultations with people 25 and under.

5th April Melbourne City, North Melbourne Town Hall, 10am - 12.30pm (lunch provided)



Young women's right to

Party safely

Project by the Centre Against Sexual Assault
CASA House

The slogan '*girls can do anything*' continues to attract the attention of young women. And why wouldn't it? The slogan seductively alludes to freedom: freedom of expression; of the reclaiming of space; access to opportunities and participation; of being bold, brash, assertive; and that these attitudes are all that are required to attain this freedom.

Unfortunately, the slogans' alluring appeal means very little for women in the context of public space and licensed premises. Indeed, the Right to Party Safely project, funded by the Victorian Women's Trust, has increased the social awareness of the numbers of young women being sexually assaulted within the context of licensed premises. Hence, the slogan, '*girls can do anything*' belies a freedom which fails to challenge and change the structural, institutional and cultural barriers that systematically exclude women's full and equal participation in social spaces. For many, the slogan offers a sense of celebration, but simultaneously creates standards of performance that are, for many young women, unattainable.

Research gathered for the project revealed that young women feel unsafe at licensed premises. The factors contributing to their lack of safety are multiple and multifaceted: men's behaviour; a culture of tolerance for violence within licensed venues; community and familial attitudes which continue to reinforce a double standard of behavioural expectations between men and women; and cultural norms which regulate the norms of interacting between men and women

According to the participants, many men consciously target women perceived to be vulnerable. Their age, exposure, dress, and appearance were all factors identified as being targets. The spiking of drinks along with other coercive tactics are also regularly practiced. A snap-shot of the problem is highlighted by statistics collected by the Centre Against Sexual Assault. Over a three month period, seventeen women identified being sexually assaulted at or shortly after leaving a licensed venue. Almost 50% of these women believed that they were drugged. For women who have had their drinks spiked, memory loss is often permanent. This hampers the process of recovery for victim/survivors and impacts on police investigations and subsequent convictions.

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About YACVIC

The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria Inc. (YACVic) is the peak body and leading policy advocate on young people's issues in Victoria. YACVic's vision is for a Victorian Community that values and provides opportunity, participation, justice and equity for all young people.

The main function of YACVic is to make representations to government and serve as an advocate for the interests of young people, workers with young people and organisations that provide direct services to young people. YACVic's resources are primarily directed towards policy analysis and development through consultation with its constituency. YACVic also resources the information needs of its members through regular updates and by facilitating networking within and beyond the Victorian youth sector.

YACVic is governed by a volunteer Board and managed by a paid secretariat. The Council's core funding comes from the Victorian Government's Office for Youth and its existence is dependent upon ongoing funding.

Vision statement

Our vision is for a Victorian Community that values and provides opportunity, participation, justice and equity for all young people.

YACVic actively works towards this vision as the peak body and leading policy advocate on young people's issues in Victoria.

Yikes

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Contributions

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*Young women's right to party safely
continued from page 1...*

Participants recognised community and familial attitudes as reinforcing a double standard of acceptable behaviour and morality between men and women. This, the participants argued, was to ensure that sexual desire, sexuality and pleasure was shaped, disciplined, and regulated in order to fulfil traditional gender roles. Participants viewed these traditional gender roles as limited in scope and possibilities.

Gender stereotyping also pits women as provoking violence and assault. The habitual questioning and unfettered 'right' of defence barristers to attack victim/survivors without impunity, on the most personal level, (their character, behaviour, drinking habits and manner of dress) continues to be a pivotal feature of rape trials. These practices present woman as 'undeserving' of justice and just 'asking for it'. They attest to women's reticence to report the crime of sexual assault to the police, or unsafe practices and violence within venues, to management or their families.

Women identified that these systemic practices and societal attitudes, reinforced expectations that young women should be able to predict sexual violence, and are therefore responsible for avoiding and maintaining their own safety. They contribute to the highly gendered and individualised safety precautions taken by women to avoid violence.

The report recognises that whilst there is an increased acceptance of the right of young women to be assertive and independent, attaining this independence involves a constant negotiation and struggle over the use of a shared space. This negotiation is always undertaken in the context of particular structural settings and parameters and exercised within institutional and cultural norms. For young women the site from which they negotiate this space is dictated within a culture that tolerates violence against women. Indeed, sets the parameters of this negotiation. This is the target of the project as it enters its second phase.



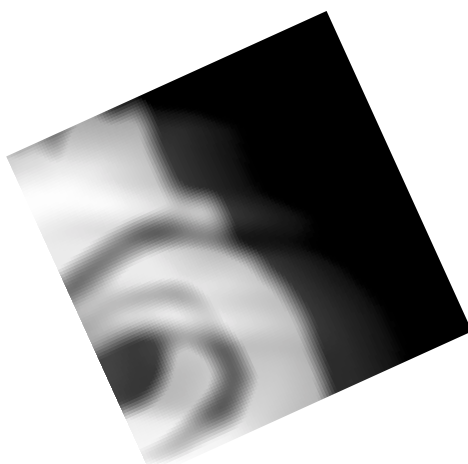
The project continues to affirm the rights of young women to participate in all activities at licensed venues without fearing for their safety. The project prioritises preventative community education: information and training sessions for licensed venues, crowd controllers and schools.

The project views community responsibility as integral to ending violence and sexual assault in licensed venues. This means promoting the rights and safety of patrons; increasing visibility of prevention campaigns; targeting offending behaviour and enforcing legal repercussions.

The struggle lies in creating a culture where sexual violence is not tolerated. Licensed venues have the opportunity to offer young women this social space: to express themselves freely and openly. The project supports young women challenging existing social norms and societal expectations. Those who test these boundaries should not be criticised or condemned for doing so. Young women have the right party safely.

Further information about the The Right To Party project or the report discussed above can be obtained from the Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA House) for a cost of \$10.00 (03) 9347 3066.

Sarah Lantz, Counsellor/Advocate
Project Worker on the *Right to Party Safely* project
CASA House



YACVic profile

Bernadette Walsh is the Deputy Chair of YACVic's Executive Committee and Manager of Connexions a program of Jesuit Social Services. Connexions is a specialist, state wide service based in Collingwood and exists to deal with young people who have extremely complex problems, including mental illness issues, drug and alcohol issues and housing problems in a holistic way.

In the mid nineties, through their work with young people, Jesuit Social Services identified a group of young people who, although they had multiple layers of problems and needed a cross over of service support, were falling out of the social services loop. The idea of Connexions emerged from this experience. Yikes! talks to Bernadette about Connexions, YACVic, the Youth Strategy and Youth Participation.

YIKES! One of the criticisms of government departments is that they are unable to provide a crossover of services, for example drug users who also require mental health support. How does Connexions manage this?

Bernadette: I agree, this is a problem the government is very aware of. One of the reasons that it happens with governments is the way that they're structurally organised. Government departments are organised into single-issue areas and unfortunately because of that, their funding comes down through individual funding streams.

At Connexions we provide a holistic service. We receive funding from a range of those different streams to provide that holistic service. As a manager it is an administrative challenge as we have to be accountable to a range of different areas with different outcome measures and recording mechanisms.

When it comes to the young person, however, we treat them in a holistic way. When they come to the service we treat them as a person with complex needs and not a particular condition. We try to gradually unravel the threads of chaos and pain that they're dealing with and work with them as a person. It means that we have to spend an enormous amount of time, networking and being knowledgeable about different fields. Our staff are very skilled, they know the mental health field well, they know the drug field well and they know the housing field. As you imagine a lot of these young people also have problems with the law, so the staff at this agency really need to be well educated in all of those areas.

We have a range of programs that we offer young people and we are very good at engaging them. We have a small team with different skills, including outreach workers and counsellors, an art program and an outdoor wilderness program and the

"Youth Grow Garden" which is a vocational site so that young people have an opportunity to be engaged with those sorts of activities as well.

YIKES! What do you think of representations of young drug users in the media and what do you think young people can do to change these images?

Bernadette: I think that young people in general get a bad run in the media, regardless of whether they're a drug user or not. Young people historically have been given very bad press. My personal feeling is that it's about what society is afraid of and basically I think that society is afraid of young people in general. That fear is often borne out of them not being able to understand young people and not being able to control young people. They are generally afraid of something they don't really know a lot about.

It's not an issue that only young people should be doing something about, but an issue that that we, in the field and society in general should be doing something about. It's about encouraging media coverage of the positive contribution that young people make.

YIKES! How long have you been involved with YACVic and how did you become involved?

Bernadette: I became involved when I was working for the Centre for Adolescent Health about three or four years ago. I became involved because I had had many years of experience and felt that it was time to contribute back at a macro level.

I've been in a fortunate position because I have seen YACVic go through the change [in 1999 YACVic's funding was withdrawn by the Kennett government and later restored by the Bracks government]. I think that it's quite a privileged position to be in, to have been involved prior to closing down which was a very difficult time and then seeing the organisation emerge again.

One of the fantastic things about YACVic coming back is that in the past the youth field focussed only on youth issues with marginalized and disadvantaged young people, whereas now society and community are starting to see that youth issues are a lot broader than that. The new YACVic is embracing this idea and is wanting to work in the whole youth field, with everyone that works



with young people and that includes schools. I think that it's a really big change, and a good change and I'm happy to be a part of that.

YIKES! You've had a long history of working with disadvantaged young people. What do you see as the main issues facing the young women and men that you work with and have these issues changed significantly over the years?

Bernadette: I have witnessed some huge changes over the last decade and the service system has changed dramatically in that time. The last government and its policies did a lot of damage to the human service area including the youth field. The attempt to apply business methodology to human services, with words like profit, competition and customers, went against the most important principles of working in the field; working together towards the benefit of the young person.

The cuts in education, health, housing and welfare together with increased unemployment has had an affect on workers in the field. I have seen workers become burnt out, tired, disillusioned and powerless to provide the services that they feel most necessary for young people.

My observation is that in many ways disadvantaged young people today mirror the pressures that have arisen in the service system that has been set up to support them. I have seen the loss of opportunity, loss of security, loss of hope and loss of faith in the future. Significantly, there's also a loss of anger.

The community would say that the drug issue is a lot bigger now and I would agree that's true, that 20 years ago it wasn't as prevalent as it is now. That is attributed to the fact that drugs are lot cheaper and more readily accessible so young people are using a lot more (although that's not the case on the street right at this moment in time). *Continued page 6...*

Long Distance Love

Bridie thought it was ultra cute that her boyfriend wanted a mobile so he could easily keep in touch with her.

However, he said he'd been refused phone deals all over town because of some old bill that got stuffed up a few years ago. As he promised to pay the bills, Bridie agreed to take out a mobile phone contract in her name for him to use. The contract lasted 24 months, which was 22 months longer than he hung around. When he split

Bridie couldn't get the phone back from him, but she was at least able to cancel the service stopping him from running up any more bills.

Unfortunately, under the contract Bridie was still responsible to pay the minimum monthly charge for the remainder of the two years. This cost

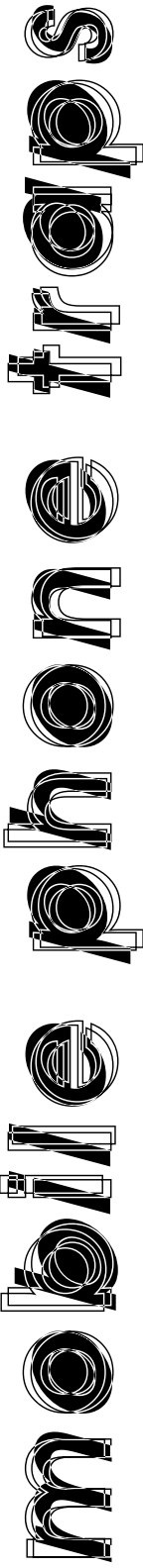
Bridie so much money, she couldn't afford to move out of home, much less get her own mobile phone.

Yackettyack

Emile jumped at the "No-dollar phone" offer and signed up immediately. Emile was totally stoked at being able to keep in touch with his mates and to be onto to any action as it happened.

However, Emile was really burned when the first bill rolled in. He had somehow racked up a phone bill of over \$300 bucks. Although he'd let a few mates use his phone in times of need, most of the calls were his. He'd never realised that he talked so often or for so long on each call. Worse still - even though the phone got disconnected when he failed to pay the bill, the account just kept growing each month with the contract fees.

Emile eventually moved back home just so he could reduce his living costs and pay back the phone company.



There's no such thing as a free phone

Going mobile can mean more independence and instant access to a phone in an emergency can be a lifeline. But mobiles can also end up costing big bucks and leave people saddled with huge debts. This article covers some of the points to think about before getting a mobile and may help you avoid getting caught in a mobile debt spiral.

Top 10 tips for avoiding mobile phone traps

- [1] Before rushing out to get a mobile, work out what you want it for. You can't shop around for the best deal for you if you haven't sussed out what your usage will be.
- [2] So called "free" or "cheap" phone deals may not be all that cheap after you look into the cost of making calls (and other services). Prices for phones and call charges can vary dramatically, so shop around and do your sums carefully to be sure a deal is right for you.
- [3] If you think you will make heaps of calls, then you could consider a mobile contract that connects you to a service with a flat rate cost per month that includes a set amount of calls.
- [4] If you mostly want a phone for emergencies, then you could buy a second hand phone and connect to a carrier with no monthly fees. This way there is no contract and you just pay call costs.
- [5] If you want to avoid being locked into a contract and the risk of huge bills at the end of the month, then look into buying the phone for a flat fee and then paying for your calls upfront. Prices for these pre-phone services can really vary, so shop around.
- [6] If you decide to sign a contract for a phone, remember that it is a legally binding agreement which is likely to be very expensive if you want to it cancel before the full term has expired. Some mobile phone contracts last for 3 years, which is a big commitment, so don't rush in.
- [7] Only sign a mobile contract when you have read it and understood it. Don't just rely on the salesperson's explanation of the contract. As you will be held responsible under the contract for all the bills, you need to check out the contract for yourself. If you can't understand the contract - don't sign it - get independent advice. (See below for sources of advice)
- [8] Remember that mobile contracts that provide you with a phone will have a minimum monthly fee, that keeps being charged even if you have stopped using the phone or have been cut off for non-payment of bills.
- [9] To protect yourself from nasty surprises should your phone be borrowed or even stolen, consider getting your service provider to bar access to international, "info services" and other expensive phone services.
- [10] Be clear about the real cost of any services available to you. If you want extras such as text messaging, voice mail and email, work out exactly how you will be charged and decide whether it is worth it. Again the price of these extra services can vary, so shop around.

Never, never, never agree to take out a mobile contract for another person. If they want a phone, they should take responsibility for it themselves rather than drag someone else into it. If a friend or family member is having no luck getting a phone deal, remind them that there are other options, like a prepaid phone service or buying a second hand phone and connecting normally to a service.

Where to get help and advice...

For referral to a financial counsellor or consumer support worker:

- Financial and Consumer Rights Council (03) 9614 5433
- Credit Helpline (03) 9602 3800

For assistance with complaints:

- Consumer and Business Affairs (03) 9627 6000
- Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (03) 8600 8700

Wimmera

Regional Youth Committee

Regional Youth Committee's (RYC's) are a state government initiative which, according to the Victorian Office For Youth, are there to "provide a state wide network of regional advice on policy, planning and service provision issues relating to young people at the local level".

There are a total of 15 RYC's in Victoria. Their membership is made up from various areas of the community including state and local government, youth service agencies, local media and business people.

Over the past few months YACVic has been attending various Regional Youth Committee meetings across the state including Wimmera. John Ackland is the General Manager of Workco Ltd. and a member of the Wimmera RYC. Over the last three years the Wimmera RYC has identified issues of concern by asking young people what kinds of problems they have in rural and remote areas. YIKES! talks to John about the role Wimmera RYC plays and also the innovative approach his company Workco Ltd has in assisting youth employment in his local area.

The Wimmera RYC covers a huge geographical area, spanning over four local government precincts. The area is scattered with towns ranging in size from Horsham with a population of 13,000 people to smaller towns of under 1,000 to 3,000 people.

John says that transport, health, and employment are some of the main areas the RYC deals with. "Transport has come up as one of the number one issues both for work purposes and social activities, particularly travel from small towns to larger centres, or regional centres". John also believes that an important role of the Wimmera RYC is to assist in providing access points for young people to the local community and facilities, "young people tend to think that things aren't available but I think it's the responsibility for us to try and connect them with the community".

The overall unemployment rate in the region is quite low at 6.8% and even lower in some of the smaller towns. John thinks that this low rate is due to the fact that many people leave town if they are unable to find work. This is particularly the case for young people who are more likely to head off to larger regional centres such as Ballarat, or Melbourne, in search of work.

"There's a perception that there's not a lot of work in the small towns, but as a Job Network provider we can't find people to fill them. Young people often have the perception that there's no work so they leave". This drain of employable people from the region distorts unemployment figures and effects the areas ability to receive funding for employment and training support.

There's also a perception that young people are a failure if they stay in the local area. John believes it's the responsibility of employment and training organisations like to introduce young people to successful local business people to demonstrate that is possible to be a success in a rural area and to encourage young people to come back to the area after having worked in larger towns or cities.

Although based in the Wimmera region, 12 months ago Workco opened an office in Footscray to service the market for job network training in the western suburbs of Melbourne. This also gave the company a unique opportunity to stay in touch with young people from the Wimmera region who had come to work in Melbourne. "We need people to go away and bring skills back. So how do we maintain that contact? Some people might go to Melbourne for two or three years and then wish to come back. If they want to come home we can find them work with another employer. Its about brining the skills back to the country areas".

For young people who choose to stay in the Wimmera region John believes its up to local industry to promote itself to attract potential employees," I don't think that industry sells itself very well in letting young people know what careers are available locally. For example we have a food industry here which has a broad depth of careers available. We need to demonstrate the pathways that young people can take locally."

Regional Youth Committees meet regularly across the state. To get in contact with your local RYC call the Victorian Office for Youth on (03) 9673 3164

Youth Strategy continued from page 1

YACVic's response aims to place young men and young women at the centre of the State government's social policy agenda. Their current concerns, perceptions and responses need to inform the debates and decisions that are occurring throughout the community. We believe that young people should be valued for the contribution that they make today not simply for the potential that they represent in the future.

There has been a sense over the last few years that young people have been excluded from many of the policy debates at the State and Commonwealth levels. They have often been the recipients of decisions that have been made by others. The image of young people that has driven government policy has been of children living at home with their parents, with all the disempowering connotations this carries. If they did not fit this mould, they were seen as 'problems' to be solved. If these problems could be fixed, the dominant image could remain intact.

Many of the issues that affect young people directly have been ignored or subsumed within debates that have mainly dealt with families, economics or welfare.

The principles on which a youth strategy should be based

YACVic believes that any Youth Strategy should be based on a set of principles and a vision for young people in Victoria. These principles are a way of guiding action, setting priorities, enabling the youth sector and other stakeholders to determine the appropriateness of existing programs and planning future initiatives.

YACVic has proposed principles that have been developed over a number of years by YACVic through policy work and consultation. They also

draw on current research in the areas of social policy and community building.

Policies and programs addressed within and stemming from the youth strategy should be:

- Flexible.
- Community-based.
- Democratic/participatory.
- Capacity building.
- Proactive rather than reactive.
- Collaborative.
- Coordinated.
- Sustainable.
- Acknowledging of diversity.

These principles are described in more detail in the YACVic response paper.

Applying the principles

These principles should be used to set priorities, develop programs and projects and determine the effectiveness of initiatives undertaken by government or other agencies. They should act as criteria against which all aspects of the strategy, including existing programs, should be judged. They can be used as a way of auditing any current or existing program in terms of its impact on young people.

The principles can then be applied to all life domains in which young people are involved including:

- Education and training.
- Health.
- Transport.
- Justice.
- Cultural and community activities.
- Housing.

The principles represent a significant change in the way policies and programs have been developed for

young people. There is a shift away from programmatic responses within single sectors or dealing with single issues to an emphasis on enhancing the skills of young people and viewing young men and young women as essential parts of and contributors to communities.

The youth strategy should inform all areas of social and economic policy and planning. It needs to concentrate on the structures and processes that can establish the conditions for young people to become central and active members of the community.

Principles such as the ones outlined above can remain just rhetoric. The challenge is to turn this rhetoric into a reality that underpins and drives the policies and programs of government.

The youth strategy is an opportunity for the State government to redefine its 'social contract' with young people. The idea of a social contract has become significantly skewed over the last few years. The term 'mutual obligation', for example, has little mutuality, in the sense it is not a negotiation between equals. The social model of the youth strategy should be one in which there is an interdependence between young people, government and the wider community. The role of the strategy is to set the conditions that enable young people to work within their communities to manage their affairs by working together.

YACVic's initial response paper, outlined in this article, will form the basis of our submission to the Minister for Youth Affairs. The views presented in our initial response and the principles articulated will be the subject of further consultation with our members through face-to-face meetings and electronic communication. It is proposed that the principles, once agreed to will then be the platform upon which YACVic will develop specific policy proposals.

Bernadette Walsh interview continued from page 3

But the underlying problems are really still the same. Disadvantaged young people are basically still in a lot of pain. They are essentially disconnected from things that are important to them, such as families, school, a home, meaningful work or friends, and because of those turmoils, they use drugs which mask the pain and compound the problem.

YIKES! The YACVic consultations for the state government Youth Strategy are underway. What relevance do you think the Youth Strategy has for young Victorians and how should they get involved?

Bernadette: The Bracks government, from day one, gave indications that they would reverse previous strategies. I think that, in the field, we all felt more optimistic, that a lot of the language would change, and we would see a move away

from competition. Competition is not always a bad thing, its important that people are accountable for their work and their use of public money, but it certainly cut against the air of collaboration that is necessary in the community sector.

The big challenge for the government is to try to have a youth strategy that not only influences the Office for Youth but cuts across the single issue areas of government departments. It needs to have an impact across the whole of government. So we will be looking to see if the strategy is genuine and not just window dressing.

YIKES! You will be attending the YACVic Youth Participation Summit on April 2. What is your understanding of youth participation?

Bernadette: I am very committed to young people participating and being involved in things that concern them. We all have to contribute in

encouraging young people to get involved in areas that affect them.

Young people have an enormous amount to offer but one of the biggest problems that happens in the field is that people tend to deal with it in an all or nothing way. Workers feel that young people need to participate and they tend to hand over whole areas of responsibility, they say "you go away and do that". When it doesn't work they wonder why. As adults we have an equal responsibility to ensure that young people have access to guidance, training, resourcing and support. If adults and health professionals can give up some of the power but also put as much energy into working along side young people, that is when you get the fantastic results that we are capable of together.

Connexions can be contacted on (03) 9415 8700

get youth issues on the agenda!

become a member of YACVic...

YACVic ABN: 39 774 045 170

When you become a member of YACVic you gain invaluable access to a **state wide network** of organisations and individuals who work with young people.

Being a member of YACVic means that you will receive a regular newsletter, policy issues papers, campaign updates and other materials. YACVic members are also encouraged to become involved in our policy development process.

Membership form tax invoice

Having an active youth peak in Victoria with a strong membership base means that your issues will get heard. Join now!

Title First Name Surname Position

Organisation Name Approx No of members in organisation

Address

Suburb/Town State Postcode

Phone Number Fax Number Mobile

Email Website address please tick if you DO NOT want a link to your organisations website included on the YACVic website

I/We agree to the purpose and objectives listed and hereby **renew** **apply** for membership to the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria Inc.

Signature Date

Fees (all prices are GST inclusive)

Organisational

- | | |
|--|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member with annual income up to \$ 20,000 | \$45.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member — with annual income above \$ 20,000 | \$95.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Member — no voting rights | \$95.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Member | \$30.00 |

Individual

- | | |
|--|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member | \$45.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member — Concession | \$15.00 |

Cheques are payable to the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria Inc

TOTAL PAID \$

Areas of policy interest

So that we can actively involve you in our policy discussions please tick one or more boxes:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts, recreation and leisure | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer and finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Multiculturalism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> The law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education and training | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexuality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Substance use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Violence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Young women |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth participation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Media and technology | |

If you are under 25 and would like to be involved in our youth consultation processes tick here

Membership

Membership is renewable on 1st July on a yearly basis

Associate members

Entitled to all printed material dispatched from YACVic. Associate members have no voting rights

Individual and organisational members

Organisational and individual members are entitled to all printed material dispatched from YACVic.

Vision statement

Our vision is for a Victorian Community that values and provides opportunity, participation, justice and equity for all young people.

YACVic actively works towards this vision as the peak body and leading policy advocate on young people's issues in Victoria.

Purpose

To influence the structures which affect young people towards a more equitable distribution of power and resources to young people, recognising that there are wide discrepancies between groups of young people in terms of their access to such power and resources.

Objectives

- To assist young people to participate meaningfully in the various processes which formulate and implement social policy in Victoria.
- To develop a framework which integrates youth affairs into social policy processes and to use that framework to advocate to government and other institutions on matters affecting young people.

- To provide a focus for organisations and individuals who support the purpose statement, to share perspectives on youth affairs issues.
- To provide an information and resource base which will:
 - (a) assist groups of young people working on issues of concern to them;
 - (b) assist service providers to increase their effectiveness;
 - (c) inform the community about issues affecting young people.

>>> youth

Young people have the right to express an opinion!

This summit will bring together young people from schools, organisations, committees, campaigns and projects to share experiences and plan future directions which will extend and enhance the ability of young people to influence the world!

participation

SUMMIT

Monday 2 April, 2001

North Melbourne Town Hall, 10am - 4pm

Corner Queensbury and Errol Sts, North Melbourne.

Catch the No. 57 Tram from Elizabeth St in the city

Contact YACVic on (03) 9612 8999

or see www.yacvic.org.au for more info

YACVic is committed to enhancing the participation of young people in all aspects of Victoria's social and economic life. Towards this goal, YACVic seeks to actively engage young people in the organisations that represent them and that influence the policies and programs that impact on their lives.

This summit will bring together young people from schools, organisations, committees, campaigns and projects to share experiences and plan future directions which will extend and enhance the ability of young people to change the world!

Young people from a diversity of areas are encouraged to attend.

The day will be divided into 3 broad areas:

>>> AT SCHOOL

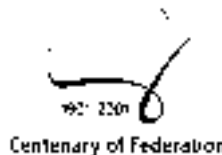
Participation in Student Councils and School Councils

>>> COMMUNITY ACTION

Participation in community organisations & campaigns

>>> WITH THE GOVERNMENT

Getting your voice heard by the government



Knives, Syringes and Bladed Weapons Research Project

In recent times, a significant amount of public and media attention has focussed on the issue of knives and syringes and their use as weapons in various crimes such as assault, robbery and homicide. However, despite growing community concern there has been no specific research conducted in the area, and as such, there is a lack of sound evidence on which to base informed policy decisions.

This project is funded by the Victorian Law Enforcement Drug Fund (VLEDF) aims at addressing the 'knowledge gap' that currently exists. The project has been under development for a number of years originating from recognition by the key industry partners – Victoria Police, RMIT University, the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria and the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons – that the incidence of crimes involving knives, syringes and bladed weapons (KS & BW) was dramatically increasing. Moreover, it has been identified that a

significant proportion of offenders and victims of crimes involving KS & BW are young people.

The overall aim of the research is to provide policy makers with a good understanding of young people's perceptions and attitudes regarding crimes involving KS&BW. In particular it will examine the relationship of the carriage of KS&BW with drugs and alcohol, precursors to offences involving these weapons; how it affects young people; and what can be done to effectively counter the growing incidence of offences of this type.

More specifically, the research will provide an understanding of:

- the extent and nature of the carriage and possession of KS&BW,
- the intent and motivation behind weapon choice, carriage and usage among offenders
- the factors which lead to offences involving KS&BW,
- the impact of drugs and alcohol on the carriage and usage of KS&BW,
- the experience of young people as offenders and as victims of crimes involving KS&BW, and
- successful strategies and practices that help reduce KS&BW crime

If you have any further queries or comments regarding the project and would like to express those, please feel free to contact Brad Astbury, the Project Officer, on (03) 9612 8920 or at bastbury@yacvic.org.au.