

YIKES!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE YOUTH AFFAIRS COUNCIL OF VICTORIA INC.

“I’M NOT RACIST, BUT” Combating Racism and Discrimination

YACVic recently hosted a forum called ‘I’m Not Racist, But - Combating Racism and Discrimination’ in conjunction with the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI). This edition of YIKES! features excerpts from the forum along with a range of other commentary on racism and discrimination.

By Janet Jukes, YACVic Executive Officer

Our racism forum had its genesis long before the actions of the Federal Government in relation to asylum seekers and before the September 11 attacks in the United States. Discriminatory responses to these events largely directed towards Muslim communities, are particularly disturbing. But it’s not just in relation to large-scale incidents that we see racism at work. The problems facing society as a whole occur in everyday settings which include the workplace, schools, universities, recreational and sporting arenas, public transport and so on. It is at this grassroots level that discrimination can be at its most insidious and destructive.

Discrimination can show itself openly in violent behaviour. But it also exists in less obvious forms that may be more difficult to detect - for example, talk of links between ethnicity and crime or unemployment rates. Racism is often the easy answer for some people for the complex problems we face.

Discrimination is learned behaviour. Racism and intolerance have existed for a long time and will unfortunately continue to exist for many years to come but that doesn’t mean that we have to accept it. The good news is that learned behaviour can be changed.

We can draw the line on unacceptable behaviour. However, before we begin the fight, we must detect the problem. The only way to stop the spread of discrimination is to confront it and address the ignorance, jealousy and fear that often promote its spread.

A full report on the racism forum is available on our website www.yacvic.org.au.

More Than Ever

Action On Commitments At Racism Conference Must Be Honoured

Diane Sisley Equal Opportunity Commission Of Victoria (EOCV)

In a message to all Australians on Sunday 23 September concerning the terrorist attack on New York and Washington, the Prime Minister John Howard said that:

“In times of challenge, Australians have always pulled together. Now it is time to pull together with free people and free societies around the world in response to the global threat of terrorism. . . This is not a time for scapegoating groups within our society. Rather it is a time for united action against a common and abhorrent foe.”

While this common foe in the immediate context is hate-filled terrorists, the underlying common and abhorrent foe is racism and racial and religious hatred.

It is racial hatred that is fuelling terrorist actions and it is racism, born out of fear and prejudice, that is giving rise to attacks on Muslims and Arabic speaking Australians, especially women and girls, on mosques, on schools and on community organisations. The EOCV is aware of almost 50 instances of such cowardly attacks since 11 September.

The consequences are that women and girls feel unsafe in public places. Schools have closed down, people have been hospitalised, people are isolated in their homes. It is indeed time, as the Prime Minister said, for united action against a common and abhorrent foe and that foe is racism. We must not let shock, anger and fear distort our fair and humane approach to others. If we respond with fear and hatred, we will be playing into the hands of those who support terrorism. The terrorists will have succeeded.

Ironically at the World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa, on Saturday 8 September, 163 countries from all parts of the world adopted a Declaration and Programme of Action that condemned racism and committed to the implementation of a wide range of measures to combat racism at international, regional and national levels. Australia is one of those committed to this action.

While much has been said about the World Conference Against Racism regarding long standing issues such as slavery, regional conflict and colonialism, what is not so well known is the very real commitments nations have given to introduce measures to prevent and reduce the devastating effects of racism within their own spheres of influence. For example, in adopting the Programme of Action, Australia along with 162 other nations has

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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.

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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If you wish to include an insert or advert in Yikes please contact the YACVic Communications Officer on (03) 9612 8999 or email info@yacvic.org.au

news in brief

National Youth Week small grants

The State Government is offering grants of between \$500 and \$1000 for projects across Victoria for local government, community groups, youth groups, service clubs and individuals to mark National Youth Week, April 7-14, 2002.

In 2001 National Youth Week, almost 100 projects were funded including a surfing competition, mural painting, a karaoke event and a youth arts festival.

The key criteria for funding applications is that young people are involved in the planning and creation of the week's activities.

National Youth Week is a collaboration between Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local governments. The theme for National Youth Week 2001 is "Bring it on".

Applications close on 14 November 2001. Nominations forms are available from www.youth.vic.gov.au, click on 'youth week'.

Grants will be distributed equitably right across Victoria. Enquiries: Jacinta Reddan, 9651 5799 or 0408 330 651

Youth housing consultation update

The Youth Accommodation Working Group met again in September to discuss further the representation of the youth housing sector in Victoria. Adrian Scholtes (Baywest Youth Housing Group) has volunteered to attend the next NYCH Council Meeting in Canberra as the interim Victorian representative. He will be providing a report on the specific issues affecting young people in Victoria. To assist Adrian with this report, YACVic organised a consultation on 1 November, from 11 am to 1 pm at the YACVic office to hear your thoughts on the key issues. Some of the issues we have identified include:

- The Victorian Homelessness Strategy
- Segmented Waiting List
- Affordable housing
- Ongoing Victorian representation at NYCH

This is a great opportunity to highlight the issues concerning housing, homelessness and young

people in Victoria. If you are interested in attending this consultation, or are unable to attend an would like to contribute this process please contact Paula Grogan on 9612 8919 or pgrogan@yacvic.org.au.

Young People Young Dragons: Conversations with Chinese Families and young people on solving intergeneration conflict

The Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne) recently received a grant from the Victorian Multicultural Commission to initiate a new project "Young People Young Dragons". The objective of the project is to raise awareness of the impact of intergenerational and intercultural issues on Chinese families, particularly among the younger generation. The broader aims of the project are to promote family harmony and social connectedness within the Chinese community.

A series of radio programs over a 6 month period will be aired on a fortnightly basis, tentatively scheduled to commence in February 2002. The programs will mainly cover interviews of personal stories of young Chinese people and parents who have experienced and resolved conflicts in the family. People from the community who are successful in 'unconventional' fields of trades such as tradesmen and artists will also be interviewed. Health care professionals such as family counsellors and psychologists will provide talk-back segments in addressing some of the intergenerational and intercultural issues. It is hoped that these radio programs will help parents reflect and revisit their values and beliefs, and ultimately enhance harmony in the family.

Presenters of the SBS Radio Cantonese Group will be responsible for conducting the interviews and very effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of the names of the interviewees.

The project is seeking assistance from service providers in recruiting interviewees for this exciting and challenging project. For more info contact Dorothy Yiu on 98731666.

Student action teams evaluation

The Youth Research Centre (YRC) has just released 'Working Paper 21, Student Action Teams: an Evaluation 1999-2000'. This draws upon two years work with 20 Student Action Teams in Victorian secondary schools. With funding from the Victorian Department of Justice, as part of the (then) Vicsafe Community Safety and Crime Prevention Framework, through the Department of Education, Employment and Training (Victoria) the schools 'were challenged to identify and tackle a school or local issue of community safety'. The YRC acted as evaluators with the program. The Working Paper includes information on the processes of setting up and maintaining Student Action Teams, stories of eleven of the schools, an analysis of program outcomes and learnings against its objectives, and a discussion of several of the issues. Copies are available for \$16 (includes GST, postage and handling) from the Youth Research Centre, Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne 3010. Email inquiries: yrc@edfac.unimelb.edu.au Original Source: 'Youth Research News', v.11, n.2, July 2001. This version sourced from: YOUTH FIELD XPRESS (YFX) July 2001 Issue n. 59 FORUMS:

Young, black and vocal!

The Victorian Indigenous Youth Advisory Council (VIYAC), a forum committed to providing a voice in government for young Indigenous Victorians, is conducting a series of community consultations with Koori youth across the state. The forums are designed to discuss the future role of young Indigenous Victorians in the wider community and government

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Keith Hamilton said that "The consultations are designed to encourage young Indigenous Victorians between the ages of 12 and 25 to join VIYAC and have their concerns, opinions and ideas about their future roles within the community heard,"

"The working party is a joint committee, with representatives from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) and the Victorian Youth Sport and Recreation Association (VAYSAR)," Mr Hamilton said.

VIYAC was established in June 2000 as part of a communique signed between Victorian Premier Steve Bracks and the ATSIC Chairman, Geoff Clark.

"The communique committed the government and ATSIC to providing young Indigenous Australians with an opportunity to voice their opinions, concerns and ideas about their roles in society and government," Mr Hamilton said.

"The VIYAC process will also provide a platform for Indigenous youth to develop skills in committee roles and responsibilities, and assist youth to become the leaders of the future."

Mr Hamilton said the way Victoria's Indigenous people can prosper is by encouraging its young people to take advantage of the opportunities and tackle the problems that will emerge in the 21st Century.

"It is hoped that the VIYAC will provide a forum for young Indigenous people to think about and discuss their future and the future of their community," Mr Hamilton said.

VIYAC Forums (a number have already been held, the following lists consultations for November)

Thornbury

Aborigines Advancement League
2 Watt St
7 November, 4-7pm

Gippsland Warragul

Morwell KODE School
Cnr Hoyle and Harold Street, Morwell
9 November, 11-1pm

Bairnsdale Sale

Lakes Entrance.
Cremin Hall 39
Pike Street Bairnsdale
9 November, 4-7pm

North West Region

Robinvale
Mildura venue to be confirmed
15 November, 4-7pm

Bendigo

Venue to be confirmed
16 November, 4-7pm

Source: Media release from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Wednesday, October 17, 2001

YACVic rural youth summit

YACVic will be holding a rural youth summit on May 9 and 10. We will be calling for abstracts in the coming months. If you are interested in getting involved in this planning of this summit contact YACVic on (03) 9612 8999 or email info@yacvic.org.au

YACVic Policy Advisory Group and Youth Reference Group update

We'd like to extend a BIG thank you to all those who nominated for these two groups, we were overwhelmed by the response. There were in excess of sixty applications for both groups (15 positions are available for each group). This is great news for YACVic as it demonstrates a huge level of interest and enthusiasm from our members.

Our new Board of Governance have formed a committee to determine the selection criteria for based on the terms of reference for each of these groups.

An all day induction workshop is planned for November, so for those of you who have nominated stay tuned!

Gavin Brown has worked for the Victorian Aboriginal Youth Sport and Recreation Organisation (VAYSAR) for the last 8 years. VAYSAR is a community-based organisation that supports and encourages Koori participation in sport and recreation at all levels. This is achieved via an annual sports calendar, sports development grants and by working with both indigenous and non-indigenous groups interested in Koori participation in sport and recreation. This is an edited version of Gavin's speech at YACVic's racism forum.

The local Koori community in Ballarat has produced a video called 'a World of Colour' which contains a series of short films about issues affecting the Aboriginal community in that region. The young people have used a creative form to try to combat racism.

One of the films depicts a young Koori girl being racially abused during a basketball game. At VAYSAR we've come across racism in this form more times than we care to remember. This is the reality of what can happen in sport but the key is how we respond to this behaviour. If you look at the two young people involved in the incident on the video, their main emotion is anger. Fortunately, there was a young woman in the middle who acted in a different way by promoting mediation and cultural awareness training. If it wasn't for her, there could've been a complete outburst in the whole situation. For me, racism is out there but the most important thing is how you react to it.

We used to get invited to a lot of situations like the one shown in the video and we always suggested a mediation type of approach. Sometimes the competition is at fault and sometimes it's a lack of cultural awareness. We've had a lot of incidents where our potentially elite young sports people were not being selected because of who they are - because they are Aboriginal or because they are seen as more of a risk or more maintenance. A lot of people get to the regional level and then struggle from there.

One sport for all

For a long time the structures in sport haven't catered for different cultural groups. They cater for a mono-cultural society where you train on a Tuesday and Thursday and you play on a Saturday. However, in our community funerals come before anything so if a funeral is on a Saturday, some groups may not be able to participate. Factors such as religion do inhibit people playing sports. I went to a multicultural

sporting

cricket meeting the other day to discuss getting more cultural groups involved in cricket. One Greek gentleman told me that in the 1940s and 50s he had to play cricket or football because there were no facilities to play soccer but his main passion was soccer. These are cultural issues and a lack of awareness can breed into racism.

The traditional influence of sport

Sport has a place in all communities. It certainly has a role in the Aboriginal community. A lot of people don't know about the social learning role that sport played traditionally. Sport provided an opportunity to pass on skills, traditions and knowledge because we didn't have a classroom. Coming together has always been a part of the Koori tradition. Historically, a number of tribes who lived in different regions around Victoria would meet at regular times to discuss business and marriages. At these meetings the communities would play a lot of sport.

VAYSAR organise sporting carnivals in a variety of sports such as netball, basketball, swimming and bowling. VAYSAR's annual football and netball carnival, which attracts up to 5,000 people each year, is the largest annual event in the Koori community. This carnival aims to bring the Koori community together. However, people get concerned when they just see us

having a carnival and they ask why people from other cultural backgrounds can't participate. Because other cultures don't tend to have specific carnivals in mainstream sport, there can be a bit of conflict and it can turn into racism.

We have to explain that it's something that's been done for 40,000 plus years and our people do learn from it. It's not just about sport. It gives the young people organisational skills and promotes health. Sport then becomes a vehicle to promote cultural diversity and awareness among many other issues. While you're there you've got 4,000 to 5,000 people watching so you've got a captive audience and you use this to deal with broader issues. Sport has become a vehicle by which we can keep people together.

Achieving equity

Ensuring equity doesn't mean treating everybody the same. To really achieve equity or fairness for people you sometimes have to treat people differently because their experiences are different.

Many people have experienced past discrimination. Because of this, and the legacies that this has left, such as lack of educational and employment opportunities, we have to provide services and support differently to address past and current discrimination. Equity doesn't mean that everybody has to have access to everything. It's about recognising different

diversity

cultures. Just like it is very important to have women-only spaces it's important for different cultures to have their own spaces to develop.

So it's not an unfair advantage or reverse discrimination. We're treating people differently to address past discrimination. The Australian Cricket Board have recognised this. They've acknowledged that Aboriginal people and cricket do not have a great history. The first team that went overseas was an Aboriginal team but since then you have had people like Eddie Gilbert who should've played for Australia but never did. But now they're moving forward.

Addressing racism in sport

To eradicate racism there has to be a new approach within the sporting industry and how it deals with the different cultures that exist. Racism is out there but I'm not trying to point the finger at anybody. It's a matter of awareness and how you react to racism and how you try to eradicate it.

There are many new communities in Australia and they're dealing with language barriers among many other things and sport usually plays a big part in developing their community. You have to go and ask them what sport means to their community. That's what we do in our community. We ask the young people what sport they want to play and how it will fit into their lives.

There is a high percentage of Aboriginal players in the AFL and players like Michael Long and Nicky Winmar did a lot to draw attention to racism on the field. The AFL initiated rules about racial vilification. However, when we asked them to endorse our national football and netball carnival, the AFL declined because they said it doesn't allow other cultures to participate. That's where we have a point of contention. But when we sit down with the Australian Cricket Board they want to talk to us about how they can develop the game within the Aboriginal communities. We respect the cricket culture and they respect our culture and how things need to happen in our community.

Different structures work differently. In some sports, they are quite mechanical and they say if you want to play our sport you play like everyone else. Some organisations come to VAYSAR and say that they want more Aboriginal people playing their sport.

The best way to develop sport within the Aboriginal community is to organise a game within the community. Eventually the team might link up with other teams and it can grow from there. But don't measure success by how many Aboriginal people are playing the sport because that's not the true meaning of participation.

Indigenous leader speaks out in support of refugees

By Lee Smallwood

Illegal immigrants, asylum seekers and boarder protection, tough immigration policy issues continue to dominate public discussion on talk back radio programs, in the newspaper and on television - it shows no sign of abating. The increased concerns over the security of Australia, the community immigration debate and the recent racial attacks toward ethnic groups in Sydney and Adelaide has led Indigenous leader Mick Dodson to speak out against race tensions rising in Australia towards Afghan and middle eastern refugees groups.

Recently at a charity function, Indigenous political leader Mick Dodson highlighted deep concerns for ethnic groups in Australia, following the recent attacks on their place of worship *"This is something that in my opinion is being fostered by the present government's approach to race and cultural difference because they see enormous political advantages in it"*

As a young Indigenous person I support Mick Dodson's statement's. Furthermore, I believe that tolerance must be matched with a deep fundamental respect for human rights of all people, whether or not they are legal or illegal citizens to Australia.

In my opinion the issue of being an illegal or legal citizen is not relevant, but that the people who are arriving into Australian waters are 'human beings' and no matter what country they fled from, it should be Australia's responsibility as a rescuing nation to provide a more humanitarian response.

I believe Indigenous people "empathise" with these people. Since 1788 Indigenous people have faced inequality for the past 200 years and still today continue to be the most disadvantage and unequal citizens of Australia with the continuing disadvantage of the impact of two centuries of dispossession, discrimination and denial of basic human rights services such medical, dental, housing, education, health, citizenship rights and equality rights.

we were all migrants once!

Kavitha Chandra is a youth worker at the Western Young People's Independent Network (WYPIN). WYPIN is a youth organisation in the western region working with refugee and migrant young people. Kavitha has recently returned from the World Conference against Racism in South Africa where she attended the Youth Summit. Ervina Lay is a member of WYPIN and has been involved in WYPIN's anti-racism education programs. She is a strong advocate of refugee and migrant youth issues through Rotary. This is an edited version of Kavitha and Ervina's presentation to the YACVic racism forum.

Turn around and introduce yourself to the person on your right and tell them your ethnic background.

When WYPIN works in schools we get young people to do this exercise to show them how diverse the Australian population is. We think this is how we can begin to address racism. We need to acknowledge that all Australians, except Indigenous people, have a migrant and refugee history. There is simply no room for racism in Australia!

WYPIN is a group of young people who are interested in challenging racism and raising awareness of the needs of refugee and migrant young people in the western region. WYPIN has worked with schools using popular music and art to explore issues of identity and tolerance. WYPIN also performs 'Time & Space' to raise awareness in the mainstream community about why refugees come to Australia and how racism impacts on their lives.

These programs have also helped refugee young people to understand that Indigenous people were the first Australians and that Anglo-Australians were also once new settlers and migrants.

Acknowledging racism

One of the great things about the recent World Conference Against Racism was that there were over 700 young people from all over the world who were not afraid to talk about racism. Today's forum provides another opportunity for us to confront the issue of racism and to work

together to fight racism both here and across the world.

At WYPIN we think it's really important to acknowledge the seriousness of racism. In Australia race is often only discussed in reaction to particular events. Perhaps people fear talking about racism because it challenges Australia's multicultural image. However, one of the key recommendations made at the World Conference Against Racism was the need to openly talk about racism and to document incidents. The following story illustrates how voices can be silenced.

There was an article in The Age recently about the experience of young refugees at schools in Melbourne. The young people spoke very openly and bravely about their experiences which included police harassment and discrimination at school. Although the schools were not named in the article, some of these young people were told by their teachers that they had made the school look bad. This is one way of challenging what they had to say. Even when young people raise racism as an issue it is often not well received.

Young people's stories

Racism reinforces young people's feelings of insecurity and discomfort and can create a feeling of not being a part of the mainstream community. This can result in young people feeling isolated. Racism can seriously impact on young people's mental health and development.

The recent attacks in America highlight this issue. A number of young people of Muslim background ring WYPIN asking 'should I go to school wearing my hijab'? Some young people on their way to school have not been allowed on the bus because of their Muslim appearance.

Racism is an ongoing problem for many young people. The following quotes provide examples of the types of discrimination that some young people deal with on a regular basis:

Just because I am of African background people stop me in the street and ask me if I am a runner.

(16 year old young person of Eritrean background)

People automatically assume that I can't speak English and speak to me really slowly, just because I wear a hijab.

(18 year old young person of Somali background)

Young women are often forced to deal with both race and gender issues.

I am made to feel ashamed for wearing traditional clothes, such as my hijab.

(17 year old woman of Somali background)

I am sick of people thinking that just because I a Muslim woman I am oppressed.

(Young woman born in Somalia)

This overt racism is obviously hurtful and damaging. However, more subtle forms of institutionalised and structural racism can be as difficult to cope with. For example, many Muslim young women have complained of not getting jobs in fast food chains because they wear a hijab. When they go to interviews without a hijab they get the job. Relations between police and young people are also often affected by racist attitudes:

I am of East Timorese background. The police automatically I think I am a drug dealer when they see me walking in the street. I am sick of being asked for ID.

(East Timorese young person 21 years)

I will be walking in my neighbourhood and just because I am black I get pulled over by the police and asked for ID and where I am going. In my culture we don't look directly in people's eyes when you speak to them, you look down as a form of deference.

(Eritrean young person 17 years)

Another critical issue is education. Many refugee young people have had their schooling disrupted due to war in their home country or because they have had to escape their country and then live in refugee camps. As a result, many may be pre-literate or have limited language and literacy skills and they may find it difficult to settle into mainstream schooling. Limited funding to address the specific learning needs of refugee young people results in high numbers of refugee young people failing to complete their VCE. This limits their ability to access further education and employment opportunities and to participate more fully in the community.

Financial problems can also impact on young people. One young Vietnamese man said 'I need to leave school and look for a job to support my

family'. Because he has recently arrived in Australia, he must wait 2 years before being eligible for Austudy and social security benefits. However, as money at home is limited, he feels pressured to leave school to help his family out. Desperate for work and with limited language skills this young person is vulnerable to low paid work.

My Uncle sold his work tractor to enable me to flee Afghanistan, hoping that once I reached Australia I would be able to help him and my family get out of Afghanistan. I now must wait three years before I even know if I will be able to stay in Australia and then maybe another 3 years before I can be reunited with my family.

(Afghani young person, 17 years).

Although meeting the definition of a refugee, this young person like thousands others have been given Temporary Protection Visas by the Australian Government. The 2-year waiting period for income security and the Temporary Protection Visas are punitive policies that ultimately discriminate against vulnerable newly arrived migrants rather than supporting them to settle into Australia.

How to begin to combat racism

So is it all depressing news? No. There are thousand of people all over the world who think that racism sucks and that it is a fundamental abuse of people's basic human rights.

At WYPIN we speak to schools and young people and do plays to educate people about how racism affects young people. WYPIN is also keen to see the issue of racism discussed more widely and we will continue to raise this issue with government and community agencies.

Today, we can start to give young people a voice to express their experiences of racism and together we can fight racism both here and across the world.

Contact WYPIN

Kavitha Chandra
Level 2, 289 Barkly Street,
Footscray VIC 3011
Ph (03) 9362 0257
email: wy-pin@vicnet.net.au

RESOURCES on dealing with racism

■ The *Victorian Government's sport web portal* has information on programs for **indigenous young people and sport**. Go to <http://www.sport.vic.gov.au> and do a key word search for "indigenous".

■ *Boomerang Magazine* is an online magazine for **international students** in Australia published by IDP Education Australia and APN Educational Media. Go to <http://www.boomerangmagazine.com.au> and follow the links to *Student Tips*. There is an article called *Is racism affecting you?* under the "Adjusting to life in Australia" menu.

■ *Racism No Way* is a website project which aims to assist school communities and education systems to recognise and address **racism in the learning environment**. The project is an initiative of the Chief Executive Officers of education systems across Australia. For more info see <http://www.racismnoway.com.au>

■ The *Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria* is responsible for **eliminating discrimination in Victoria**. It is a statutory body and reports to the Victorian Parliament through the state Attorney-General. The EOCV offers information, training and education programs, conduct research and provide legal and policy advice. They also provide free and impartial complaint resolution services. For more info <http://www.eoc.vic.gov.au>

■ The *UN World Conference Against Racism* was held in Durban, South Africa, August 31 - September 7, 2001. This conference attempted to create a **new world vision for the fight against racism** in the twenty-first century. For more info see <http://www.un.org/WCAR/>

More than ever, action on commitments at racism conference must be honoured

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pledged to take concrete action to eliminate racism in the workplace. In Victoria, 64% of all complaints of racial discrimination occur in the workplace. Further, the unemployment rate for indigenous Australians is 23% compared to 9% for non-indigenous Australians. Clearly concrete action is required to redress these inequities.

Australia pledged to facilitate family reunification for migrants with due regard to the desire of many to have independent status. However, given the proposed changes to family reunification rules, only those with significant financial resources will be able to bring their aged parents to Australia. This is hardly equitable.

Australia reaffirmed its obligations under international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law relating to refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons and to provide them with protection and assistance in an equitable manner. Australia also pledged to recognise the racism that refugees may face as they endeavour to engage in the life of their host country, to develop strategies to address this discrimination and to facilitate the full enjoyment of the human rights of refugees in accordance with international obligations.

To honour this pledge, Australia is going to have to think carefully and clearly about how it is currently treating refugees. Is it equitable for one refugee to have access to English classes and assistance with finding work and another not, or to have access to settlement services and another not, simply based on where they applied for refugee status? What is the impact of a temporary visa on a refugee seeking work? The EOCV is aware that refugees are being refused employment because they are on temporary visas. We have also received reports that people on temporary visas are treated less favourably in accessing accommodation and receiving goods and services. Clearly concrete action is required to overcome these barriers in order to provide protection and assistance in an equitable manner. The proposed Border Protection and related legislation will further add to the barriers facing genuine refugees fleeing oppressive regimes.

Australia pledged to ensure full equality of all before the law, eliminate barriers to accessing judicial and administrative tribunals dealing with grievances and to providing victims of discrimination free legal assistance in civil and administrative cases.

“Australia reaffirmed its obligations under international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law relating to refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons and to provide them with protection and assistance in an equitable manner.”

Given the current over representation of indigenous people in the criminal justice system, the increasing frequency with which young people from particular cultural groups are coming into contact with law enforcement agencies, and limited access to private or public legal assistance, concrete and effective steps are clearly required to fulfil this commitment.

Australia pledged to implement all necessary measures to promote, protect, and ensure the enjoyment and exercise by indigenous Australians of their human rights on the basis of equality and non-discrimination. Given that indigenous Australians face significant discrimination and do not enjoy equity in relation to, for example, health (infant mortality rate is 3-5 times higher for indigenous children than that for non-indigenous children), education (23% of indigenous adults possess post-school qualifications, compared with 40% of non-indigenous adults) and housing (in 1996 only 31% of indigenous families owned their home, compared with 71% of all Australian families). Much concrete action is required to redress this situation and honour the commitment made.

To its credit Australia at the World Conference lead the work on commitments in relation to education to combat racism and to ensure equity in educational outcomes. But to be effective the concrete actions required to change racist attitudes and behaviours must be serious, systematic and sustained. We must learn from the successes and failures of the past. Once-off grants to community groups to undertake unconnected activities will not lead to the systematic behavioural change required. We need to learn from those campaigns that have changed behaviour and perhaps attitudes, campaigns against the road toll, smoking and skin cancer, anything less will be ineffective.

But there were other pledges to combat racism agreed on at Durban. Significantly in view of the events of 11 September, Australia along with the 162 other countries pledged to intensify efforts to bring to justice perpetrators of neo fascist, nationalistic ideologies which promote racial hatred at the national and international level and to bring perpetrators before national and international tribunals, including the International Criminal Court. Australia is yet to ratify the Statute of the International Criminal Court, although it has committed to eventual ratification.

Australia and all other nations undertook to develop national action plans to fully implement the provisions of the Declaration and Programme of Action. An annual report on this implementation is to be prepared by the High Commission on Human Rights and to be presented to the United Nations General Assembly. The Australian Government, indeed all States and Territory and Governments are now obliged to develop Action plans to implement the pledges committed to. We must encourage and monitor this work to ensure that it occurs and that it is appropriate and effective.

Mary Robinson in a speech prior to the conference made a prescient observation. *“If truth is the first casualty of war, then observance of human rights norms is one of the first casualties of conflicts.”* We must not let this happen. Hate and terrorism will only be defeated when there is real, actual and genuine recognition of the position and rights of others who are different in some way from us.

Clearly given the terrorist attack on NY and Washington, it is absolutely vital that the commitments made at the World Conference Against Racism, are kept.

The commitments made by the nations of the world at this conference speak directly to the critical issues we now face.

Reflections

on the World Conference Against Racism

by Kavitha Chandra, WYPIN

One of the great things about the recent World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) was that there were over 700 young people from all over the world who were not afraid to talk about racism. At the NGO conference over 5,000 representatives from all around the world participated, indicating the significance and importance given to combating racism.

The conference highlighted the insidious nature and prevalence of racism and discrimination all over the world. It was also an invaluable opportunity for organisations and individuals to share their experiences of combating racism and lobby governments present for UN WCAR.

The conference reiterated that racism is a fundamental abuse of young people's human rights and the seriousness of racism and impact of racism on a young person's mental health and development should not be understated.

Held in South Africa it was amazing to hear the stories of young people who had lived through and survived apartheid and in post-apartheid continue to fight for their rights to land and economic participation. The use of personal testimonies and hearings was an especially powerful way of reflecting on the injustices of racism.

At the WCAR a number of agencies highlighted the benefits of using drama and hip-hop music as a community education anti-racism tool. Another innovative campaign was one by the British Council in the UK, titled "Kick It Out" that acknowledged the level of racism in football at both the international and local level, where it often prevents black young people participating.

Indigenous Australian representatives raised issues such as mandatory sentencing and deaths in custody which were supported by US representatives who argued against 60% of the US prison population being coloured.

Coincidentally the conference occurred in the same week of the Tampa boat situation. Australia's treatment of the Tampa boat people was strongly condemned at the conference as discriminatory towards asylum seekers and in breach of Australia's obligations to the UN Refugee Convention. For young Australians at the conference this was extremely embarrassing but for those of us who work in the area it was only part of the story of discrimination that refugees coming to Australia now face.

Although Australia was represented at the WCAR compared to the USA and Canada representation by community agencies was small. To a certain extent this reflects the lack of commitment and support by the current federal government to take racism seriously as well as by meeting its international human rights obligations through the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and belittling the International Day for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. On a brighter note at the UN Conference the Australian Government ratified the final UN declaration, making an international and local commitment to combat racism in Australia and must now be held to task on this.

Youth specific issues that were raised at both the non-government conference, Youth Summit and UN conference were:

- need for adequate educational and employment support for newly arrived young people to ensure that they are able to participate in the mainstream community
- scapegoating of refugee and migrants for political gains was strongly condemned
- police harassment and racial profiling of young people
- the negative portrayal of ethnic youth in the media
- Education curriculum is content often mono-cultural, not reflecting multicultural communities and discriminatory against these communities young people's learning
- Need for compulsory anti-racism education in school curriculum
- Need for increased anti-racism education at schools, debunking stereotypes and myths

- Need to ensure Convention on the Rights of the Child continues to be met by governments especially in the context of race

Particularly relevant to Australia was the need for the teaching of history in schools to acknowledge colonisation and its legacies i.e. History of the treatment of indigenous Australians.

Although much less compared to the USA and Canada, Australian community agencies' responses to race relations and anti-racism programs needs to be acknowledged. But still it appears that in Australia we only seriously talk about racism when something like the September 11 events occur and there is an increase in racist incidents.

In light of the September 11 events in America and subsequent racist targeting of Muslim communities we as community agencies need to look at increased anti-racism and mutual respect community education and programs. Community agencies and schools need to be further resourced to develop innovative workshops that explore anti-racism and mutual respect. Governments also need to do more to combat structural racism.

In these difficult times when we are increasingly witnessing the demonising of refugees and increased racism it is heartening for me to remember the dedication and enthusiasm of so many young people at the WCAR who shared their experiences and helped develop strategies to combat racism. Having been fortunate enough to attend the WCAR I am keen to continue to work with young people to address racism and discrimination in our local community.

Finally, as young people we can also draw strength from the words of a man who spent 27 years of his life in prison.

"I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal, which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if need be it is an idea for which I am prepared to die for." Quote by Nelson Mandela

Western Young People's Independent Network (WYPIN) is a Western region based youth organisation that targets refugee and migrant young people and conducts anti-racism and mutual respect programs in schools.

Meet the new YACVic Board of

Jamie Crosby Chairperson

This is Jamie's second term as YACVic Chairperson. Jamie's involvement in YACVic stretches back over four years. His work in the youth sector has been primarily in two areas: youth

homelessness - working on a housing and support program at the Salvation Army Crossroads Network; and previously in local government youth services, where he was employed at the City of Moreland.

Jamie welcomes the support and active interest of YACVic members in the organisation and looks forward to continued input our members.



Felicity Sloman Deputy Chairperson

Felicity's role as State Manager is to ensure that Kids Help Line is well known by young people and the professionals that work with them. She also works to secure funding to ensure that

children & young people in Victoria continue to have speedy access to a high quality counselling & referral service so that they may continue to improve and maintain their well-being. Felicity also project manages the Kids Help Line Peer Skills Program that has been conducted in Victoria for the past 4 years. Prior to working with Kids Help Line, Felicity spent 6½ years at the Centre for Adolescent Health in Melbourne working predominantly in the education and training of professionals working with young people as well as parents. Whilst there she completed a Graduate Diploma in Adolescent Health and Welfare run by the Centre, through the University of Melbourne. She has been working closely with service clubs in Melbourne and in 1997 received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Rotary Club of Brighton North for her work in the area of Youth Suicide. Originally Felicity trained as a nurse at the Alfred Hospital and gained valuable skills following that by becoming a parent herself. Felicity is the parent of two adolescents, now aged 14 and 16. After returning to the workplace she did further studies in Health Promotion at Deakin University.



Matthew Bubb, Treasurer

Matthew Bubb is a solicitor at Blake Dawson Waldron, in Melbourne. Matt works in the Financial Services Group at Blakes, and specialises in corporate and project finance work. Before joining Blakes in 1999, Matt was Senior Policy Officer at the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs in South Australia.



Matt has had extensive experience in dealing with young people. While studying at the University of Adelaide, Matt returned to his secondary school, Rostrevor College, in the role of housemaster for the

College's boarders for a period of three years. In this role, Matt was responsible for the care of students from the ages of 12 to 18.

Matt also tutored aboriginal students while resident in Darwin and was also a founder of the Edmund Rice Camps for underprivileged kids in South Australia in 1989. Matt was also a delegate to the Queens Trust Forum (now the Foundation for Young Australians) in July 1999.

Matt is keen to resume his interest in community and youth affairs and use his commercial and legal skills in a practical and beneficial way, and believes that a position on the Board would offer him a great opportunity to do this.

Mary Aldred

Mary is an 18 year old working student dealing first hand with many of the issues facing young people today, and aims to become an active voice for young people by working as an active link between young people and the government.

Mary believes that education is the key to so many of life's doors. Advocating for education is a priority that she takes very seriously. Mary is also interested in focussing on young people and the law, in particular drug related crime.



After experiencing many aspects of the education system, including through the Distance Education Center of Victoria, Mary is now about to commence her tertiary education. She had also been in the work force for a number of years and hopes that her experience through this will aid her to work with and for Victorian young people.



Lise Della Torre Media Spokesperson

Lise is a very passionate 16 year old student who is particularly concerned with avenues for youth participation and the problems of underage

drinking and drug taking amongst suburban young people. She's also interested in the media and earlier this year undertook a "hyper journalism" course at Yarra Youth Services and was a National Youth Week reporter for the City of Yarra. Lise has written a number of articles for Yikes! and was recently on a 3LO radio panel discussing whether or not youth participation is relevant.

In July Lise was one of three students selected out of 120 applicants to interview the Prime Minister on Triple J. On a representation level Lise has attended a number of events including the YACVic Youth Participation summit in April this year; the fifth Victorian Youth Round Table and was an ambassador for the Victorian Youth Week. She is currently formulating a proposal to her local council to set up a local youth advisory body, run by young people, to give them a realistic avenue to address issues and is an active member of the school debating team.

Rowena Allen

Rowena is the CEO of Cutting Edge Youth Services-UnitingCare, an agency she established in the Goulburn Valley to work with disadvantaged and rurally isolated young people.



Rowena has held positions in the area of community development and direct youth services with rural and metropolitan local governments including the City of Greater Shepparton, City of Stonington and Waverley.

Row is currently the chairperson of the Goulburn Regional Youth Committee, a member of the Learning Employment and Skills Commission as well as a member of Minister Thwaites Advisory Committee on Gay and Lesbian Health.

Active in the Uniting Church, Row has worked for the Social Justice Questions Committee and Victorian Council of Churches on environment and unemployment projects. She has also represented them nationally and internationally through the Christian Conference (Network) of Asia.

Governance

Joanna Scott

Jo is currently an IT contractor for NIKE and responsible for systems and business analysis. Jo has spent considerable time in the music industry working for both Brash and Sanity, holding positions such as assistant buyer for recorded music POS/EDI (Point of Sales and Electronic Data Interchange) Project Manager and business analysis for Sanity/Sanity.com.

Prior to this Jo has held various positions within the youth sector. These have included Parkville Youth Training Centre, Manager of a Drop-in center in Mitcham and working part-time as a Residential Youth Worker for Wesley Youth Services in Mooroolbark.



Jo is a straight shooter, a passionate person who is looking for something that interfaces both her involvement in a corporate environment and her fervor for issues affecting young people.

On a personal level, Jo has led many youth camps and activities, hand been a member of a number of church committees including the Uniting Church Prisons Task Force. Jo has also done some personal research and interviews with varying members of the police force in relation to Community Policing and Police and their relationship with young people.

Jo brings a hard work ethic, strong contacts in the corporate, business and music industry as well as a passion for young peoples issues.

If you have any questions about the organisational structure of YACVic and how to get more actively involved check out our website www.yacvic.org.au

Network Coordination or Coordinating Networks?

A Local Government Perspective

By Richard Hill

Ten years ago I observed that the outer suburb in which I worked had a proliferating range of agencies providing to youth. Young people had to find their way to all those whose specialist service met some segment of their need or issue.

Being a Coordinator of a local government youth service I took on the role of establishing a Youth Service Providers Network, which soon had a mailing list of over 100 and attendances of over 40 workers. It seemed to ease some of the barriers to young people's access to and movement between services, and created more co-ordinated approaches to meeting needs.

While we heard about Government level youth policy and inter-departmental committees, we saw little evidence in what they delivered to us of linkage between the silos that had made our network so large. Even within large departments like Human Services the silos seemed disconnected in how they dealt with us, let alone between levels of government. In fact, in the following years, with the economic rationalists dominant, services seemed to become more specialist and restrictive in their intake. While they talked about integration of services, new agencies kept appearing in our area with contracts to provide another specialist service.

Since the change in government, there has been a big change in the rhetoric (It may have started before that election). The buzz words are community capacity building, place management, community connectedness and so on. This rhetoric emphasises the need for a locally co-ordinated community development approach from the local service system. Many in State and Federal Governments have been working hard on how to enable this with some awareness their departmental silos are a major barrier. In the area of funding there are some signs of a new flexibility, with packaging of grants and deadline free negotiating processes

appearing at State and Federal level.

New awareness and approaches to the need for local co-ordination have also been filtering down. We (councils) have had requests from a variety of government areas to form networks such as Primary Care Partnerships, Local Learning and Employment Networks and a Pathways Network. There are also various regional bodies with coordination aims like the Regional Youth Committees, SAAP Networks and planning groups.

The new recognition of local government's role in local coordination and planning is a pleasing change but brings with it a nasty suspicion. What if every one of those State and Federal silos decides that we should form a network to coordinate the local service system around the goals and needs of their silo. Will we end up with a network for every silo? Will we then start forming networks to coordinate the silo based networks? Is this why many local governments view LLENs with suspicion? Unless State and Federal departments can coordinate their silos, the answer may well be yes.

The purpose of coordination is the best use of resources to meet young people's needs and enable their development. The real evidence of successful coordination is in the young persons experience and development resulting from their contact with the service system. Good local coordination will help identify needs, gaps and issues of service quality and design. These apparently simple truisms are not so easily achieved. What's required is efficient and collaborative local decision making, not silo based networks. The first two challenges for local and State governments to enable that are:

- To coordinate our silos in all their impacts on local services.
- To do funding and accountability in a way that allows local decisions and flexibility in service delivery.

As this happens more local services will move out of their competitive bunkers and learn effective collaboration.

Case study: *Clockwork*

Despite the advances of health care in Australia and lip service to the importance of young people as the future of our country, statistics show that the health of young Australians is getting worse. Interventions, that aim to prevent chronic illnesses, need to target young people.

The Centre for Adolescent Health has noted that:

- The rate at which young people are killing themselves has increased approximately threefold since the mid 1960s.
- More young people die in car accidents than any other group. Rates of depression amongst adolescents are high.
- The current generation of young women is probably the most infertile in our history, as a result of very high rates of sexually transmissible diseases, most notably Chlamydia.
- 25% of the people registered as HIV positive are under the age of 25 years of age.
- One out of every five women under the age of 25 years has been a victim of sexual abuse; often this abuse begins early in adolescence and goes unreported.
- The problems are compounded for adolescence by drug and alcohol abuse, teenage unemployment, homelessness and the physical and emotional changes associated with adolescence in addition to the inaccessibility of mainstream health services.
- Chronological and developmental imperatives are important to consider when justifying the prioritisation of adolescent health. Chronological imperatives relate

Although General Practitioners are in an ideal position to assist young people, there are major barriers preventing young people's access to GP care, integration of General Practice with other services, professional education, youth health promotion and research.

The Clockwork Program aims to promote the accessibility, relevance and quality of health care for young people. It has achieved this both by offering direct provision of a range of holistic health care services in Geelong, Victoria and by impacting on community General Practice and other mainstream health services throughout

Australia, by distributing information on GP access, education, integration, health promotion, research and evaluation.

Clockwork is best known for the youth health service run by GPs in Geelong, that currently sees approximately 200 young people per week. 400 Clockwork manuals describing the implementation and key features of the health service were distributed throughout Australia in 1996 and since then, two major, successful external evaluations of the service have been undertaken.

Outcomes of the Clockwork Program

Young people are using the Clockwork program, where they may not access any other health service. The service is able to address multiple and complex issues of young people, including:

- alcohol and drugs,
- depression,
- suicidal behaviour,
- sexual health, pregnancy,
- child abuse
- self esteem,
- anger management
- welfare issues
- family conflict,
- domestic violence
- all physical health issues.

Consultations at Clockwork are more complex than in mainstream General Practice and the GP focus of the service is highly valued. Practitioners have experienced increased skills and knowledge in adolescent health and counselling through the GP education programs available at Clockwork.

Community GPs and youth workers, who refer to Clockwork, reported the following significant outcomes for the service: prevention of youth suicide, hospitalisation, pregnancy, involvement in the juvenile justice system or mental health system, and homelessness.

Critical success factors.

Clockwork;

- is driven by General Practitioners,
- responds to ongoing youth consultation,
- targets marginalised young people,
- has a caring staff culture,
- has a multidisciplinary team that provides holistic health care and responds to young people in crisis,
- is collocated with other youth services.

The Difficulties

1. Access

Many young people have difficulties with access to General Practice, due to fears about confidentiality, cost, judgmental attitudes and serious illness. In the Clockwork experience, many young people are also crisis orientated, do not tolerate waiting and are often unassertive during consultations, but easily critical of GPs later. These issues and attitudes affect their help seeking behaviour.

In a needs assessment before the implementation of Clockwork, young people's attitudes to GPs were surveyed. The following quotes are a summary of what the 80 young people said about GPs:

They don't listen to what I say They think I smell

You should see their body language if you tell them you are gay They don't believe what I am saying They make me feel uncomfortable They think they know everything

We don't think about them because they are boring

I get the impression they cant wait to get out of there they rush you I hate those big words they use

They are people in white gowns with power to prescribe whatever drugs you're after

These local findings were important in motivating GPs in Geelong to be involved.

2. Funding

At General Practice level, consultations with young people are time consuming and often require follow up phone calls and case meetings with other agencies. Medico legal problems associated with issues such as suicide, drug addiction and child abuse are also time consuming. Not only are these items poorly covered by Medicare in General Practice, but in the Clockwork experience, young people are often late, do not keep appointments or do not have a Medicare card. These issues result in poor remuneration for GPs working with young people.

Youth health is funded by short term, submission based grants, with very little ongoing basic infrastructure funding for youth services. 'New' strategies and programs targeting young people are funded by the expiry of other effective programs. Youth funding is controlled by many

...health for young people

different Departments of Government and fragmentation of funding and short term grants results in a rapid turnover of staff, competition rather than cooperation between agencies, cost shifting and knee jerk reactions to single issues. Youth health simply cannot compete in the current health system, which gives priority to acute health needs and short term quick fix, easy to evaluate solutions.

3. GPs are expected to know it all.

Young people's issues can be very complex. It is difficult for GPs to keep up to date with sources of evidenced based information.

The following list of suggested topics sent to Clockwork by a school, prior to a visit to Year 7 students demonstrates the expectation of the community for GPs to *know everything*:

eating disorders, youth suicide, depression, teenage pregnancy, contraception self-esteem, blended families, HIV, AIDS, TV violence, grief, alcohol and drugs communication, panic disorders, steroids, cannabis, bullying, homework, smoking, sexuality and STDS, cults and aromatherapy.

4. Medico Legal and Ethical Issues.

GPs who work with young people are confronted with many difficult and ethical issues.

For example, what do GPs do if:

- A 13 year old asks for emergency contraception, condoms or syringes?
- A 15 year old requests confidentiality for termination of pregnancy after consenting to sex with a 25 year old man?
- A young person admits to criminal activity that may endanger others in the community?
- A 15 year old requests antenatal screening tests because she is planning to get pregnant?

5. Youth Health Promotion

Young people in focus groups at Clockwork have enlightened us with this message. It is a commonly held attitude by young people and it makes youth health promotion more difficult.

Programs that work

1. Clockwork GP shared care project

A major aim of Clockwork is to increase the access of young people to mainstream General Practice. However, there are times when young people may not feel comfortable attending the family GP or do not know how to access the health system, particularly if they are marginalised. GPs are supported to work at

Clockwork with very disadvantaged young people, who do not normally seek health care. GPs undertake an orientation program, work with a multidisciplinary team and with other services and bring this experience back to their own practices.

2. Clockwork GP practice support

Clockwork has also developed major resources for GPs to use in their own practices, including: a brochure for young people, which details how to access General Practice; the Clockwork manual: Time for Young People about making General Practice work for young people; health promotional materials including posters, that have been developed by Clockwork and young people; a young people's book on mental health, Creating Girl X; and the Clockwork teenage health website www.clockwork.org.au

3. Clockwork GP Education

GP education is provided by Clockwork in a number of ways including distribution of Clinical Practice Guidelines, Fact Sheets, kits of relevant journal articles and book lists and Clockwork Newsletter to GPs in the community. Development of policies and protocols on difficult areas such as suicide risk, sex offending, prescription drug abuse, sexual health and termination of pregnancy and a library of relevant books.

Workshops are also held for GPs and people working with young people, once a month and cover topics from illicit drug use to Gay and Lesbian issues; Endocrine Disorders; and accommodation for young people who cannot live at home amongst many others.

4. Clockwork GP community projects

Clockwork runs a school program for Year 9 students. The major focus is access to General Practice in the community. Community forums are also run for parents and teachers on adolescent depression. These forums involve GPs as speakers or as panel members with other youth services.

5. GP Special Interest Groups

A number of GPs have developed special interests in adolescent health. These GPs have developed resources and assist other GPs with secondary consultation on issues such as: Anger management, learning disorders teenage

mothers; sexual health; eating disorders; Gay and Lesbian Issues; GP self care

6. The Clockwork Network

A major role of Clockwork is to assist GPs work with other services. The GPs and staff at Clockwork participate in ongoing meetings with other relevant services, reference groups and Government and non Government bodies. The Clockwork service is collocated with other youth services and consultation with these services occurs on a daily basis.

7. Clockwork GP Research projects

- Links have been developed with the Monash University Department of Psychological Medicine. Clockwork is involved in the Time for a Future Project, which is a depression management research project.
- Links have also been developed with Melbourne University Department of General Practice and a shared submission has been developed to examine the effectiveness of youth programs in GP Divisions on a National basis.

8. Clockwork at a National Level

GPs provide 100 million consultations each year to 80% of the Australian population and have broad skills in managing mental health, sexual health, drug and alcohol and family problems. GPs are in an ideal position to change worsening youth statistics such as suicide, alcohol and illicit drug abuse, child abuse and sexual health issues. However, there are many barriers that deter GPs from being involved in adolescent health and Clockwork has a role in promoting strategies, that improve youth access, education, integration, health promotion and research in general practice at a national level.

Youth health simply cannot compete in the current health system, which gives priority to acute health needs and short term quick fix, easy to evaluate solutions.

Prepared by Jenny Lawton, Financial Counsellor

How not to **SMASH** your finances in a car accident

Even though you survive a car accident without needing so much as a Band-Aid, a prang can spell the beginning of a financial nightmare. If you cause damage to property while you're behind the wheel of a uninsured car or hurt someone while driving an unregistered car – you can be up for big bucks. This fact sheet looks at some of the steps you can take to ensure you aren't saddled with heavy debts as a result of a car accident.

Dog day afternoon

Although Tia was a careful driver, while rushing her sick Kelpie Bongo to the vet, she lost control of the car and took out a fire hydrant. While Tia and Bongo huddled under an umbrella to avoid the resulting fountain, the Water Board came to shut off the water and replace the hydrant, the police came to direct traffic and the Fire Brigade came along just for good measure. Although the car was a bit smashed up, Tia was able to drive it so Bongo got to the vet after all where he cost Tia a small fortune. However Tia's financial misery had just begun. Tia got bills for the emergency call out fees for the Fire Brigade and the Water Board, plus a bill for the cost of a new fire hydrant. All up, it was nearly \$8,000. Tia didn't have that kind of money and didn't have car insurance to cover property damage. In the end, Tia sold her car to pay out the debts.

Lamp posts don't come cheap

Van assumed his car registration fees included insurance for property damage, but found out to his cost that only his medical expenses for a broken arm were covered and not the price of replacing the lamp post he'd wrapped his car around. Before Van had even had the plaster off, the electricity company was demanding over \$20,000 for the damaged lamp post. With no assets – now that his car was written-off – and two more years of his low-paid apprenticeship ahead of him, Van eventually filed for Bankruptcy to wipe out the debt.

Getting help

Don't just rely on the general information in this article. It is best to get advice specific to your situation

For referral to a free community financial counsellor to deal with a car accident debt:

- Financial and Consumer Rights Council (03) 9663 2000
- Credit Helpline (03) 9602 3800

For free advice and assistance about dealing with an insurance company:

- Insurance Enquiries and Complaints 1300 363 683

Staying in control

In the last year, **an estimated 500 Victorians went bankrupt because of car accident debts**. To avoid the risk of needing to hand over control of your affairs to a Bankruptcy Trustee for 3 years – only drive cars that are both registered and have at least Third Party Property insurance to cover you for damage to the property of others. **Registration does not cover property damage** but it will protect you against medical costs and loss of income expenses for you and anyone you injure.

Types of car insurance

Car registration fees paid annually to VicRoads include insurance provided by the Transport Accident Commission, but **this cover is limited to payment of treatment** and benefits for people injured in transport accidents. It does not cover damage to cars or property. Car registration is compulsory.

Third party property insurance covers accidental damage to other vehicles and property if the insured driver causes an accident, subject to the terms of the policy. This insurance costs around \$150 to \$200 per year.

Bonus extension: Some third party property insurers will also cover your car up to a limited amount (usually around \$3,000) if it is damaged in a collision which is the fault of an uninsured driver of another vehicle and you are able to provide the name and address of that other driver.

Third party property plus fire and theft insurance

covers the same as third party property insurance, but your car is also covered for fire and theft, subject to the terms of the policy. The bonus extension cover may also be available. This insurance costs around \$200 to \$300 per year.

Comprehensive insurance offers the greatest protection. Subject to the terms of the policy, it covers damage to your car as well as damage to other vehicles and property. This is the most expensive type of insurance.

Cars under finance are best covered by comprehensive insurance. This is because the lender would still demand that the loan be paid even if you wrote-off the car in an accident.

Tips for avoiding insurance problems

- Before deciding whether to go with an insurer – **read the policy carefully**. The policy is one of the documents that makes up the contract between you and the insurer. It will explain what you are and are not covered for and when you may and may not make claim.
- Understand **how much excess is payable** for certain claims. The excess is the amount you must pay when you make a claim. There are many different excesses depending on things such as the age of the driver, whether the driver is listed on the policy and how long the driver has been licensed.
- When you select an insurer – **take care to answer all the insurer's questions truthfully, fully and accurately**, whether or not the questions are verbal or in writing. Insurers decide who to cover and how much to charge based on all the information you provide. If it later turns out the insurer was given wrong or untrue information, any claim you make may be refused for what is known as non-disclosure.
- Keep the insurer informed of any changes to the information you originally gave them, otherwise the insurer may be able to **refuse a claim** for non-disclosure.
- **Modified cars** are trouble – most insurers won't cover them or will only do so for older and experienced drivers at a very high cost.

Shop around for insurance cover – but don't just consider the price. Compare the excesses as well as the cover that is offered. Watch out for so-called bargains – the cover may be so restricted that it is not worth it.

Before you drive anyone's car

- **Check the car is registered**. Registration includes insurance for most injuries caused by a car accident. A driver who has an accident in an unregistered car could be held responsible for the expenses of anyone who is injured and may not be able to claim for loss of earnings.
- Find out whether the car owner has **Third Party Property Insurance** and if it covers young drivers or only covers drivers that are named on the policy.
- Keep in mind that even if there is insurance – the insurer may be able to refuse a claim for an accident you cause because you **broke a policy condition**, such as being over the legal alcohol limit.

When saving up to buy a car – make sure you also can afford the cost of paying registration and at least the cost of insuring for damage to property owned by others.

YACVic welcomes your submissions to the calendar. Please email contributions to info@yacvic.org.au or phone us on (03) 9612 8999. Some of the events on this website have been sourced from the Australian Clearing House for Youth Studies calendar see <http://www.acys.utas.edu.au>

events and resources

Deadline for contributions to the next edition of yikes is 14:12:01

■ Youth, Leadership and Development - Challenges and opportunities in the 21st Century

Date: 4 November 2001 - 6 November 2001
International Youth Conference organised by the International Youth Coordination Council.
Where: Tigertops, Chitwan, Nepal
For more info: Chauyen Lai Shrestha, Secretary-General, International Youth Co-ordination Council P.O. Box 3969, Kathmandu, Nepal. Ph. No. 00977-1-352281 & 00977-1-330315
Web: www.iycnepal.org

■ The Best and Worst of Worlds: Rural Youth Work

Date: 9 November 2001
Time: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Centre for Adolescent Health 10th Anniversary Workshop Series 2001. Cost \$85.00
Where: Shepparton, Victoria
For more info: Kate Wilson in Education and Training, Centre for Adolescent Health on ph: 9345 4835

■ Child protection and its relevance to social workers, workshop

Date: 12 November 2001 - 13 November 2001
Where: Melbourne
For more info: Catherine Neville and Penny Mackieson ph: 0412 378 176
Email: cneville@nevillemackiesonconsulting.net.au

■ Living, Learning, Life: Working with Adolescents in the TAFE Setting

Date: 13 November 2001
Time: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Centre for Adolescent Health 10th Anniversary Workshop Series 2001. Cost \$85.00
Where: Bendigo
For more info: Kate Wilson in Education and Training, Centre for Adolescent Health on ph: 9345 4835
Email: wilsok@cryptic.rch.unimelb.edu.au

■ The Road to Somewhere: Adolescent Health Issues

Date: 13 November 2001
Time: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
For more info: Kate Wilson in Education and Training, Centre for Adolescent Health on ph: 9345 4835
Where: Bairnsdale, Victoria
For more info: Kate Wilson in Education and Training, Centre for Adolescent Health, ph: (03) 9345 4835
Email: wilsok@cryptic.rch.unimelb.edu.au

■ Third Australian Conference on Quality of Life

Date: 16 November 2001
Themes: Jointly sponsored by the Australian Centre on Quality of Life, Deakin University and OzQoL: The Australian Society for Quality of Life Studies. The aim of this conference is to assemble researchers, students, and professionals with diverse approaches to the area of quality of life. Presentations will include the following themes: The contemporary understanding of QoL; The application of QoL measurement; Cross-cultural issues in QoL measurement.
Where: Melbourne
For more info: Elise Maher, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Hwy, Burwood Victoria 3125
Web: <http://acqol.deakin.edu.au/introduction/default.htm>

■ Learning to Be: Building social and emotional literacy for living and learning in adolescence

Date: 20 November 2001
Centre for Adolescent Health 10th Anniversary Workshop Series 2001. Cost \$85.00
Where: Ballarat
For more info: Kate Wilson in Education and Training, Centre for Adolescent Health on ph: 9345 4835
Email: wilsok@cryptic.rch.unimelb.edu.au

■ CWAV Practice/Policy Forum - Social Entrepreneurialship

Date: 21 November 2001
Time: 10:00 AM - 1:30 PM

■ 5th National Parenting Conference

Date: 22 November 2001 - 23 November 2001
'It is in the shelter of each other that the people live' - this conference from Jesuit Social Services and Parenting Australia will address the many ways society shelters, nurtures and builds the resilience of families, children and adolescents.
International keynote speaker is Norman Glass, Director-designate, National Centre for Social Research, UK.
Where: University of Melbourne
For more info: Conference Secretariat, Fifth National Parenting Conference, PO Box 1141, Collingwood Vic 3066. Ph: (03) 9415 7186; fax: (03) 9416 5357
Email: parents@jss.org.au

■ Women in Prison Conference

Date: 30 November 2001
Call for expressions of interest and papers for an International, National & State Conference
Where: Brisbane
For more info: Rebecca Baird, PO Box 3407, South Brisbane, QLD 4101
Email: sisters@lrnnet.org.au

■ Footscray flyers

Date: 2 December 2001
Circus and theatre come together in a performance by 5-16 year olds
Cost: Entry by gold coin donation
Where: Footscray Community Arts Centre
For more info: Footscray Community Arts Centre (03) 9689 5677

■ Cultural action for community health

Date: 13 December 2001 - 14 December 2001
A two-day forum, North Melbourne Town Hall
Convened by the Cultural Development Network, Victoria and the Centre for Popular Education, UTS and supported by the City of Melbourne and the Australia Council for the Arts.
Themes: art and ...
- community cultural development
- mental health promotion
- health promotion in community settings
- health care in institutional settings
- youth suicide prevention
- AIDS education
Where: North Melbourne Town Hall
For more info: (02) 9340 4386.
Email: Rick.Flowers@uts.edu.au

■ 3rd international conference on drugs and young people

Date: 13 May 2002 - 15 May 2002
The conference will focus on youth drug policy and practice in:
>Prevention
>Education
>Treatment
>Law enforcement
>Legal and justice issues
Where: AJC Convention Centre, Randwick Sydney NSW
Email: events@adf.org.au
Web: www.adf.org.au