



## Fringe Benefits? YACVic's State Conference is Fast Approaching!!

the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs, Jacinta Allan. Minister Allan will draw on themes of young people's participation in democracy. The Minister will also officially launch the three booklets on Youth Participation that the Office for Youth and YACVic have jointly produced.

Gillian Calvert, the NSW Children and Young People's Commissioner will deliver a keynote address on the positive and negative ways that young people exist on the fringe. Gillian is a well respected practitioner and advocate, she is a dynamic and lively public speaker who will no doubt, deliver a provoking key note address.

Ms Marge Thorpe, CEO from the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (AHS) will speak about Indigenous young people's experiences of the fringe. The AHS is one of Victoria's major Indigenous health organisations. Coming from Lake Tyres, Bun Yarnda, she is a former board member of the National Council for Reconciliation and has been an active campaigner in state Stolen Generations issues.

There will be several panel discussions involving young people. Thao Pham from WYPIN and Liz Ellis, a young disability advocate will explore, with others, the question Am I on the Fringe? This session will be skillfully facilitated by Lill Healy, Director of the Office for Youth.

Monika Prasad from Whitelion and Jess Healy the Victorian Senate Candidate for the Democrats will all share their thoughts on crossing the boundaries between the "fringe" and the "mainstream". This session will be facilitated by Lisa Bellar, a very experienced presenter and facilitator, academic and community activist. Young people will also play an important role in facilitating workshops and plenary sessions. For a full run down on the daily program check out:

<http://www.yacvic.org.au/conference/includes/web-timetable.pdf>  
continued next page

YACVic has been a hive of activity over the past few months in preparation for our bi-annual state conference. By the time you read this, there will be less than 30 sleeps until the big event, so if you haven't booked GET ON TO IT TODAY!!

This issue of YIKES! is a Bumper Conference Edition, designed specifically to whet your conference appetite. Many of the articles contained within this issue highlight themes that will be addressed at the Conference. There's also a conference program insert that gives you all of the necessary information regarding workshop sessions, venue information and accommodation options. This program can also be found at the conference website:

<http://www.yacvic.org.au/conference/includes/webprogram.pdf>

There are over forty workshops on offer over the two days with approximately 60 presenters sharing their youth research, policy and practice experience. We are also very pleased to have secured some excellent keynote speakers and panellist that will ensure lively and stimulating plenary sessions.

We are delighted to have the conference officially opened by

### Also in this issue...

In the September/October edition of Yikes! you get a taste of what will be happening at the conference. We thought to entice you with a snapshot of various workshops and presenters. With the election coming up we have an article by Jess Healy the State Youth Spokesperson for the Australian Democrats in Victoria. Also in our **opinion section** we have an article on the **casualisation of the work force** by the Howard government, an article on **Sudan** that gives an overview of what is happening there with some practical ideas on how young people can help. There is also a report by Amy Blake on the youth binge drinking forum "Is getting pissed getting pathetic?". Our State Government News page has been left out this time due to our **Fringe Benefits - young people on the edge of policy and place** Conference snapshot. Our other news is that YACVic has recently said goodbye to Nik Beuret, our wonderful Communications Officer of the past 18 months. We thank him for all his dedicated work. You can meet our new CO inside this edition of Yikes! who has jumped on board and is wondering what hit her. ■

# YACVic updates

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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.

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.

## YIKES!

Is YACVic's regular newsletter. The views and opinions contained in this publication do not necessarily represent the views of YACVic. This publication is copyright, articles may be reproduced with permission from YACVic.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions to Yikes! are welcome. The deadline for the next edition of Yikes! is 22 October.

## INSERTS & ADVERTISING

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](mailto:info@yacvic.org.au).

## The YACVic Conference Dinner

We are very excited about our conference dinner this year, where Dr Di Sisley former CEO of the Equal Opportunity Commission and Co-chairperson of Reconciliation Victoria will be our dinner speaker. The Conference dinner will be an excellent opportunity for you to network with colleagues from all over the state and to catch up with people you may not have seen since the last highly successful YACVic conference dinner (that people are still talking about, two years later!). There are limited places for this event, so make sure you mark it on your rego form!

The venue for the conference is absolutely fantastic; set in beautiful open parklands, there is plenty of space for a gentle walk at lunchtime or a chat with colleagues in a sunny nook.

## Other News from YACVic

### AGM

Our AGM will also be held at the Conference this year. The Board made the decision to hold the AGM during the conference to ensure maximum participation of our members in this important annual meeting. It is particularly important that you are there this year as there are a number of amendments to the constitution being proposed. These include expanding the Board from seven members to up to ten members and having five designated young people positions. The board are also proposing the establishment of a designated rural position. These amendments are all explained in the enclosed AGM papers. If you have any questions about the proposed changes, please call the YACVic office.

## The Victorian Indigenous Youth Advisory Council.

YACVic is delighted to announce that we have received funding from Aboriginal Affairs Victoria for 12 months to support the Victorian Indigenous Youth Advisory Council (VIYAC).

The impetus for VIYAC came from a ground breaking Communiqué between ATSIC and the Victorian Government signed in 2000, with joint funding provided by Aboriginal Affairs

Victoria and ATSIC. In July 2003 as a part of NAIDOC celebrations a Statewide Indigenous Youth Gathering was held and the members of the inaugural VIYAC were nominated. The VIYAC is representative across five regions (Hume, Loddon Mallee, Gippsland and Far East Gippsland, Melbourne Metropolitan and Barwon South West) and has 10 members, with provision for two Torres Strait Islander representatives.

Aboriginal Affairs Victoria has continued the commitment to support VIYAC by providing funding to YACVic to employ a Statewide coordinator to the VIYAC. The Office for Youth has also offered supports to secure the ongoing functioning of VIYAC.

In the next 12 months a State Co-ordinator will be based at YACVic. Their role will be to strengthen the network of elected representatives, give a voice to Koori youth and ensure that VIYAC is represented at key meetings with Government and the community.

YACVic will be advertising for a part time co-ordinator in the coming weeks.

## Strategic Plan

We are in the final stages of preparing the Strategic Plan for publication. The draft document is currently with the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs and the Office for Youth for comment. Once we have incorporated their feedback into the plan it will be ready for formatting and distribution. Who knows we may even have it ready at the conference!

## Participation in Practice

We are delighted that the three Participation in Practice handbooks that we have jointly developed with the Office for Youth are about to be launched. As mentioned above the Minister will launch these at the Conference. There will also be a small launch the day before at Parliament House.

There's heaps happening at YACVic, no wonder the year has gone so quickly! Catch you at the conference. Can't wait? Neither can we!

Georgie Ferrari ■

# Fringe Benefits?

Young people on the edge of policy and place

WHATS ON.....

2004  
YACVic  
Conference

## New South Wales Commissioner for Children and Young People to present at YACVic conference.

YACVic statewide conference features a range of experts from the youth sector and beyond. One of our keynote speakers is Gillian Calvert, the first NSW Commissioner for Children and Young People. Gillian is a social worker with an MBA and has been a family therapist, policy adviser, lecturer and management consultant.

Gillian's talk is titled 'Pathways to and from the edge: supporting young people to be part of communities'. This keynote speech will consider the way in which young people are often on the edge of our communities, whether it be because of their difference to the mainstream, their disadvantage or because being a young person is a period of transition between being a child and an adult. Gillian will look at the need for our communities to get better at recognising, celebrating, supporting and listening to, young people. By doing this we can create pathways for young people between the mainstream and the edge that benefit not only young people, but everyone in the community.

As the NSW Commissioner for Children and Young People, Gillian works with children and young people, their families, schools, neighbourhoods, government bodies and community-based organisations to help make NSW a better place for children and young people.

The NSW Commission for Children and Young People was set up in June 1999 as an independent organisation that reports directly to the Parliament of NSW. The Commission works to:

- promote the participation of children and young people in making decisions that affect their lives

- help organizations to seek the participation of children appropriate to their age and maturity.

- promote and monitor the overall safety, welfare and wellbeing of children in the community.

- monitor trends in complaints made by or on behalf of children and young people.

- run special inquiries into issues affecting children and young people

- make recommendations to government and non-government organisations on legislation, policies, practices and services affecting children and young people.

- provide information and advice to assist children and young people.

- promote and monitor training on issues affecting children and young people.

- promote and monitor public awareness activities on issues affecting children and young people.

- conduct, promote and monitor research into issues affecting children.
- participate in and monitor screening for child-related employment.

- develop and administer a voluntary accreditation scheme for counsellors and therapists who work with people who have committed sexual offences against children.

Gillian Calvert will address the conference on the morning of Wednesday the 6th of October. ■

## Role Models for the Future Program

beyondblue to share findings with youth sector at YACVic's conference.

beyondblue: the national depression initiative, Athlete Development Australia (ADA) and the Bounce Back Foundation (BBF) have formed an exciting partnership that is committed to making a difference to the lives of young Australians.

The program, Role Models for the Future, is based on the belief that appropriately trained elite athletes are able to engage and influence an often difficult-to-reach demographic, particularly young men aged between 12 and 25 and young people who have become detached from their communities. The program provides young people with communication and leadership skills, as well as life skills such as problem-solving and being able to cope with adversity.

beyondblue and ADA have focused on research and evaluation to determine the success of using elite athletes as facilitators in the delivery of key messages and skills for young people.

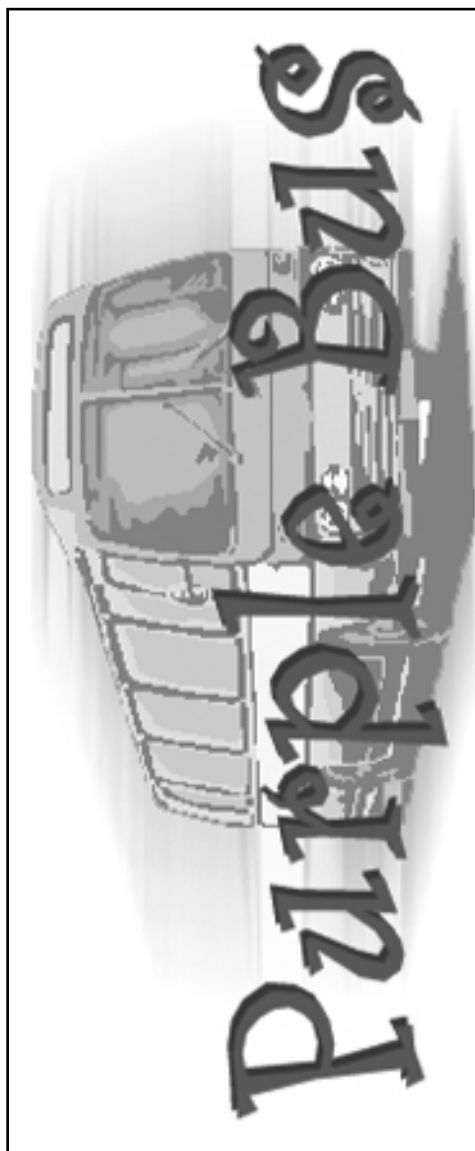
This is a new area of research. Programs using elite sports people are common, however very little is known about their effectiveness.

In particular, beyondblue and ADA will work closely with Bounce Back Foundation, an innovative charity established to provide a vehicle for elite athletes to improve the lives of young Australians. Currently the Bounce Back Foundation is delivering programs that address issues such as leadership, conflict management, diet, nutrition, bullying, depression, drug and alcohol use and peer support.

beyondblue's workshop 'Role Models for the future - athletes as role models on Wednesday the 6th of October at *Fringe benefits? Young people on the edge of policy and place.* ■

# Fringe benefits?

## Young people on the edge of policy and place



### Purple Bus comes to the Fringe

Established in 2000, the Purple Bus is a highly regarded zine created by same sex attracted young people for same sex attracted young people. The magazine is compiled by a small group of young people and Samantha McGuffie from Knox City Council, but publishes works from young people from right around the country. The Purple Bus crew will be giving a hands-on, fun workshop for same sex attracted young people (and their fans!) on the first day of YACVic's conference.

Purple Bus was created out of the need identified by same sex attracted people to see themselves accurately reflected in the media, to tell their stories, express themselves creatively and share thoughts and experiences as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning (or whatever) young people. Over the last four years, eight issues of Purple Bus have been produced, addressing issues including homophobia, discrimination, coming out and identity. The latest issue 'School is Gay' was distributed to over 300 young people and organisations, including schools. The Purple Bus workshop will hopefully build on this success and share ideas about how to achieve such phenomenal accomplishments in your own projects!!!

Issues around same-sex attraction will be explored through a range of practical activities, discussion and creative writing exercises... there's also the chance to win prizes! The key issues addressed in the workshop will include:

- myths and misconceptions around same sex young people and strategies to challenge these
- young people's participation in political processes
- awareness raising around issues of homophobia and discrimination
- resources available to same sex attracted young people

#### What is the Purple Bus and how to get involved!!!

The Purple Bus Workshop is aimed at young people but others are welcome! It will be facilitated by Samantha McGuffie from Knox City Council and Jen Blyth, editor of Purple Bus and member of YACVic's Youth Reference Group, on Wednesday October 6th. ■

#### Support for Young People Attending the YACVic Conference What a FAB idea!

YACVic's Youth Reference Group (YRG) have come up with an idea to support young people attending the conference - it's FAB. The Fringe Access Bursary is offered to young people who are registered to attend the conference, but who might need financial assistance with travel and accommodation costs.

The YRG have decided to focus their resources on young people who have the least access to resources, particularly young people from rural and regional communities, CALD and Indigenous young people, young people from the urban fringe and same sex attracted young people.

To apply for the FAB (it's just a simple form), please email [fab@yacvic.org.au](mailto:fab@yacvic.org.au)

Or call Rys on 9612 8999.

#### S T O P P R E S S Conference Dinner

Don't forget to register for the Conference Dinner at 7:00pm on Wednesday the 6th of October.

Guest Speaker: Dr Di Sisely, Formerly Chief Executive of the Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria, Co-Chair of Reconciliation Victoria, currently Managing Director at Reputation Measurement.

Limited spaces are available, so register now to avoid missing out. Just choose the Conference Dinner option on the conference registration form.

Due to duty of care issues, the dinner is for conference delegates over 18 only.

## YACVic explores the urban fringe

**A key concern of *Fringe benefits? Young people on the edge of policy and place* is young people's experiences of the geographic fringes, that is young people on the urban fringe of Melbourne, or living in isolated regional areas. The urban fringe has been a broader focus point for YACVic this year with Project Officer, Jen Rose, consulting with a range of young people's services and with young people themselves to inform an urban fringe issues paper. The paper will be launched at *Fringe Benefits?* and distributed broadly throughout the sector and presented to government to lobby for greater resources on the urban fringe.**

dences of risk taking behaviours are reportedly higher in some urban fringe communities, a lack of accessible services has clear ramifications for the health and well being of young people and of their local communities.

So, what is meant by the urban fringe? The term 'urban fringe' refers to those residential areas that are on the edge of Melbourne's urban sprawl. Over time that boundary has shifted dramatically. Melbourne 2030, the Victorian Government report on planning for sustainable growth, describes a housing development picture in 1972 when 'someone wanting to live on the city fringe could buy a house on one of the new estates in Doncaster or Glen

information collected by youth services and previous research done, and consulting youth service providers in these areas.

These local government areas are quite diverse. For example, the Mornington Peninsula is a very different place for young people to live in than the Yarra Ranges, however there are some things that affect young people and services providers in similar ways across these areas. Previous research tells us that young people on the urban fringe have concerns about inadequate public transport and recreation opportunities in their areas and that young people in many fringe communities have lower secondary school retention rates than young people living closer to the city and are less likely to gain a tertiary qualification.

Youth service providers experience common challenges across different fringe communities too. Key concerns for service providers include a lack of services locally available, and the accessibility of services based in more central areas given the public transport limitations for young people, difficulties in providing services to young people over a vast geographic area and across a mixture of rural and dense urban communities within their municipal boundaries, maintaining service networks in fast developing areas in which community infrastructure lags behind housing development, being funded under inadequate structures that don't take into account the specific challenges of working on the urban fringe, such as outreach or travel capacity and which are not forward focussed allowing services to match population growth and geographic sprawl.

YACVic is grateful to all the young people, youth service providers and community representatives who fed their knowledge into the paper and we look forward to sharing the findings and enhancing a broader understanding of the unique situation of young people and service providers on the urban fringe with the broader youth sector and with policy makers at a local state and federal government level. ■



The paper will focus on the key concerns are for youth service providers in these regions to highlight the unique challenges of delivering services in these communities. It will also report on what it's like for young people to live and access services in their area.

The report will highlight the typical inadequacy of local public transport on the fringe and the impact this has on young people's choices and opportunities in employment, education and recreation. YACVic consultations also revealed concern in many fringe communities with a lack of locally based, accessible mental health, homelessness and drug and alcohol services. Given that research suggests that inci-

Waverley, where long-established orchards were being cleared and their land subdivided.' Now the urban fringe lies much further out with expected growth in some urban fringe communities predicted to increase dramatically in the near future.

Local government areas on the urban fringe are also known as Interface Councils and they include Wyndham City Council, Melton Shire Council, Hume City Council, City of Whittlesea, Nillumbik Shire Council, Shire of Yarra Ranges, Cardinia Shire Council, and the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council. YACVic's consultations have focussed on these areas and have involved tapping into youth forums,

## YRIPP Commences - New service for young offenders

On 24th June 2004, the Youth Referral and Independent Person Program (YRIPP) was launched by Police and Emergency Services Minister André Haermeyer, in association with Victoria Police Chief Commissioner Christine Nixon. YRIPP represents a partnership of the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, Crime Prevention Victoria, Victoria Police, the Federation of Community Legal Centres, the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.

YRIPP, funded by Crime Prevention Victoria under Safer Streets and Homes, the Government's Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy for Victoria 2002-2005, aims:

- to work with and improve the existing system of Independent Person support provided to young people in police custody; and
- to divert young people, primarily refugee and newly arrived young people, from progression to higher levels of the criminal justice system.

YRIPP is fully operational in Dandenong, Springvale, Footscray, Sunshine, Broadmeadows, Sunbury, Reservoir, Preston and Shepparton police stations. Under YRIPP, police at

these stations have access to a 1300 telephone number. Upon calling the number, a trained, including culturally trained, Independent Person is deployed to attend a police interview with a young person under 17 years of age who is suspected of committing an offence.

The 1300 telephone number also provides young people at the above stations with access to free, 24 hour, 7 day a week telephone legal advice through a Victoria Legal Aid solicitor.

Recognising that the point of police interview offers an ideal opportunity for re-engaging disconnected young people, Independent Persons under YRIPP are trained to refer young people to health and welfare support services as appropriate.

For further information, contact Sally Reid, YRIPP Manager, at YACVic on 9612 8916 or sreid@yacvic.org.au.



## New guide for offenders in the Magistrates' Court

Victoria Legal Aid has produced a new edition of its free booklet 'Your Day in Court'.

The booklet is a general guide for people who have been charged with a criminal offence in the Magistrates' Court.

This edition is a substantial revision of previous versions. New content includes information about Magistrates' Court programs, criminal records, bail, case flow and outcomes if you are found guilty, plus sample court documents and letters and a new glossary explaining common legal terms.

The information in the booklet applies to offenders:

- aged 17 or over at the time of committing the offence or
- who were under 17 when they committed the offence but turn 18 before their first court date, as these offenders are dealt with by the Magistrates' Court rather than the Children's Court. (There is a possibility that the Children's Court will increase its age limit to 18 within the next 12 months but this is the situation at present.)

VLA also produces 'The Road to Court', a guide to traffic offences in the Magistrates' Court.

All VLA publications are free of charge. To order these guides or to find out more about VLA publications, call 9269 0223 or email Chris Shelley at [chrishh@vla.vic.gov.au](mailto:chrishh@vla.vic.gov.au)

You can also download most VLA booklets from its website:

<http://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/publications.cfm?publication=1>

# Sudan: A Call to Action by Chris Varney

Realistically any young person looking at the world today can be fairly overwhelmed by the issues affecting our global community. If we have a look at the daily newspapers we are bombarded with issues such as the War on Terror, the latest update on Iraq, terrorism, war in Israel/Palestine, Bali in turmoil, refugees and asylum seekers kept in detention, child exploitation, famine, poverty, etc.

It is difficult to be young and wanting to enjoy your youthful years, but also to have to face the world issues that seem to grow with us. The latest humanitarian crisis that is making the headlines is the situation in Sudan. When I read about it, research it and think about it, it's an issue that I along with many other young people are awfully passionate about.

From reading about the political, religious, territorial, social and cultural differences Sudan faces within its population I've become increasingly confused about whether I can do anything to help. What I've told myself is....rather than try to understand the complexities, understand the need and the effort that we can take in order to help the Sudanese.

I think it's very daunting to know that tens of thousands of Sudanese people are living in humpies, without shelter from the heat. In the Kalma refugee camp, 70,000 people are living in dreadful conditions with very limited food, water and sanitation. When you think of 200,000 refugees fleeing Sudan for neighbouring Chad due to violence and conflict in the western Sudan region of Darfur, it's hard to believe that we share the same planet.

Even though we can be encouraged by the recent peace agreement between North and South Sudan, the large - scale problems in Darfur and the Shilluk Kingdom are becoming dramatically worse. For instance there are currently 1.2 million internally displaced people within Darfur itself.

From being involved with Australian aid agency, World Vision, I know that such organizations are doing all that they can to prevent this situation exploding into a full scale catastrophe. However, humanitarian agencies are faced with the difficulty of the rains,



which make the situation worse daily in Sudan with diseases like cholera, measles and malaria threatening to become an epidemic at any time.

Therefore, the situation for refugees is hazardous and leaves them extremely vulnerable. With the rainy season having commenced, more and more roads will become impassable. In the Bahai region, many of the estimated 18,000 refugees are camped in ouaddis (dried out river basins) that will turn into raging floods in the next few weeks. We can imagine that if action is not undertaken swiftly to move these people, the situation will become critical, if not fatal.

With the intention of administering short-term relief and long-term rehabilitation, World Vision intends to distribute food at camps in Chad and to 250,000 beneficiaries in Darfur. Non-food items are also going to be delivered by the NGO, including thousands of blankets, plastic sheeting, water purification tablets, mosquito nets and kitchen sets to chronically ill Sudanese families. Already there have been three separate relief flights from Europe bringing aid to high refugee prevalent areas and delivered by organisations working in the region.

## What can young people do?

I write this article knowing full well that I have no income, so I can't contribute financially to the Sudan emergency appeal and I'm no politician so I can't change Australia's policy on relief aid, but I can change the mindsets of

other young people. As concerned young people towards the Sudan crisis, it is important that we engage our fellow youth in what's happening in Sudan. We don't want to reflect back in ten years time about what we didn't do when Sudan's need was the greatest as it is now. So I implore all of us to start talking about it. If you're a young person concerned about this crisis, kindle your concern in others. You may want to become more informed on the issue so you can run a fundraiser or advocacy session to raise awareness about the ongoing plight of the Sudanese. If so you can find out more information on the crisis how you can respond and/or donate by calling the World Vision hotline on 13 32 40 or log onto [www.worldvision.com](http://www.worldvision.com).

Chris Varney

Youth Ambassador for World Vision  
YACVic Youth Reference Group member

# Casual work - reality bite for young workers

**It is interesting that employers seem to believe that young people prefer to work as casuals. There is a belief that it benefits the employee as well as the employer. But the reality is quite the opposite.**

A major new study released recently explodes this myth of the 'happy casual.' It found that 75% of respondents would prefer a permanent job either fulltime or permanent part-time. In areas where many young people are employed such as retail, accommodation, cafes and restaurants, between 44% and 59% of workers are employed as casuals.

The study, *Only A Casual: How Casual Work Affects Employees, Households and Communities in Australia*, conducted by the University of Adelaide, was presented at an ACTU conference on Casual and Insecure Employment in early August. Speaking at the conference ACTU President Sharan Burrow said: "This study disproves the myth that casuals prefer the 'flexibility' of casual work and don't want permanent jobs."

## The myth of flexibility

That young people prefer casual work is a myth for the majority of casuals. What the young worker finds is they are expected to be on tap, always ready to drop what they are doing. They have to take what they are offered because to refuse may mean an assumption they are not interested, they are seen to be unreliable. The work is unpredictable which effects the hours worked and their income, they are not given access to training and promotion opportunities, all of which creates a feeling of marginalisation.

The majority of casual workers believe their jobs are not 'flexible' in ways that suit them - these workers felt they are on call rather than in charge of working time. One worker who changed from casual to permanent employment stated she has "lost the casual loading which was nice in the pay cheque but would pick 'permanent' over 'casual' any day because I have my life back."

Three quarters of the casual workers studied would prefer permanent jobs so that they could access paid sick and holiday leave, improve their job security and get more respect in the workplace.

## Casualisation of the workforce

In the last fourteen years there has been a massive growth in casual work, in fact a 76% rise since 1990 and a 21% rise since 1996.

Casual employment is a good way to deal with short-term and irregular fluctuations in labour demand but as most casuals will tell you, they simply aren't engaged on a short-term or irregular basis. More than 1.2 million workers (54%) have been in their current job for more than a year and 110,000 plus workers (5%) are still casual having been in the same job for more than 10 years.

Three quarters of all casuals still expect to be with their current employer or business in 12 months time and that the same proportion work to some form of fixed roster.

## Young workers want MORE than flexibility

Many workers want more stable employment such as permanent part-time. This was the preference shown by a cross section of people including young and older workers, students, workers from various industries and occupations, with and without dependents.

Workers want to work permanently so that they know what their annual wage is, can have holidays, and predictable time off. They also want the security of sick leave instead of having to work when ill. Having no guaranteed income effects more than just flexibility, it effects a person's ability to pay the rent, and to save money, instead of worrying about whether they will be called in tomorrow or have their shift cancelled because there may not be enough customers.

*"I want the stability and knowing that everyday I could have a job without just... you know, if something goes wrong they're just going to get rid of me." (Monique, 24)*

Other workers talk about being 'respected for the job you do and being seen as an important part of the team' instead of being casual and being 'treated differently'. Of being called in to do work that permanent workers see as 'their overtime', and being abused for taking it, of never being invited to Christmas parties despite having worked for years in the same workplace.

The reality for many young people is that as a casual worker they experience lower pay, poorer conditions and fewer training and career opportunities. The ongoing effect of this can be profound. With years of working in jobs that offer no prospects, no respect for the work they do, low and inconsistent wages that exclude them from applying for loans, buying a house, buying a car, etc, it means that a large section of the Australian population is missing out on a future. It is an issue that will affect the future of the Australian workforce as much as it affects the future happiness and stability of the young worker.

For more information on issues raised, go to the Australian Council of Trade Unions website [www.actu.asn.au](http://www.actu.asn.au)

For a full copy of the report *Only A Casual: How Casual Work Affects Employees, Households and Communities in Australia*, you can download a PDF from the ACTU website above.

*Information was taken from ACTU media releases about the casualisation of the Australian workforce. Information also taken from speeches given at the ACTU conference on Casual and Insecure Employment by the ACTU Secretary Greg Combet (3 August) and Shadow Minister for Workplace Relations, Craig Emerson (2 August)* ■

# Binge Drinking - Downing to Drowning

By Amy Blake



**It starts off with just one. Then before you know it, you've already finished your second and you're downing the third. By now any intention to stop has vanished and you're wondering what to drink next.**

This is a common scenario that gets played out every weekend at pubs, clubs and bars around Melbourne. Sadly, the lead actors are usually people too young to be parents but old enough to vote and drive. Not exclusive to the bright lights of the city, tickets to garages and halls in suburbia and regional Victoria can also be bought. It doesn't matter if you're male or female, white, yellow, brown or black because there will always be some place for you to rehearse this act.

Thoughts about this play vary. For some it's the normal night out but those more clued would recognise this as the disturbing trend known as 'binge drinking'. The term, 'binge drinking' is difficult to define but that was the reason why professionals, youth and community representatives gathered recently at the Melbourne Town Hall. In a first ever, the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) combined with the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic) hosted a youth binge drinking forum; "Is getting pissed getting pathetic?"

It was 'Drug Action Week', the perfect time to raise awareness about this problem... because yes... alcohol is a drug. Recent statistics show that in Victoria, alcohol is attributed to three deaths every day. After all, alcohol is still the most popular drug, with 80 per cent of the Australian population believed to have consumed it over the past 12 months.

From the onset, it became apparent that the forum would focus on those aged between 12 and 25. It was also clear that research can't really define what a 'binge' is. When it comes to drinking, Dr. John Howard a Clinical Director and Researcher at the Ted Noffs Foundation suggested that 'binging' was closely linked to quantity. He said that it was an assumed drinking pattern, which stated, "have fun now and keep drinking until you fall over". Most experts believe three or more drinks are the sign of a 'binge'.

*Brad Rowswell, 18, represented a young person's perspective and made it clear that 'binge drinking' doesn't just happen by accident. He said that it was the result of people going out with the intention of getting drunk.*

With this in mind, alarming statistics and issues were raised. Everyone agreed that drinking and its problems were not exclusive to Victorians or even the youth. It appears to be a cultural phenomenon that both adults and youth partake in. However, young people are easily singled out. Paula Grogan from YACVic said that this happened because the message is to try and get in early before more harm can be done.

Over the past few years researchers have noticed that young women are drinking more (almost as much as young men) and that self-identified 'heavy drinking' is starting at a much younger age.

*Donna Gross, also voicing a young person's perspective said that alcohol advertisements were partly to blame and should be banned. Too many young people are enticed by catchy slogans. 'Jim Beam - real friends, real*

*bourbon' was just one ad mentioned.*

On top of this, alcohol is being marketed in all the wrong shapes and forms. Geoff Munro the Director of the Community Alcohol Action Network called for some corporate responsibility, suggesting that products like 'Tia-Maria Tim Tams' and 'Magnum Vice Creams' trivialised the alcoholic substance and turned them into mere flavours.

Such an extensive topic, made it difficult for any agreeable solutions to be reached. But thanks to the forum, no group was forgotten or suggestion unnoted. From a clinical perspective to an Indigenous understanding, all areas were covered. Even positive experiences and benefits of drinking were mentioned. But by the end of the day, it was well known that 'binge drinking' created adverse outcomes in young people. Unprotected sex, increased rates in violence and crime, conflict, relationship difficulties, mental health and organ damage were just some recalled. The most extreme is clearly death; an option no actor should be faced with.

There are already help lines, alcohol education, pricing controls, labelling requirements, adult responsibilities, legal liabilities, zero tolerance for drinking and driving, government messages and treatment programs in place all to stop the problem from escalating. But really the only person with control is the person who controls your drinks...you.

A full report on the Forum can be found at <http://www.yacvic.org.au/pages/policy/publications.htm>

*Amy Blake is an 18 year old Journalism Student at RMIT* ■



# DON'T CALL ME BABY 'COS I DON'T WANT YOUR KISSES

When an election is called, the babies of the world must feel a sinking feeling in their little stomachs. The hoardes will soon arrive, wearing suits and wandering through shopping malls as the cameras roll. When these creatures leave their natural habitat in Canberra to campaign, the babies know that soon a big sloppy politically-motivated kiss will be coming their way.

## Won't somebody please think of the children?

I'm reminded of Judas kissing the cheek of Jesus before betraying him to a horrible fate. What lies ahead for these kissable kids? Only 6% of young people who were surveyed by the Democrats in Youth Poll last year said they trusted politicians, and they have good reason. The kiss on their bald baby-sized heads is a Judas kiss. It is a photo opportunity, an election campaign tool, a sham. As they grow into adolescence, they will find themselves ignored and abandoned by that same hoarde of suits.

Young people have been screwed over by governments again and again, and yet political parties and the media still ask why most teenagers aren't interested in politics. Young people - whose concerns are not on the Government's agenda - can't be expected to sit up and listen until a few things around the 'house' change.

Three quarters of the young people surveyed in Youth Poll wanted more young people in Parliament. Instead of getting the middle aged suits to stick up for them, many young people are now knocking on the door and saying 'let us in'. Who better to represent young people in parliament than the young people themselves?

The Howard Government doesn't want young people to get involved in politics. He doesn't even want them voting, if he can help it. In May this year, the Howard Government tried to pass new legislation that would close the electoral rolls at the time the election is called, which would have prevented many young people from having the chance to enrol. In 2001, 83,000 young voters registered for their first election in the week after the poll was

announced.

In the last issue of YIKES, Michelle Blanchard talked about the problems young people still face in accessing healthcare and some of the inadequacies of the Government's so-called 'safety net'. There was also an article from Luke Bo'sher talking about the need for Larry Anthony and other politicians to properly fund and listen to a range of independent youth affairs groups and consultancy bodies instead of trying to take away the voices of Australian youth, or limit those voices to a select and small group of young people.

How surprising then, that young people are increasingly disengaging from the political process here in Australia. From cradle to campus, from healthcare to HECS, from community voice to voting, young people are being stuffed around by this government. Rural young people, homeless young people, disabled young people, Indigenous young people, same-sex attracted young people - all of them deserve a better deal, a better future.

Young people have great potential to be passionate, energetic, and visionary members of the Federal Parliament. Their perspective could be a real breath of fresh air in Australian politics.

*Jess Healy is the State Youth Spokesperson for the Australian Democrats in Victoria. She is also their Lead Senate Candidate for Victoria in the upcoming federal election. If elected, Jess (who is 19) would be the youngest person ever to be elected to the federal parliament.* ■

## New YACVic Communications Officer

I am delighted to be working at YACVic as the new Communications Officer.

The job combines a lot of my previous work experience and offers some new challenges for me. I have a fine arts degree, majoring in sculpture and an Advanced Diploma in electronic design and interactive media from RMIT. As well as working at YACVic, I run my own part-time business - Louladesign - a graphic design business.

I have previously worked in a youth refuge in NSW and as an assistant to the events manager at the Also Foundation in Melbourne.

Work to me means being passionate about what I spend my time doing. I relish the opportunity to participate in the community on social justice and equity issues, helping to create a vibrant, tolerant and diverse society. I also love cats.

I look forward to working with you in the future.

Louise McDonald ■



# Fringe Benefits?

Youth Affairs Council of Victoria Inc. ABN 39 774 045 170

Young people on the edge of policy and place

## Registration form

Your name

Position (if applicable)

Organisation (if applicable)

Address

Suburb/Town  State  Postcode

Phone  Fax

Email

Yes I am under 25  Yes I would like to receive the regular youth sector news bulletins via email from YACVic.

### Registration Fees

Please note YACVic will sponsor a number of free places for young people\*. We also encourage organisations to sponsor young people to attend this conference. Please call us on (03) 9612 8999 for more information about sponsorship.

\* These will be targeted at young people accessing, rather than employed by, youth services and other agencies.

Young person (under 25): **One Day** - \$25  **Two Days** - \$50

YACVic Member: **One Day** - \$110  **Two Days** - \$200

Non-Member: **One Day** - \$145  **Two Days** - \$260

If you are nominating for one day only please print which day you will be attending:

Conference dinner (Wednesday 6 October at the conference venue):

**Young people** (18-25) - \$30  **Others** - \$60  Please specify any dietary requirements or other special needs you have:

*All prices include GST*

### Payment

Total amount paid: \$

Yes my cheque or money order payable to Youth Affairs Council of Victoria Inc. is enclosed

Credit Card:  Visa  Mastercard  Bankcard

Name on card

Card number \_ \_ \_ \_ - \_ \_ \_ \_ - \_ \_ \_ \_ - \_ \_ \_ \_ Expiry date \_\_ / \_\_

Signature

Please send me information about the conference in the post as I don't have email access

**Send** your completed form with your payment to:

#### FRINGE BENEFITS

C/ - Youth Affairs Council of Victoria  
Level 6, 1 Elizabeth St  
Melbourne 3000  
Ph: (03) 9612 8999  
Fax: (03) 9620 4802  
Email: info@yacvic.org.au

For accommodation, transport and program details, please see the conference website:

[www.yacvic.org.au/conference](http://www.yacvic.org.au/conference)

Call us on (03) 9612 8999 for more information.

#### OFFICE USE ONLY

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# Up Coming Events

## Seminars

### Master of Youth Health & Education Management (MYHEM)

The Master of Youth Health and Education Management (MYHEM) is for practitioners in the health, education, youth and community service sectors and all those who share the vision of working together to solve problems facing young people.

Co-ordinated by the University of Melbourne's Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, MYHEM provides leaders, managers and practitioners with the opportunity to:

- Develop skills to lead cross-sectoral practice;
- Conduct a community-based research and capacity-building project; and
- Address real workplace challenges in a stimulating learning environment.

Presenters: Professor Johanna Wyn and Dr Ani Wierenga

Date: Tuesday 28th September 2004

Time: 6pm until 7.30pm

Where: Frank Tate Room (211) Level 2, Alice Hoy Building, University of Melbourne

To register your attendance or interest, please contact Melbourne Education via email or telephone: Emma Forehan

Melbourne Education Student Centre

Alice Hoy Building

University of Melbourne Vic 3010

Telephone: +61 3 8344 4259

Facsimile: +61 3 8344 0151

Email: education-events@unimelb.edu.au

### 'Escape or lifestyle? An exploration of the links between drug use, homophobia and sexual diversity in young people'

Turning Point's next public seminar in its 'Talking Point' series on 10 September will be presented by Dr Lynne Hillier, a Senior Research Fellow and social researcher at The Australian Research Centre in Sex Health and Society, La Trobe University. Her research is mainly on the sexual health and well being of marginalised young people.

Using quantitative data and stories from 750 same sex attracted young people she will focus on their use of drugs and the context in

Yikes! would like to begin a 'bits and spits' page. If you've heard anything or seen anything that got you laughing or got you spitting let me know. Please send the 'bit' to info@yacvic.org.au or post your clippings to 6/1 Elizabeth St, Melbourne 3000.

which they use them.

Friday 10 September

1 - 2 pm

142 Gertrude St, Fitzroy

The seminar is free. All welcome, bookings essential, on 8413 8413

## Training and workshops

### To be Frank - Young People Talk About Mental Health

Come and hear from the experts. In this workshop young people will talk about their experiences of mental illness and recovery. It will be co-presented by young people from ORYGEN Youth Health and the Paying Attention to Self (PATS) program at the Centre for Adolescent Health.

At the end of the workshop, participants will be able to describe key issues relating to:

- What is it like for a young person who experiences a mental illness
- What is it like to use the mental health system and other support services
- What helps young people engage with support services
- How workers and young people can work together to improve outcomes for young people with mental health issues

Date: 15 Sep 2004

Venue: Treacy Centre, Parkville (Melways 29 F12), Melbourne

Contact: Sandra Biggs at ORYGEN Youth Health on (03) 8346 8213

E-mail: sbiggs@unimelb.edu.au

## Conferences

### YACVic 2004 bi-yearly conference

Fringe benefits? Young people on the edge of policy and place.

Date: 6-7th October

Venue: Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre, Ferres Boulevard, South Morang Meways ref: 183 A10

Approximately 50 minutes north from the CBD Fringe Benefits is a conference for young people, workers with young people and community leaders. It will explore the ways in which young people have varied and diverse experiences of occupying the fringes, both positive and negative. Key focus areas are young people on the fringes geographically, politically and culturally. The conference program includes a range of challenging and stimulating keynote presentations and workshops. Please visit [www.yacvic.org.au/conference/](http://www.yacvic.org.au/conference/) for more information.

### Home truths: Stop sexual assault and domestic violence.

Presented by the Centres Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, Victoria, this will be a national forum for service providers, policy-makers, academics and victim/survivors to discuss, debate and highlight practice and policy issues relating to contemporary issues in sexual assault, and domestic and family violence.

Sponsored by the Australian Government Office of the Status of Women, and with the support of the Victorian Department of Human Services, and the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation.

Date: 15 - 17 Sep 2004

Venue: Southgate, Melbourne, Australia.

Contact : 03 9439 3855

Fax: 03 9431 5167

Email: clems.sg@bigpond.com

### Minding Nemo (New Education and Mental Health Opportunities in Schools)

A one day conference showcasing health promotion projects in schools. Brought to you by: The School Focused Youth Service Coordinators Network, The Mental Health Promotion Officers Statewide Network, Mind-Matters, DE&T

When: Friday 8th October

Where: Melbourne University Private 442 Auburn Rd Hawthorn

Who Should Attend: Anybody working in or with schools in Victoria.

Contact: John Mullane

Mental Health Promotion Officer

ORYGEN Youth Health/

RCH Mental Health Service

Ph: 0418 321 403

Fax: 9347 9099

Email: jmullane@unimelb.edu.au