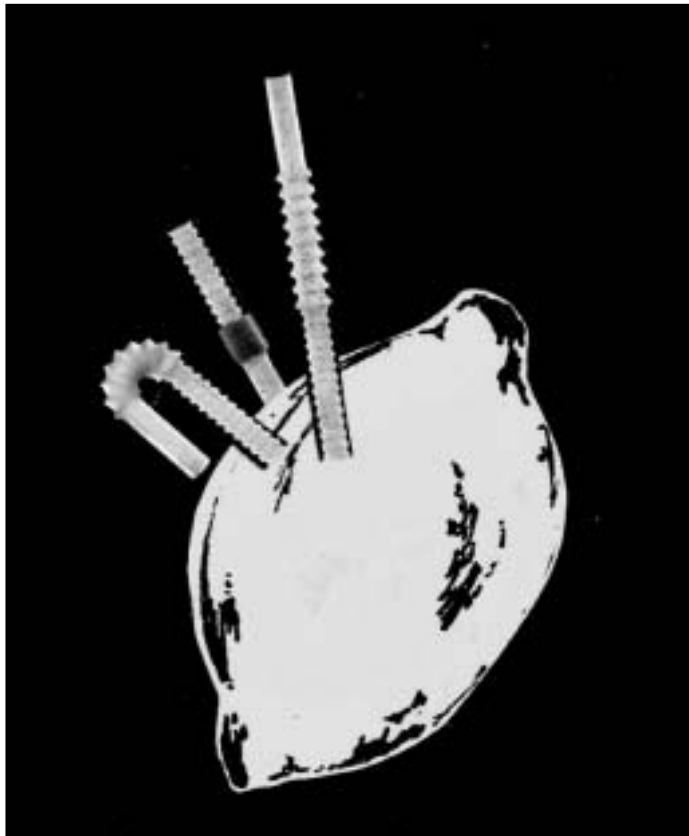


Will the New Workplace Laws Suck for Young People?

YACVic and Job Watch Inc are launching a postcard campaign entitled *New Workplace Laws Suck?* to find out from young people the impact on them of the new industrial relations laws and to inform them of assistance available if problems arise at work.

We are launching the campaign because we are concerned about the effects of these new laws on young workers, one of the most vulnerable groups in the labour market.

We also understand that a large proportion of young people are unaware of their workplace rights and where to go for help and information if problems arise. This campaign is also an opportunity to inform young workers of available resources.



The new industrial relations laws, the *Workplace Relations Amendment (Work Choices) Act 2005*, came into effect in March this year. The laws represent a substantial change to the industrial relations system.

One of the main changes introduced by the legislation is an increase in the range of categories of workers excluded from accessing unfair dismissal laws to include: employees of businesses of up to 100 employees; seasonal employees; employ-

ees who have been employed for a period of less than 6 months in businesses of over 100 employees; employees who were terminated for genuine operational reasons or reasons which include genuine operational reasons.

The widening of the exclusion categories means that the vast majority of employees in the workforce will no longer have any protection against harsh, unjust and unreasonable termination. In other words people can be terminated for no valid reason or justification. The result is that those who are in particularly vulnerable positions like young people may be reluctant to complain about unfair work conditions, or unhealthy/unsafe conditions because of the fear of losing their job.

Although workers will still have access to 'unlawful dismissal' legislation, this is a much narrower option compared to unfair dismissal.

Another major change under the new IR laws is the replacement of the 'No Disadvantage Test', which individual agreements (AWAs) and collective agreements had to meet, with a lesser standard, the Australian Fair Pay and Conditions Standard.

...CONTINUED PAGE 3

This issue...

Our April edition of Yikes! lead article looks at the new **Workplace Laws** and the potential problems for young people and puts you on notice of a postcard campaign coming up. **Populism and Public Space** is discussed by Jen Rose and Anna Forsyth. We also introduce the new **Youth and Disability Advocacy Service** and its new Coordinator **Dr George Taleporos** and Janet Jukes gives tribute to Danny Sandor. All our other regulars are in here so I reckon you should get cracking....

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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!

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 **17 May 2006**

INSERTS & ADVERTISING

If you wish to include an insert or advertise in Yikes! please contact the YACVic Communications Officer on (03) 9267 3766 or email info@yacvic.org.au.

Editorial

April already!

We're nearly a quarter of the way through the calendar year, and so much has happened already.

As you'll be aware the Office for Youth have been consulting all over the state on what a refreshed youth policy for Victoria might look like. I hope you have had some input into those discussions, either in person through the many consultations organised by the RYANs, YACVic and other organisations or through the online surveys.

YACVic will be participating in the next phase of discussions over the coming weeks to help shape the final document. You can see our formal submission to the Office for Youth on the first phase consultations on our website www.yacvic.org.au/pages/policy/submissions.htm.

Catch up in this issue on what YACVic has been up to over the last few months. Check out our introduction to George Taleporos, the new Co-ordinator of the Youth Disability Advocacy Service and his article on what the service is all about.

Jen Rose, YACVic's Policy Officer and Anna Forsyth, the Youth Homelessness Policy Officer for Council to Homeless Persons, have written an excellent piece on young people and public space, it appears on pages 4/5.

Hear about what Andrew Lavin from the PAG has been working on in terms of YACVic's policy platform on page 8. And find out what's happening in that week of the year when we all get busier than we ever thought was possible - Youth Week! See State Government news on page 11.

I've been working behind the scenes towards a National Youth Conference in 2007 to be held here in Melbourne. It's been nine years since an event of this scale has been held for the youth affairs sector and we think it's about time it happened again. I'll have more information for you in the next issue of Yikes!

On a sadder note, many of you will be aware that Danny Sandor passed away in late February. Danny was well known in many communities and organisations in Melbourne and abroad and was a passionate campaigner for the rights of children and young people.

Danny's huge intellect, his boundless energy and enthusiasm for his work made him an invaluable colleague, friend and ally in the youth affairs sector. He will be sadly missed.



Georgie Ferrari
Executive Officer
gferrari@yacvic.org.au

Will the New Workplace Laws Suck for Young People?

...CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE. Previously individual agreements (AWAs) and collective agreements were required to meet a no disadvantage test based on conditions contained in the designated award. This meant that the overall conditions of an agreement were compared against those provided by a designated award, which included overtime pay rates, higher rates of pay for shift and weekend work and rest breaks, to ensure that workers were not worse off.

The replacement of the 'No Disadvantage Test' means that all new workplace agreements only have to meet the Australian Fair Pay and Conditions standard. This standard comprises five conditions: minimum hourly rates of pay (including classifications) and casual loadings; and the legislated conditions of annual leave, personal leave, parental leave and maximum number of ordinary hours.

If workers want conditions above the standard then they will have to negotiate with their employer. Young people often do not have the necessary skill and knowledge to negotiate with their

employer and are likely to be especially disadvantaged in any individual negotiations. They will often have little to bargain with, particularly if they are entering the labour market for the first time, as they won't have the skills, training and experience compared to other groups.

YACVic and Job Watch believe it is important that the effects of these new laws on young people as well as other vulnerable groups and the community in general are monitored and assessed. The postcard will be an easy way for young people to let us know what's going on and to access advice and information if needed.

The postcards will be distributed widely in cafes, pubs, schools and universities. If you would like to receive copies, please contact YACVic on 9267 3799 or email info@yacvic.org.au

Vera Smiljanic is a Research Worker with Job Watch, an Employment Rights Legal Centre. For more information on Job Watch go to <http://www.job-watch.org.au/>

A VOICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES:

INTRODUCING THE YOUTH AND DISABILITY ADVOCACY SERVICE

The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, in partnership with Youthlaw and the Disability Discrimination Legal Service has been funded by the Department of Human Services to establish the Youth and Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS). To date, the service has undertaken a consultation phase to find out what young people with disabilities would like from the service. From these consultations, it became clear that young people with disabilities wanted the service to give them an opportunity to speak out on the issues that were of concern to them. Issues that came out strongly in the consultation were around the lack of accessible recreation for young people with disabilities and the problem of bullying in schools.

The service has now entered the setup phase with the employment of a coordinator for YDAS, Dr George Taleporos who will establish, promote and run the new service. George will be primarily involved in systemic advocacy for the service, however, in the second half of 2006, the service will commence providing individual advocacy. It is expected that the individual and systemic advocacy will complement each other to provide the best outcomes for young people with disabilities.

George has extensive experience in disability advocacy and you can learn more about him on page 6. One of George's first tasks is to set up a steering committee of young people with disabilities to ensure that the work of the service is relevant to them and that it is actively addressing their advocacy needs. *"This is a fantastic opportunity for young people with disabilities to get involved in advocacy. In my experience within the disability advocacy sector, I have found that it is rare to find a person under 25 who is actively involved in disability advocacy and this new service will work to change that"* George said.

For a young person with a disability with an interest in disability rights, membership of the steering committee of YDAS is an opportunity to increase their skills, work in a team and participate in disability advocacy. The work of the committee will involve developing policy and campaigns that will increase access for young people with disabilities in a variety of areas including buildings and transport, information and technology, schools and universities, support and equipment, sport and recreation, as well as shows, pubs and clubs.

Members of the steering committee will decide, with other young people, what issues they would like to address and what action they would like to take. For example, the committee may decide to develop a campaign to reduce bullying in schools. Together, they will prioritise what is most important to young people with disabilities.

Members of the steering committee will need to participate in regular meetings and to be available to work with the coordinator of the service and other steering committee members on various tasks from time to time. The minimum time commitment would be 2 hours per month. While participation is voluntary, expenses will be covered by YDAS and access needs will be catered for.

The Youth and Disability Advocacy Service will be launched by Minister Sheryl Garbutt during Youth Week on April 7, 2006 at the YACVic office.

For more information about the service, or to express your interest in joining the steering committee of YDAS or attending the launch, please contact George Taleporos on 03 9267 3755 or 041 281 4851 or email: gtaleporos@yacvic.org.au

Populism, Public Space and Young People

By Anna Forsyth, Youth Policy Officer, Council to Homeless Persons and Jen Rose, Policy Officer, YACVic.

This article first appeared in *Parity* Vol 19, Issue 1 February 2006. *Parity* is published by the Council to Homeless Persons.

Few could deny that the response to the use of public space by young people has been one characterised by increasing control and regulation. When presented with the evidence of recent approaches being recommended by the State Opposition¹ and Inner City Entertainment Precincts Taskforce,² it is hard to argue to the contrary. This paper aims to explore the driving forces behind this reactionary trend and the subsequent impact this is having on young people, particularly those experiencing homelessness. It also attempts to provide a comparative analysis of what makes 'good' and 'bad' public space policy and asks readers to challenge traditional welfare discourse surrounding the treatment of marginalised young people in our community. What we propose, instead, is that young people's access to public space be considered within a 'rights-based' framework.

What is Happening in Private Space to Dictate Current Public Space Discourse?

It is not only in the domain of public space that we see an increasing emphasis on laws which restrict individual liberties under the pretext of improving public safety. The anti-terrorism legislation³ with its introduction of 'control orders', a 'preventative detention' regime and broad questioning, search and seize powers, to name a few, is perhaps the most powerful example of late. In analysing public space policy, it is therefore not surprising that author Catherine Robinson comments that '[T]here has tended to be an emphasis on the ways in which young people enter and threaten or contest already constructed spaces with their own meanings or spatial requirements. This is a view which potentially (re)produces street-frequenting young people's marginalization in hegemonic space, as young people are effectively located outside the processes through which space is produced.'⁴

The view that young people 'threaten or contest' public space is one that is often perpetuated by representations made in the media. Following a two year investigation into the experiences of young people in rural and urban settings, researchers Panelli, Nairn, Atwool and McCormack '...argue that "hanging out" in spaces beyond family and school arenas is presented as problematic behaviour in much of the print data, and...that media writers/editors are producing constructions of young people in "public space" that are primarily negative.'⁵ The researchers identify key media themes surrounding the issue of young people and public space as drunkenness, disorder and the need for supervision.⁶ Our own daily glance over the newspaper headlines is enough to confirm this finding.

Through constant negative imaging of young people in public space, we participate in the alienation of young people from society and deny this group fundamental rights associated with citizenship. There is neither sufficient examination of societal deficiencies and systemic flaws impacting on our youth nor recognition of the need to support vulnerable young people in public space. Instead, we see a socially detached response where simplistic stereotypes justify simplistic laws and policy formation.

What are the Effects for Young People of Current Public Space Discourse?

Heightened regulation leading to the increasing exclusion of young people from public space only compounds typical adolescent experiences of difference, isolation and uncertainty. This can be particularly damaging for young homeless people given that for this group, the use of public space is a constant reality dictated by circumstance.

What is often forgotten is that living on the street is a last resort for most young people. A two year longitudinal study of young homeless people in Melbourne, *Project i*, has shown that young people who are forced to permanently occupy public space experience poor physical health, higher levels of anxiety and depression and higher rates of poor mental health and diagnosable mental illness.⁷ Add to this the disempowerment experienced through marginalisation in public space, and we begin to get a clearer picture of the impact exclusionary practices can have on young people who are in most need of support.


Imogen's Story, the account of a young woman experiencing homelessness, is revealing; '[T]he main problem was just wondering why people didn't want me, just like, blaming myself for things that were happening in my life that were completely not under my control. I haven't done anything to cause this, it's just something that's happened - I'd been dealt a bad poker hand. Some get lucky and some don't and that's all there is to it.'⁸

For many young people, access to public space is their only link to social and support networks. Robinson's sociological studies lead her to articulate precisely this point; '[Y]oung people drew on the resources of the city physically and emotionally in building up a sense of 'home' and a sense of self. As well as basic living facilities, the contact with other people during the day...was crucial in helping young people cope with everyday difficulties and develop social skills, as well as dealing with specific housing, health, legal and emotional problems.'⁹

In 2004, the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) published *Health in public spaces*, a report of the work being undertaken through the Arts and Environment Scheme.¹⁰ It was noted in the introduction that '...public spaces can either be health limiting or health enhancing. They can facilitate safe passage for citizens, create access to community resources and instill a sense of community connection and cohesion or they can alienate, isolate and deter people from engagement in public space and life.'¹¹ Policy relating to the use, regulation and development of public spaces will either promote health limiting or health enhancing public spaces, with serious implications for the health and wellbeing of young people.

What can 'negative' and 'positive' public space policy look like?

Unfortunately, policy relating to the regulation of public space is often developed within the context of populist law and order policy agendas. At no time are we more likely to see this type of policy emerging than in an election year and it is no coincidence



that young people, who don't yet vote, are typically targets for such policy and the debate surrounding it. Research shows that punitive public space policy such as that seeking to introduce Anti-Social Behaviour Orders or 'move-on' powers for Police punish already marginalised members of our community, including young people.¹² Young people are also directly implicated in public and media debate seeking to articulate the perceived need for a 'clamping down' on 'antisocial' behaviours in order to make our communities safer.

Poor, reactionary, public space policy (of which the Victorian Liberal Party's '*Combating Anti-Social Behaviour*' Policy is a prime example) panders to perceptions and exacerbates anxiety rather than addressing realities. Within this picture, young people are typically cast as villains and occasionally victims, but not as community stakeholders with the rights to access public spaces freely and without harassment. This role is cast to the pensioner, the mums and dads, the small business owner. Typically this type of policy defines social problems as law and order issues, requiring a get-tough approach and an extension of police powers. It seeks to criminalize behaviours that have not previously been deemed criminal and is designed to show the community that the Party is prepared to take action to preserve the safety of 'decent, law abiding citizens'. It clearly describes an 'us' and a 'them' and seeks, literally, to exclude 'them' from both the realms of public spaces and debate.

Considerations for effective policy to develop and regulate public spaces have been documented in detail in research. At the *Space Invaders? Young People and Public Space Forum*¹³ in 2005, Professor Rob White called on participants to think about public space as a community resource, with public space design and policy placing an emphasis on social inclusion. Professor White also highlighted the importance of constructing comfortable physical environments, of adopting inclusive forms of regulating public space that recognise diversity, and of ensuring young people's participation in the planning, development and use of public space.¹⁴

Dr Phil Crane, in his address to *Space Invaders?* explained that there are two typical forms of response which tend to influence policy relating to young people and public space: "*For a complex of reasons....the resolution of pressures and issues regarding young people often takes the form of increased regulation, displacement and/or specific provisions to encourage 'purposeful activity' by young people. Such responses are usually underpinned by behaviourist logic - that the issue is about discouraging or encouraging young people in respect to particular behaviours.*"¹⁵

One example of providing specific provisions for young people can be seen in the development of 'youth specific' spaces. Young people's specific interests are easily overlooked in policy and planning for public spaces and the creation of spaces that are of specific interest to young people can be a really positive investment for a community. However, we argue that it may be more useful to consider the issues surrounding young people

and public space within a rights based framework, rather than simply in a behaviourist or welfare-focussed framework.

At the *Space Invaders?* forum, young people participating highlighted the fact that they nominate and choose the spaces they want to use and that they have specific reasons for doing so. They were also keen to remind the forum that not all young people used skate-parks and that young people's interests, experiences and requirements of public spaces were diverse and extended beyond simply recreational pursuits.

It is crucial that policies relating to the design and regulation of public spaces recognise and acknowledge the rights of all young people to equitable access to public space. This is best achieved when young people have the opportunity to participate in decision making processes that impact on their lives, communities and the public spaces they access. Advocates for young people need to actively combat the influence of regressive, populist law and order approaches on policies relating to the regulation of public spaces in order to ensure that young people, and particularly young people experiencing homelessness, do not experience further marginalisation.

¹ Liberal Victoria *Combating Anti-Social Behaviour*, Policy Information for the 2006 State Election.

² Inner City Entertainment Precincts Taskforce (2005) *A Good Night for all: options for improving safety and amenity in inner city entertainment precincts*.

³ Anti-Terrorism Act (No 2) 2005.

⁴ Robinson, C *Creating Space, Creating Self: Street-frequenting Youth in the City and Suburbs*, Journal of Youth Studies, Vol 3, No 4, 2000, p 430.

⁵ Atwool, N, McCormack, J, Nairn, K & Panelli, R "Hanging out" print media constructions of young people in "public space", Youth Studies Australia, Vol 21, No 4, 2002, p 38.

⁶ Ibid, p 42.

⁷ Mallett, S, Myers, P, Rosenthal, D & Rossiter, B (2003) *Living well? Homeless young people in Melbourne*, The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne.

⁸ Edwards, J, Keys, D, Mallett, S & Rosenthal, D *Getting Out: Young People's True Stories*, Project i, Melbourne, p 35.

⁹ Robinson, op cit, p 439.

¹⁰ McLeod, J, Meade, J & Pryor, S (2004) *Health in public spaces: Promoting mental health and wellbeing through the Arts and Environment Scheme*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth).

¹¹ Ibid, p 4.

¹² The NSW Ombudsman reviewed the powers granted to police in the NSW Summary Offences Act 1988, to give direction to a person or persons to move on. The review found the powers were overwhelmingly utilised to direct young people and Indigenous people to move on. See the Ombudsman's report *Policing public safety: Report under s.6 of the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Police and Public Safety) Act. 1998*. Sydney, 1999. The UK Antisocial Behaviour Act (2003) was reviewed last year by the Youth Justice Board, reporting that young people (under the age of 18) represented around 54% of those being issued with an Anti-Social Behaviour Orders being imposed. Furthermore, 15.5% of these resulted in that young person being placed in custody. See Brogan, D.(2005) *Anti-Social cont page 10 Behaviour Orders:* ..CONT PAGE10

Presenting the new YDAS Coordinator...over to you George



My name is George Taleporos and I recently started working at YACVic as the coordinator of the Youth and Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS). See page 6 for more about the new service.

I am slightly too old to call myself a young person, but as I am 30 years old, it doesn't feel like that long ago for me! I have had a physical disability since birth which has become more severe as I have gotten older. I now use a ventilator during the night to help me to breathe and a motorised wheelchair to get around. I also use attendant support workers and have a lot of support through family and friends. Basically, I am high maintenance and there would be a lot of people out of work and with nothing to do if I wasn't around!

In the 80s when I had big hair and a lot of it, I went to a special school and got to travel in a big blue bus with the words Spastic Society splashed along the side. It was around the time when the word 'integration' was becoming more fashionable than my big hair and so I was slowly mainstreamed into a regular high school. When I finished high school, I spent 10 years studying at university and finished my PhD in psychology in 2002. My PhD research was around body image and sexuality issues and how they are affected by physical disability. Some say I'm like the Doctor Feelgood for people with disabilities!

My previous work has been in the areas of advocacy, training and community development. I have been involved in delivering disability awareness training to local government as well as disability service providers. I've worked with various disability advocacy organisations including Action for Community Living, and the Disability Resource Centre. I have been involved in setting up new services as well as advocating on systemic issues around community living and attendant support for people with disabilities.

I am a self-confessed workaholic and have been known to regularly violate social norms around acceptable working hours. I laugh at the concept of an eight-hour workday.

In addition to my day job, I host and assist with the production of a community television show called No Limits. While it

has not reached the point where I am being mobbed by fans in the street, I do get the occasional fan mail and brief expressions of admiration from the public who regularly approach me to let me know that they enjoy the show.

I also have an interest in comedy and went through a stage where I thought I was going to be the next Dave Hughes and regularly performed stand-up at sleazy pubs until I realised that I no longer wanted to risk my life being dragged up and down inaccessible performance spaces. My proudest moment in my comedy career was coming third in the State finals of the Melbourne International Comedy Festival Raw Comedy competition.

In my short time at YACVic I have noted that the occupational health and safety incident report folder is a great source of comedy so check it out if you're up for a giggle next time you're in the office! I am thrilled to be a part of the YACVIC team and to work on such an important and innovative project.

My goal is to make other advocacy organisations extremely jealous about what we have going for young people with disabilities at YACVic! Please feel free to call me, write to me or watch me on Monday nights at 7:30 p.m. on Channel 31 (please excuse the blatant plug).

*George Taleporos, YDAS Coordinator
gtaleporos@yacvic.org.au*

What's the Youth Reference Group been up to?

The year is well underway, and things have kicked off with a bang for the Youth Reference Group. Members continue to meet one Saturday afternoon a month to work on a whole range of issues relevant to YACVic and young people across Victoria.

February saw the YRG members not only participating in a consultation on the Office for Youth's new youth policy, but also facilitating the discussion for the day. There was no shortage of ideas and viewpoints on what are the key issues for young people in Victoria, and the discus-

sion could have continued well in to the evening! The key themes raised from the consultation were fed back to the Office for Youth, and a draft policy will be developed over the coming months. The YRG will have further opportunity to engage in this process and will be providing comment on the draft policy when released.

Not content with simply reacting to issues as they arise, the YRG are forming 'working groups' to tackle a range of topics that members believe are particularly important for young people. This will allow the YRG the opportunity to take on a proactive role in developing projects of interest.

Working groups are currently being developed around the themes of Children's Rights and Human Rights, Housing and Homelessness, and Mental Health. The Youth Reference Group is also keen to extend an invitation to anyone else who is interested in these issues.

So, if you're a young person who would like to work on a project in any of these key areas, or perhaps you work in the youth sector and are able to provide the YRG with some guidance, we'd love to hear from you! *Just email Larissa, Information and Participation Officer, at info@yacvic.org.au*

Danny Sandor – A Tribute



On Tuesday 21 February, Danny Sandor, children and youth rights advocate and former chairperson of YACVic, died after a courageous fight with cancer.

I wanted to take the opportunity here in Yikes! to pay tribute to Danny's life because his contribution to the regeneration of YACVic, although hidden to many, was colossal. In fact it was Danny's determination to have a strong youth peak that, together with other like minded individuals, ensured that YACVic didn't die and that we were able to redevelop into the strong advocate that we are today.

Danny was the only son of Jewish Hungarian immigrant parents, and at his memorial it was clear to me that his commitment to justice was formed by the strong values that his family, together with his work history in acting, nursing, youth work and, finally, the e law gave him.

Some of you will know Danny through his work with Community Services Victoria in the 1980's and 1990's where he held various management positions involving young people. These included Malmsbury Youth Training Centre, Allambie Reception Centre for children recently made Wards of State, and the Streetwork Project, a unique Victorian protective service for young people who were subject to drug and sexual exploitation in the inner metropolitan suburbs of Melbourne. These roles suited Danny as it provided him with a significant platform for influencing policy and programme development whilst remaining firmly grounded in

developing practical techniques for engaging very disengaged and marginalised young people. As well as paid employment in the youth sector, Danny worked to influence children's and youth policy through his involvement in the leadership of YACVic and Defence for Children International - Australia, National Children's and Youth Law Centre, not to mention the many and various ministerial or high level policy forums.

While Danny studied law and worked as a senior associate to the former Chief Justice of the Family Court, the Honourable Alastair Nicholson, Danny remembered his youth work background and continued to support, often from behind the scenes, children's and youth campaigns and projects. Indeed only last month, and despite his deteriorating health, Danny was working with others on issues including the Victorian human rights charter and, in the federal arena, the terrorism legislation, to make sure that young people were protected.

He preferred working behind the scenes and perhaps as a consequence his true contribution to our community will remain unrecognised.

We have lost a powerhouse of energy and passion. A man who knew how to mix work and play with style and energy, Danny could smell a decent champagne a kilometre away and could dance the youngest and fittest into early retirement.

On a personal note Danny, a dear friend and mentor, challenged me to work harder and better, but most of all to just get on and do it and not let the obstacles (many of my own imagination) stifle my purpose.

It's impossible to recite Danny's many achievements or reflect his full life in these few words. Needless to say we will be reaping the benefits of his prodigious work output and networking for years to come. All those who worked with Danny will remember his powerful intellect, his generosity and passion. Farewell Danny!

Janet Jukes
Former EO of YACVic and National Secretary of Defence for Children International - Australia

Advance Notice: Youth Support Services: Who's Carrying the Can?

**A Forum to address the
gaps in service provision to
young people in Victoria**

**4 May Melbourne
11 May Wangaratta**

VCOSS and YACVic invite you to participate in these forums to discuss the critical need for increased resources and better responses in early support and generalist services for young people in Victoria.

The Forum's objectives are to:

- Further develop an evidence base of the gaps in youth support services
- Highlight the impact of the lack of funded support roles on existing services and young people's wellbeing
- Identify solutions to address current youth support service needs

PARTICIPATE & MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

This will be a solutions focused forum where participants will be asked to identify possible ways forward in addressing the gaps.

Following the forum VCOSS and YACVic will produce a report that will assist in advocacy for greater support services for young people in Victoria.

For further information:
YACVic 9267 3799, VCOSS 9654 5050



Victorian Indigenous Youth Advisory Council Update

VIYAC has had a very exciting month. The second call out for members, which went out in February, was very successful and has brought about the expansion of the Council from 14 to 22 members.

On the 22nd of February VIYAC had its second council meeting. Thirteen Council members attended the day. The meeting was held at Parliament House and the Council were treated to lunch in Parliament Gardens, hosted by the Honourable Gavin Jennings, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

Due to the Council's expansion, many members were meeting for the first time and the day offered a great opportunity for the group to get acquainted. Much of the day was spent discussing issues they believe are affecting Indigenous young people in Victoria. Two main concerns of the group were a lack of respect for country and land by young people and

the effects of chroming which was reported as a problem for several communities.

Part of the day was taken up by a consultation with the Office for Youth, discussing the Government's proposed new Youth Agenda. The group were very passionate about issues brought up during the consultation, especially the need for cultural awareness training to be compulsory and delivered in all schools, organisations, agencies and to be available for the general public.

It was greatly appreciated that the Hon Gavin Jennings was able to spend time with the VIYAC at the consultation after lunch. The Council enjoyed meeting the Minister and look forward to more meetings to share their ideas and perspectives on issues important to young people in their communities.

The next few months are going to be a busy and exciting time for VIYAC. In April,

Zack, a VIYAC Representative from Gippsland, and I will be heading off to Brisbane for the Indigenous Leadership Forum and Conference. Also, the VIYAC are starting work in March on a joint research piece between YACVic and VIYAC. The research will involve VIYAC members participating in an oral history workshop and recording their own stories and perspectives on issues that are important to them and other Koorie young people. April will see the first of several accredited training workshops for the VIYAC with RMIT. The focus of this workshop will be on Submission Writing.

Once again thank you to all those who have helped the VIYAC in any way, we really appreciate it.

Keep spreading the word!

*Jade Colgan, State Coordinator, VIYAC
To contact VIYAC ph 03 9267 3788 or
email on jcolgan@yacvic.org.au*

YACVIC'S POLICY PLATFORM REVIEW

Dear Fellow YACVic Members

I am pleased to have this opportunity to introduce myself to you and to tell you about an exciting new endeavour that is underway. My name is Andrew Lavin and I'm currently serving my second term on the Policy Advisory Group (PAG). I am a Melbourne-based sociologist and will complete a degree in Youth Studies at the end of this academic year.

As you are likely aware, one of YACVic's ongoing goals is to produce policy documents that are both relevant and useful to a variety of stakeholders - young people, government, the youth affairs sector, and the community at large. Our contributions in this respect figure greatly in government policy and programmatic responses. The 2004-2005 Annual Report outlines a broad range of recent inputs that YACVic has had into a number of key inquiries and changes within the youth sector.

As part of the process of ensuring that we continue to produce relevant and sustain-

able material, I am looking inward through a review of YACVic's Policy Platform. This process was last completed in 1996. The Policy Platform clarifies our policy principles: Human Rights, Participation, Flexibility, Collaboration, Early Intervention, Resourcing, Affirmative Action, and Cultural Diversity. It details specifically what these mean to the organisation. Further, the Platform identifies and makes statements about key policy areas for which YACVic has clear field-endorsed positions. These include, for example, housing, employment, health, and the law. It is primarily these 'area statements' that are under review.

Working closely with our Policy Officer Jen Rose and the other members of the PAG, I will examine our current standing in light of present and anticipated climates. The language of the existing Platform will be considered to ensure that it is reflective of the lives of today's young people and that it will continue to serve as a useful tool to the Secretariat and the membership. Each of the policy areas

will be explored and considered in relation to a variety of options for expansion and consolidation, and will be rewritten when appropriate. A draft version of the new Platform will be submitted to the Board in June or July of this year.

Regardless of your level of experience in the development of policy or organisational documentation, you are most welcome to assist in this project. I want to be as certain as possible that YACVic members have the opportunity to share their ideas and experience with me as I formalise an updated Policy Platform.

It is possible that some of you will hear from me in the near future as I seek guidance in relation to specific areas of the sector. But you need not wait for my call! I invite you to ring or email me if you have any desire to contribute or if you have questions about what it is that is taking place. You can ring me on 9267 3799 or send me an email andrew@sociologyaustralia.com

Andrew Lavin, PAG

Policy Update

A new Youth Agenda For Victoria

The Office for Youth have completed consultations with youth service providers and young people in various locations across the state to inform a new State Government youth policy. Participants were asked to provide feedback to assist in steering the direction of the policy and the key outcomes it should aim to achieve. VCOSS and YACVic co-hosted a forum on 16th February at the Melbourne Town Hall, in which youth service providers provided feedback on the policy. The outcomes of the forum provided the basis for YACVic's submission to the Office for Youth which can be downloaded from the YACVic website.

A draft of the new youth policy will be released for comment to a 'critical friends' network around late March or early April.

A youth agenda for Indigenous young people

The Victorian Indigenous Youth Advisory Council provided feedback to the Office for Youth on the new youth agenda. This feedback highlighted the specific experiences and needs of Koorie young people. In response, Aboriginal Affairs Victoria is exploring the possibility of creating a distinct State Government policy for Indigenous young people, to sit alongside the broader Youth Agenda.

A Fairer Victoria for Young People

The Victorian Council of Social Service *A Fairer Victoria Sector Implementation Project* has identified young people as a seventh area of key focus of the project. The project engages both the Victorian community sector and the Victorian Government departments. It seeks to facilitate a cross-sector response to complement a cross-government response to the implementation of the initiatives outlined in the policy. Further information about the project and the strategic focus on young people will be available for the next edition of YIKES.

Parliamentary Inquiry into Retaining Young People in Rural Towns and Communities

The Rural and Regional Services and Development Committee is hosting a

Parliamentary Inquiry into retaining young people in rural towns and communities and are currently calling for submissions from both experts in the field and interested members of the community. Some key questions the Inquiry is seeking responses to include:

- Why young people are leaving the country
- How we can encourage young people to take up residence in our rural towns and communities
- Whether young people who leave for study, work or other short term purposes return to country life
- What factors would influence young people to stay in or return to rural communities

Submissions close on Friday 28th April 2006. The Committee will also be holding public submissions throughout Victoria from April 2006. YACVic will submit to the Inquiry. Further information can be found at www.parliament.vic.gov.au/rrsdc

Office of the Child Safety Commissioner and changes to the role of the Advocate for Children in Care

The Office of the Child Safety Commissioner was established in June 2005 with specific responsibilities under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 to:

- provide advice and recommendations to the Minister about child safety issues
- promote child-friendly and child-safe practices in the community
- review and report on the administration of the Working with Children Act
- in conjunction with Department of Justice, education and inform the community about the operations of that Act
- monitor our of home care services and conduct inquiries into the death of a child who currently/recently was known to Child Protection Services.

The new structure developed within the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner sees that the role of the Advocate for Children in Care does not continue, and that Toby O'Connor, the former Advocate for Children in Care will fill the role of Director, Children in Care and Protection.

Government Response to Body Image Inquiry

Jacinta Allan, Minister for Youth Affairs launched the Government response to the Inquiry into Issues Relating to the Development of Body Image Among Young People and Associated Effects on their Health and Wellbeing in January.

The response outlines twelve recommendations that were made by the Family and Community Development Committee of Parliament. A coordinated whole of Government response to this complex issue was also outlined in the response paper. Some recommendations that the Government has agreed to act on include:

- the development of a Media Code of Conduct
- the more effective use of Community Health Centres to deliver body image programs
- to map existing eating disorder services
- to establish a Community Reference Group to advise Government
- to include Eating Disorder Awareness Week as part of broader health promotion in body image
- to develop and promote programs in media literacy for primary and secondary schools.

For more information on the Inquiry and the report visit www.youth.vic.gov.au

For info on policy matters please contact Jen Rose on 9267 3722 or email her on jrose@yacvic.org.au

Micro Finance Fund

FUNDING FOR YOUTH AGED 16-24

Support for young entrepreneurs

The Enterprise Network for Young Australians (ENYA) is introducing Australia's first system of interest free micro loans to young people wishing to establish a business as part of the ENYA Micro Finance Fund. The Micro Finance Fund will be conducted as a pilot initiative and has been selected by Youth Business International (YBI) as their Australian Pilot project. YBI is a unit of The Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum that helps disadvantaged young people realise their ambitions to become entrepreneurs.

ENYA's Micro Finance Fund has been developed specifically to support young entrepreneurs, aged between 16-24 years, entering the business world. To be eligible to apply for a loan, each applicant:

- ♦ Must be over the age of 16.
- ♦ Must not currently be in business.
- ♦ Must demonstrate sound business planning skills, or the potential to develop these skills.
- ♦ Be highly motivated and committed to establishing a sustainable business.

ENYA, a not-for-profit organisation established in 2003, provides a national network to promote the active participation of young Australians in enterprise. Projects such as MoneySense Financial Literacy Workshops are aimed at helping Australian youth raise their awareness and understanding of financial literacy issues.

For more information please visit www.enya.org.au or contact ENYA toll free on 1300 136 921.

Learning for Activism

PROJECT FOR YOUTH AGED 15-24

Learning for Activism is a project being run through the Faculty of Education at the University of Melbourne. The main aims of the project are to gain a better understanding of what motivates young people to become politically active, discover how they have learned about politics, find out what skills they bring to activism and identify some of the barriers they have overcome along the way.

The latest stage of the project features an online survey for young people aged between 15 and 24 living in Victoria who are involved in political activity. This can include forms of participation such as taking part in protests and demonstrations, supporting a community campaign, being a representative on a school SRC or university union, posting a political blog or standing as a candidate in an election.

If this describes you or you are working with young people to support their social and political participation then please direct them to the following link.

http://www.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/eesc/yrclfa_survey.html

For further information please email learningforactivism@bigpond.com or phone Ian Fyfe on 0408136566.

Ian Fyfe is a PhD Candidate at the Australian Youth Research Centre, University of Melbourne. For more information on the project see the YIKES! December Bumper issue.

Six degrees

PROJECT FOR YOUTH AGED 18-25

Six degrees is a project about young people and their stories. Stories about how their mental health has been affected by their connection to their family, communities and how services have either allowed them to get help that they need or made it difficult for them to move forward with their life (due to continuing problems with mental health or drug and alcohol problems).

If you know a young person, aged 18-25, who has had experience with mental health and drug or alcohol problems and you think they would be interested in sharing their story, please ask them to write about their experiences (approx. 200-300 words) in the following areas:

- ♦ Connection to family—whether being connected (or not) to family made a positive difference to their ability to deal with mental health and drug and alcohol problems
- ♦ Connection to community—whether being connected (or not) to community made a positive difference to their ability to deal with mental health and drug and alcohol problems
- ♦ Barriers to accessing services- whether services were available to help deal with mental health and drug and alcohol problems. Some barriers may include, difficulty getting to services eg. transport, lack of services, cost, staff, etc
- ♦ Successful treatment—what made the service helpful in dealing with mental health and drug and alcohol problems (individual factors, well-trained staff, youth specific services, support from family or community)

Stories can be in the form of poems, artwork, written work, etc!

For more info please contact Sarah Joy on sjoy@bigpond.net.au or phone 0413 694 533 or post stories to PO Box 281 Enmore 2042 NSW

Populism, Public Space and Young People NOTES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

An assessment of current management information systems and the scale of Anti-Social Behaviour Order breaches resulting in custody. UK Youth Justice Board. p.19.

¹³ The *Space Invaders? Young people and public space* forum was hosted in June 2005 by the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria and the Public Space Action group. The report can be downloaded from www.yacvic.org.au

¹⁴ White, R. 'Young people and community

public space.' As reproduced in *Space Invaders? Young People and Public Space Forum report, June 2005.* Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2005. pp 20 - 25.

¹⁵ Crane, P. 'The changing character of public space: implications for young people and community action.' As re-produced in *Space Invaders? Young People and Public Space Forum report, June 2005.* Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2005.p.17



NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK 1-9 APRIL, 2006.

Events will be held all over the state from April 1-9 to celebrate National Youth Week.

Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs, Jacinta Allan said the Victorian Government, in partnership with VicHealth, had given more than \$150,000 to community organisations across Victoria to work together with young people to deliver National Youth Week events.

"National Youth Week, which this year will run from 1-9 April, is Australia's largest celebration for young people," Ms Allan.

"2006 promises to be bigger than ever and I look forward to seeing young people in Victoria getting involved in a range

of events from arts, music and culture to sport."

Ms Allan said many fantastic ideas had been generated by young people and thanks to this funding these will now be turned into events to be enjoyed by other young people.

"The theme for the week this year is 'Just Add You' and I encourage all young people to do exactly that: get out there and celebrate the contribution that you make to your community."

"A key criterion for National Youth Week funding is that young people are heavily involved in creating, planning and running the week's activities," she said.

"65 young people played a pivotal role in

assessing applications for National Youth Week funding with regional assessment workshops held in Melbourne, Charlton, Benalla, Warrnambool, Stawell and Sale."

National Youth Week is a joint initiative between the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. Last year, more than 300,000 young people were involved in National Youth Week events across Australia.

The calendar below gives details on some Melbourne events. There are many others in Melbourne and around the state. For more information on events in your area, please visit www.youth.vic.gov.au and follow the Grants and Programs link to National Youth Week.

Please note: changes to events may occur.

EVENT	ORGANISATION	DESCRIPTION	DATE	VENUE
The Next Big Thing	Student Youth Network Inc SYN	Day Festival, music, film, art, live radio broadcast	1 April National Youth Week Launch	State Library, Swanston St, Melbourne
Past & Present Expression Expo	Maribyrnong City Council	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse young people express through spoken word, painting, art forms.	1-2 April	Hyde Street Church Hall, Footscray
Festival Of Youth	Mornington Peninsula Shire	Live music with 3 headlining bands, Freeza Battle of the Bands, carnival rides and market stalls	1 April	The Village Green Foreshore Reserve, Rosebud
Aspire 2 Inspire Muslim Youth Conference	Muslim Community Co-operative of Australia	Day event with workshops/group activities on community involvement	3 April	Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre, Coburg
Young Black Koori Digital Stories (Digital Storytelling)	Koori Programs Unit – Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE	Launch: Multi-media digital stories by Indigenous youth from the Koori Programs Unit (early school leavers and 'at risk' youth)	Launch: 3 April Exhibition: 3- 6 April	Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE, Broadmeadows
Vibewire.net e-Festival	Vibewire Youth Services	Online festival of writing, short film, music, digital art, discussion, online panels	4 – 8 April	www.vibewire.net/efestival
National Youth Week 2006	Knox City Council	Activities: Hip Hop dance, Street Latin, Drum Workshops, 'Iron Chef' Cooking class, Circus Skills, CALD Girls only Learn to Swim,	Jewellery making, Skating Clinic on Mobile ramps, Belly dancing, and a Mystery bus tour	Date and times to be confirmed
Art Link	Maroondah City Council	Launch: Mosaic Mural created by young people, situated at the station, with Live music	6 April	Croydon Train Station
Imagine....	Deaf Children Australia	Deaf Youth Forums	6 April	Deaf Children Australia
Chips Video- Chronic Illness Peer Support Video Launch	Chronic Illness Peer Support Program (Chips)	Launch: CHIPS video	6 April	Ella Latham Theatre, Royal Children's Hospital, Parkville
Expressions Skate Tour and Program	Brimbank Youth Services YMCA	Skate event	8 April	St Albans Skate Park, St Albans
Victorian Arabic Social Services Inc	Arabic Youth traditional meets new skool music workshops	Music workshops for young people of Arabic speaking background in the western suburbs.	9 April	VASS Newport Office, Newport

Up Coming

NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK 2006

When: 1-9 April

Where: All over Australia

National Youth Week is the largest celebration of young people in Australia. This event is aimed at young people aged 12-25 years and provides the opportunity for youth to have their voices heard, be recognised by the community, showcase their talents and have lots of fun.

For more information visit the website www.youthweek.com and also see page 11 for other info on events.

Treasurer Hunt—the Amazing Race Against Poverty

When: 2 April

Where: Melbourne and other cities

Decipher clues. Race against time. Fill the Aidometer and give the Treasurer our Dream Aid Package.

Like the amazing race, your team of 3-4 will be given a set of cryptic clues. Each clue represents one of the Millennium Development Goals. Decipher the clue, find the location in your city centre, collect the token and when you've got seven, race back to HQ and fill the Aidometer with your Millennium Development Goal tokens. We need to fill up our dream aid package to 0.5 percent of GNI. Are you up to the challenge? Get a team together today! www.makepovertyhistory.com.au

UPCOMING FORUM

Youth Support Services: Who's carrying the Can?

When: 4 May, 10am – 1pm

Where: Melbourne

When: 11 May

Where: Wangaratta

VCOSS and YACVic are running a forum to address the gaps in service provision to young people in Victoria. Discussion will be on the need for increased resources and better responses in early support generalist services for young people. A solutions focused forum, participants will be asked to identify possible ways forward in addressing the gaps.

For more info email vcoss@vcoss.org.au or ph 03 9654 5050 and rsvp to VCOSS by 28 April.

CONFERENCES

United Nations Youth Association Conference

When: 1-4 April

Where: Level 4, Queen Victoria Women's Centre, Lonsdale St, Melbourne

This year's conference is themed "*In Larger Freedom: Toward Development, Security and Human Rights for All*" and brings together over 300 high school students from around Victoria.

Delegates attending the event will hear from informative and engaging speakers on a plethora of issues including human rights, youth empowerment and global poverty. Delegates also take part in issue-based and interactive workshops.

To register go to www.unyavic.com.au and follow the links. For more information, contact UNYA's Conferences Coordinator, Tamsin Moran, at vicconferences@unya.asn.au or on 0422 280 139.

Teaching It Like It Is

When: 13 –14 July

Where: Education Development Centre, Adelaide

A conference on the practice and policy of relationships and sexual health education in schools. It will cover a broad range of topics such as healthy relationships, communication skills, HIV/STI education, sexual diversity and anti-homophobia education, growth and development, sexual violence and coercion, puberty, and contraception.

For further info contact Alalsha De Meo on 08 8431 5177 or alalsha.demeo@health.sa.gov.au

Learning Choices Expo 2006

When: 24 – 25 May

Where: Maroochydore, Queensland

Workshops, professional development sessions and fierce conversation topics have been finalised. Students from twenty quality programs and schools are practicing their presentations. Trainee teachers from the University of the Sunshine Coast have been selected to work alongside the student teams, and keynote presenters from Australia and the USA have been confirmed.

If you are working with young people who respond to flexible, authentic education, who require something more than what the traditional classroom offers, then come to the Expo for your dose of inspiration for 2006.

With over 500 teachers, principals, youth workers, researchers, government people and students attending, this event is shaping up to be one to remember.

Visit the Expo website for the updated program and more information http://www.dsf.org.au/learningchoices/expo_2006.php or call the Dusseldorp Skills Forum on 02 9571 8347.

5th International Conference on Drugs & Young People

When: 24 – 26 May 2006

Where: Sydney, NSW

Organised by the Australian Drug Foundation and the Centre for Youth Drug Studies, in partnership with the Ted Noffs Foundation, it will explore the culture and context of young peoples' drug use focusing attention on the settings in which drug use occurs. Some of these settings are bars and clubs, workplaces and schools, public spaces, juvenile justice settings and sports settings. This conference will enable professionals, policy makers and those working with young people to share their knowledge, ideas and experience and promote best practice in all domains.

For more information please visit www.adf.org.au; email DYP@adf.org.au; or ph (03) 9278 8137.

Level 2, 172 Flinders Street, Melbourne 3000
Ph: (03) 9267 3799 | Fax: (03) 9639 1622
Email: info@yacvic.org.au | Website: www.yacvic.org.au
ABN: 39 774 045 170 Reg No: A0015316H